

Christianity and its substitutes
Lessons for 1st Quarter, 2015
General Introduction

The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth. As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply, our experience will enlarge, and our knowledge increase. We shall become strong to bear responsibility, and our maturity will be in proportion to our privileges.

The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. It sends down its roots into the earth. It drinks in the sunshine, the dew, and the rain. It receives the life-giving properties from the air. So the Christian is to grow by co-operating with the divine agencies. Feeling our helplessness, we are to improve all the opportunities granted us to gain a fuller experience. As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take deep root in Christ. As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, we are to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. The work is to be done "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zechariah 4:6. If we keep our minds stayed upon Christ, He will come unto us "as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea 6:3. As the Sun of Righteousness, He will arise upon us "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. We shall "grow as the lily." We shall "revive as the corn, and grow as the vine." Hosea 14:5, 7. By constantly relying upon Christ as our personal Saviour, we shall grow up into Him in all things who is our head.

The wheat develops "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." The object of the husbandman in the sowing of the seed and the culture of the growing plant is the production of grain. He desires bread for the hungry, and seed for future harvests. So the divine Husbandman looks for a harvest as the reward of His labor and sacrifice. Christ is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts of men; and He does this through those who believe in Him. The object of the Christian life is fruit bearing, the reproduction of Christ's character in the believer, that it may be reproduced in others.

The plant does not germinate, grow, or bring forth fruit for itself, but to "give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater." Isaiah 55:10. So no man is to live unto himself. The Christian is in the world as a representative of Christ, for the salvation of other souls.

There can be no growth or fruitfulness in the life that is centred in self. If you have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, you are to forget yourself, and try to help others. Talk of the love of Christ, tell of His goodness. Do every duty that presents itself. Carry the burden of souls upon your heart, and by every means in your power seek to save the lost. As you receive the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of unselfish love and labour for others, you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Galatians 5:22, 23. This fruit can never perish, but will produce after its kind a harvest unto eternal life.

“When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.

Christ's Object Lessons, pages 65-69.

Compiler's Note

This series of lessons is designed to set forth the everlasting Gospel at a time when every wind of doctrine is blowing and false gospels abound. Perhaps the most prevalent of these false gospels is the gospel of Calvinism, which teaches:

- that all people are sinners from the moment of birth simply by virtue of the fact of being human.
- that sin is not primarily the act of breaking God's law but the fact of being a descendant of Adam.
- that God holds all people guilty simply because we were born human.
- that Christ gained the victory over sin and temptation because He was not born as a normal human being. His unique nature (some say 'the God-Man', others that He was born with the nature of Adam before his fall, still others that He was given physically and emotionally the nature of Adam after the fall but spiritually the nature of Adam before the fall) was what made Him victorious.
- that Christ cannot grant us full salvation over our sins and therefore we must continue sinning throughout this life. There is no possibility of salvation from our sins in this life.
- that all Christ can offer by His death on Calvary is unlimited forgiveness. This is what Calvinism regards as 'salvation'.

This series of lessons will examine the Gospel against these alternative gospels in the light of the Bible's teachings.

Lesson 1: December 28-January 3

‘Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.’ 1 John 3:4.

STUDY HELP: *Be Like Jesus*, page 381.

LESSON AIM: To examine what the Bible teaches about sin.

Introduction

‘What is sin? Why are we concerned about a subject which seems so negative? Simply because one’s conclusions about righteousness by faith depend on the definition one gives for sin. Why is man guilty? For what reason does God condemn a man? Why does God say that a man must die in the fires of hell? What we decide about sin must affect every other decision we make about the nature of righteousness by faith.’ Dennis E. Priebe: *Face to Face with the Real Gospel*, page 22.

‘God hath said’

1. What was the nature of the original sin of Eve? Genesis 3:1-4. Compare Genesis 2:16-17.

NOTE: ‘What is sin? The only definition given in God’s word is, “Sin is the transgression of the law;” and the apostle Paul declares, “Where no law is, there is no transgression.” The law is the great standard that will measure every man’s character. The very test that was brought upon Adam in Eden will be applied to every member of the human family. We stand as Adam did, with opportunity for a second trial, to prove our allegiance to the Government of God. If we listen, as Adam did, to the first adversary of God’s law, we shall be led to treat the words of God as of little consequence, and transgress the commandment.’ *Signs of the Times*, November 24, 1887.

2. What is the inevitable consequence of sinning? Romans 5:12; Romans 6:23, first part; James 1:15.

NOTE: ‘God has given in His word decisive evidence that He will punish the transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary. The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that “the wages of sin is death,” that every violation of God’s law must receive its just retribution. Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and the hiding of His Father’s face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out. All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin. And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression.’ *Great Controversy*, page 539.

‘By the law is the knowledge of sin’

3. How do we know what sin is? Romans 3:20, last part.

NOTE: ‘The soul must first be convicted of sin before the sinner will feel a desire to come to Christ. “Sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). “I had not known sin, but by the law” (Romans 7:7). When the commandment came home to Saul’s conscience, sin revived, and he died. He saw himself condemned by the law of God. **The sinner cannot be convinced of his guilt unless he understands what constitutes sin.** It is impossible for an individual to experience Bible sanctification while he holds that if he believes in Christ it is immaterial whether he obeys God’s law or disobeys it.’ *Faith & Works*, page 31. [Emphasis added.]

4. How did Paul explain this in more detail? Romans 7:7.

NOTE: ‘Paul says that “as touching the law”, as far as outward acts were concerned, he was “blameless”, but when the spiritual character of the law was discerned, when he looked into the holy mirror, he saw himself a sinner. Judged by a human standard, he had abstained from sin, but when he looked into the depths of God’s law, and saw himself as God saw him, he bowed in humiliation, and confessed his guilt. He did not go away from the mirror and forget what manner of man he was, but he exercised genuine repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He was washed, he was cleansed. He says, “I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” Sin then appeared in its true hideousness, and his self-esteem was gone.’ *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 6*, page 1076.

‘All have sinned’

5. Why do all people die? Is it because of Adam’s sin or because all people commit sin? Romans 5:12. Note especially the last part. Compare Romans 3:23.

NOTE: ‘He who chooses a course of disobedience to God’s law is deciding his future destiny; he is sowing to the flesh, earning the wages of sin, even eternal destruction, the opposite of life eternal. Submission to God and obedience to His holy law bring the sure result. “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” John 17:3.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 71

6. How was this truth taught in Old Testament times? Ezekiel 18:20.

NOTE: ‘Complete obedience is the only condition that meets the requirement of the law. “God is not a man, that He should lie.” God’s law is the rule of His government. He says, “This do, and thou shalt live.” But to the disobedient He says, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” God has given the promise that those who obey His law will be rewarded, not only in the present life, but in

the life to come. He declares just as decidedly that those who do not obey His requirements shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on them. By lips that never lie the obedient are blessed, and the disobedient are pronounced guilty.’ *Review & Herald*, May 7, 1901.

‘They had not sin’

7. How does Paul show that God judges us by the light that we have been given? Romans 7:9.

NOTE: ‘Sinners will be punished, whether they live in heathen lands or in so-called Christian lands. But no one will be judged by that of which he knew nothing. God does not punish men for violation of a law of which they knew nothing, nor does He hold them accountable for light that they have not had. It is very plain that those who have the law must know many things that are not known to those who do not have it in written form. All men have light enough to know that they are sinners; but the written word gives those who have it a knowledge of many particulars of which those are ignorant who do not have it. Therefore God in His justice does not hold the latter accountable for many things for which the former will be judged. “As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.” The man who has rejected light, whether it be little or much, is obviously guilty.’ E. J. Waggoner: *Signs of the Times*, December 5, 1895.

8. How did Jesus teach the same lesson? John 15:22. Compare John 9:41.

NOTE: ‘Many excuse themselves for keeping Sunday by saying, “My father and grandfather were good Christians, and they died keeping Sunday. They will be saved, and I am willing to run the risk of doing as they did. The whole world keeps Sunday; and I am as well off as the rest of the members of my church.” But will these excuses be accepted in the Judgment? No, no. Had their fathers had the light and the messages of warning which God has sent to His people in these last days, they would, if they were candid, God-fearing men, have obeyed the commandments of God. Our fathers are not accountable for the light they never received, or for the messages of warning they never heard; and shall their habits and customs be thought worthy of respect merely because they have been handed down from generation to generation? “If I had not come and spoken unto them,” said Christ, referring to the Jews, “they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.”’ *Review & Herald*, July 13, 1897.

9. What did James teach regarding the relationship between sin and knowledge of God’s law? James 4:17.

NOTE: ‘When you truly repent of sin, you will not be satisfied to acknowledge simply that you are sinful, and let the matter rest there. Do you intend to remain sinful while life shall last? Do you mean to violate your conscience? Do you mean to do evil always? What does the Lord say to those who have had light, and yet have failed to live in accordance with it? “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.” There is a repentance of sin that needeth not to be repented of. “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”’ *Youth’s Instructor*, February 15, 1894.

‘When lust hath conceived’

10. How does James show that temptation itself is not sin? James 1:15.

NOTE: ‘Temptations will pour in upon us, for by them we are to be tried during our probation. This is the proving of God, the revelation of our own hearts. There is no sin in having temptation, but sin comes in when temptation is yielded to.’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 251.

11. How are we shown that Christ was tempted as we are tempted, yet did not sin? Hebrews 4:15.

NOTE: ‘Christ was one with us in suffering the temptations common to human nature. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet He sinned not, neither was guile found in His mouth. When tempted, He sought strength from His heavenly Father, just as every individual may do who is tempted. He prayed often, pouring out His petitions with strong crying and tears. He besought His Father for help, in order that He might be braced for trial and strengthened for duty.’ *Review & Herald*, May 19, 1896.

‘The times of this ignorance’

12. How does God treat those who are ignorant of the requirements of His law? Acts 17:30.

NOTE: ‘Those who have an opportunity to hear the truth and yet take no pains to hear or understand it, thinking that if they do not hear they will not be accountable, will be judged guilty before God the same as if they had heard and rejected. There will be no excuse for those who choose to go in error when they might understand what is truth. In His sufferings and death Jesus has made atonement for all sins of ignorance, but there is no provision made for wilful blindness. We shall not be held accountable for the light that has not reached our perception, but for that which we have resisted and refused. A man could not apprehend the truth which had never been presented to him, and therefore could not be condemned for light he had never had.’ *Last Day Events*, page 218.

13. What provision does God make for such people and with what result? John 1:9; Romans 2:14-15.

NOTE: ‘Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God’s Holy Spirit. In the depths of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The “Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9), is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 385.

life. There will be felt a continual sense of need and dependence, a drawing out of the heart after God. Prayer is a necessity; for it is the life of the soul. Family prayer, public prayer, have their place; but it is secret communion with God that sustains the soul life.’ *Maranatha*, page 87.

11. Will those who are resurrected at Christ’s coming also be Christlike? Psalm 17:15. Consider Job 19:26-27.

NOTE: ‘It is not only possible, but it is an absolute necessity for men to behold the Lord, so desirable is it, such a wonderful privilege is it, it is the sum of all the blessings that God can bestow upon His faithful ones. We have it in the last chapter of Revelation, at the time where there shall be no more curse, the former things having passed away, His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face; His name shall be in their foreheads. For the servants of God to behold His face is the sum of all the blessings that God can bestow upon man. And so the Psalmist says, “As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness, and shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.” Still further, the Saviour said, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” That, then, is one of the glorious privileges of the pure in heart, to see God. In the book of Hebrews, we have this injunction, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”’ E. J. Waggoner: *The Medical Missionary*, July 1903.

‘In Thy presence’

12. What will it be like to be in God’s presence? Psalm 16:11.

NOTE: ‘The result of sin is before you, and the result of obedience. Adam lost Eden, not only for himself, but for the race, for you and for me. But through Jesus it will be restored in more than its original loveliness. The prize before you is eternal life in the kingdom of God; is it not worth striving for? “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him.” Says the psalmist, “In Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.”’ *Youth’s Instructor*, August 6, 1884.

13. What kind of person will dwell in God’s presence? Psalm 140:13. Compare Psalm 37:18.

NOTE: ‘Heavenly intelligences are waiting to co-operate with human instrumentalities, that the world may see what human beings may become through a union with the divine. Those who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to God’s service will constantly receive a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the life of His life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in mind and heart. Through the grace given us we may achieve victories which, because of our defects of character and the smallness of our faith, may have seemed to us impossible. To every one who offers himself to the Lord for service, withholding nothing is given power for the attainment of measureless results.’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 62.

8. How are we to be changed into the image of Christ? 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:8-10.

NOTE: 'Those who do the words of Christ will perfect a Christian character, because Christ's will is their will. Thus is Christ formed within, the hope of glory. They are beholding, as in a glass, the glory of God. By our making Christ the subject of meditation, He will become the subject of conversation; and by beholding, we will actually be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord. Man, fallen man, may be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that he can "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." How does he prove this? By the Holy Spirit taking possession of his mind, spirit, heart, and character. Where does the proving come in? "We are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men" (1 Corinthians 4:9).' *Ye Shall Receive Power*, page 50.

'We shall be like Him'

9. How does John express his confidence that God's people will indeed become Christlike? 1 John 3:2

NOTE: 'When God gave His Son to the world, He made it possible for men and women to be perfect by the use of every capability of their beings to the glory of God. In Christ He gave to them the riches of His grace, and a knowledge of His will. As they would empty themselves of self, and learn to walk in humility, leaning on God for guidance, men would be enabled to fulfil God's high purpose for them. Perfection of character is based upon that which Christ is to us. If we have constant dependence on the merits of our Saviour, and walk in His footsteps, we shall be like Him, pure and undefiled. Our Saviour does not require impossibilities of any soul. He expects nothing of His disciples that He is not willing to give them grace and strength to perform. He would not call upon them to be perfect if He had not at His command every perfection of grace to bestow on the ones upon whom He would confer so high and holy a privilege.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 230.

10. What part have we to play in the process of becoming Christlike? 1 John 3:3. See also 2 Peter 3:11, 14.

NOTE: 'Prayer and faith are closely allied, and they need to be studied together. In the prayer of faith there is a divine science; it is a science that everyone who would make his life-work a success must understand. Christ says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God's will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received. We need look for no outward evidence of the blessing. The gift is in the promise, and we may go about our work assured that what God has promised He is able to perform, and that the gift, which we already possess, will be realized when we need it most. To live thus by the word of God means the surrender to Him of the whole

Lesson 2: January 4-10
'He also Himself likewise took part of the same'

MEMORY VERSE: 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.' Ezekiel 18:20.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 25, 48.

LESSON AIM: To show how the teaching of 'Original Sin' compares with what the Bible teaches.

Introduction

'One group says that our guilt is the inevitable result of something called Original Sin. According to this line of thought, Original Sin does not mean Adam's choice to sin. It means the state in which we are born, because of Adam's sin. As a result or because of Adam's sin, we are born sinners. . . . Some say that we are guilty because we have inherited sin from Adam. Some say we are guilty, not because we inherit guilt, but because we are born as sons and daughters of Adam, and thus we are imputed as guilty because of our birth into a fallen race. Thus Adam's sin is imputed to us. Another variation says we are not guilty either because of inheriting sin, or because of being imputed as guilty, but because we are born into a separated state. We are born estranged from God. We are born apart from God, and that separation is our guilt. It is that estrangement for which we are guilty. Some even say that we are not personally guilty, but we are born condemned as part of a fallen race. But the one common denominator through all these views is that we are guilty or condemned because we are born into the human family.' Dennis Priebe: *Face to Face with the Real Gospel*, pages 23-24.

What is 'Original Sin'?

1. How is the doctrine of Original Sin expressed by those who teach this idea?

John Calvin: 'All of us come into the world tainted with the contagion of sin. We are in God's sight defiled and polluted. The impurity of parents is transmitted to their children. All are originally depraved. Guilt is from nature. Even infants bringing their condemnation with them from their mother's womb suffer for their own defect. The whole man is so deluged that no part remains exempt from sin, and, therefore, everything that proceeds from him is imputed as sin. Men are born vicious. We are all sinners by nature.'

NOTE: 'There are many who in their hearts murmur against God. They say, "We inherit the fallen nature of Adam, and are not responsible for our natural imperfections." They find fault with God's requirements, and complain that He de-

mands what they have no power to give. Satan made the same complaint in heaven, but such thoughts dishonour God.’ *Signs of the Times*, August 29, 1892.

2. What Bible verse is invariably quoted by those who promote that idea that we are sinners simply by being born? Psalm 51:5.

NOTE: When Martin Luther, a believer in the error of ‘Original Sin’, translated Psalm 51, he changed this verse to read: ‘I was a sinner by birth.’

Here is an example of one who believes in Original Sin. “Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Since David was physically handsome, he is speaking of his spiritual condition. From his very conception and birth, he was shaped in iniquity. We are born with a nature that is bent towards sin and self.’ Jack Sequiera: *Beyond Belief*, page 14.

‘In sin did my mother conceive me’

3. How are we to understand Psalm 51:5?

NOTE: In considering this verse, ask yourself the following questions:

7. What are possible answers are there?
8. Who was his mother?
9. Was she Jesse’s lawful wife?
10. Was she a concubine?
11. Was she an adulteress?
12. Was her union with Jesse lawful?
13. What can we conclude?

1. Who is speaking?
2. Who is he talking about?
3. What act is he talking about?
4. What does he say about his conception?
5. Whose sin was it?
6. What was the nature of this sin?

5. What will be the reaction of those unprepared to see God? Revelation 6:15-17. Compare Isaiah 2:19.

NOTE: ‘The sight of the inexpressible glory of the Son of God will be intensely painful to those whose characters are stained with sin. The pure light and glory emanating from Christ will awaken remorse, shame, and terror. They will send forth wails of anguish to the rocks and mountains, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”’ *Confrontation*, page 87.

6. Why will they respond in this way? Psalm 76:7. Compare Psalm 5:5; Psalm 76:7-8.

NOTE: ‘God is essentially, infinitely, and eternally holy; and His holiness influences Him, and appears in all He does. His holy eye observes the least violation of His law; His holy heart loathes all impurity: His holy law condemns every transgression; His holy arm will punish every obstinate offender: and His holy covenant saves myriads of beings from their sins. The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. His holiness makes Him a consuming fire to sinners, and produces the question, “Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?” Not the formal professor, the presumptuous pretender, the proud legalist, or the unsanctified church member, these will not be able to stand. But only those who now fall at His feet in penitence, flee to Jesus as the refuge for the guilty, trust in His glorious atonement for peace, rely on His precious promises for support, plead at His throne of grace for daily supplies, are clothed in His righteousness, united to His person, and lovingly look for His appearing. Sinner, you must appear before this holy Lord God: how will you be able to stand? Reader, whoever you are, examine into your state; be wise in time, nor rest without good ground to conclude that you will be able to stand! Believer, see to it that your evidences are bright, that your preparation is complete, and that you have no just cause for fear! Set the foot on the Rock of Ages, obtain grace to sanctify your soul, and trust in Jesus alone: so shall you be able to stand. Oh, my soul, see to it that in that great and terrible day, the day of wrath, thou wilt be safe! Ponder the question, “The great day of His wrath is come, and WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND?”’ James White: *Review & Herald*, September 30, 1862.

‘Conformed to the image of His Son’

7. What is Christ’s plan for His people? Romans 8:29.

NOTE: “‘This is the will of God,” the apostle Paul wrote, “even your sanctification.” 1 Thessalonians 4:3. The sanctification of the church is God’s object in all His dealings with His people. He has chosen them from eternity, that they might be holy. He gave His Son to die for them, that they might be sanctified through obedience to the truth, divested of all the littleness of self. From them He requires a personal work, a personal surrender. God can be honoured by those who profess to believe in Him, only as they are conformed to His image and controlled by His Spirit. Then, as witnesses for the Saviour, they may make known what divine grace has done for them.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 559.

‘But then face to face’

1. What prospect awaits God’s people? 1 Corinthians 13:12.

NOTE: ‘The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. “Now we see through a glass, darkly.” 1 Corinthians 13:12. We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence, and behold the glory of His countenance. Let us determine that if it costs everything we will have heaven and become partakers of the divine nature.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 363.

2. How did Job express his belief in this prospect? Job 19:26.

NOTE: ‘Here he points, in a clear manner, to the resurrection as the time when for himself he shall see God. The above is in harmony with other testimony of Job. “Oh! that Thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that Thou wouldst keep me secret, until Thy wrath be past, that Thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands.” Job 14:13-15.’ J. N. Loughborough: *The Hope of the Gospel*, page 19.

‘For they shall see God’

3. How did Jesus describe those who will see God? Matthew 5:8. Compare Hebrews 12:14.

NOTE: ‘The lesson book, the Bible, contains the instruction of the character they must have, the moral excellence of character which must be cultivated, which God and heaven require. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.”’ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 385.

4. How did David describe those who live with God? Psalm 15.

NOTE: ‘The Lord can do very little for us while we live in transgression, breaking the first four and the last six commandments. All who love God supremely will love their neighbour as themselves. The keeping of the new commandment is to the believer a step heavenward. The one thing that will give God’s people the supremacy is obedience to the command, “These things I command you, that ye love one another.”’ *Review & Herald*, October 17, 1899.

‘Hide us from the face of Him’

4. What possible answers can be given to these questions?

ANSWERS BY EXEGESIS (Drawing meaning out of the text)

1. David.
2. His mother and himself.
3. His own conception.
4. It was done in sin.
5. His mother’s.
6. We are not told.
7. Adultery, concubinage, an evil mother, the sinful condition of the race.
8. We are not told.
9. We are not told.
10. We are not told.
11. We are not told.
12. We are not told.
13. Any of Answer 7 would be possible.

Every statement above is a fact.

ANSWERS BY EISEGESIS (Reading the text in the light of a pre-conceived opinion)

1. All men.
2. All mothers and all men.
3. The conception of all men.
4. Conception is always done in sin.
5. All mothers.
6. Original sin and guilt.
7. Original sin and guilt.
8. The wife of Jesse.
9. Yes, she was.
10. No, she was not.
11. No, she was not.
12. Yes, it was.
13. This proves the doctrine of original sin and guilt.

Every statement above is an assumption.

‘The Word was made flesh’

5. What serious problem is caused by accepting the teaching of ‘Original Sin’?

If all men are sinners by the fact of being born, Jesus, being born a man, was likewise a sinner

NOTE: ‘A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man in order that He might redeem man, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it is sinful man that He came to redeem. Death could have no power over a sinless man, as Adam was in Eden, and it could not have had any power over Christ, if the Lord had not laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Moreover, the fact that Christ took upon Himself the flesh, not of a sinless being, but of a sinful man, that is, that the flesh which He assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject, is shown by the statement that He “was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” David had all the passions of human nature.’ E. J. Waggoner: *Christ and His Righteousness*, page 26.

6. What additional teaching did the Roman Catholic Church devise to get around this problem?

The official and “infallible” doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as solemnly defined as an article of faith, by Pope Pius IX, speaking ex cathedra, on December 8th, 1854, is as follows:

‘By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we declare, pronounce, and define, that the

doctrine which holds that the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of HER conception, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and, therefore, is to be firmly and steadfastly believed by all the faithful.' Quoted by A. T. Jones: *Review & Herald*, January 15, 1901. [Emphasis in quotation]

NOTE: 'In the counterfeit gospel, the perversion of the true, we have the self-styled "representative of Christ on the earth," who "as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God." While assuming the titles and prerogatives which belong only to the divine Author of our salvation, he yet denies to the Christ whom he pretends to represent that very experience which alone constitutes Him the Saviour of a fallen race, the incarnation in sinful flesh. Here is the crucial test. Here is where the counterfeit reveals itself. Here is where the divinely-appointed detector will show that not the Spirit of God but the spirit of Satan is working under this mask of a pretended gospel. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh [or confesses Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh, all flesh, and therefore in sinful flesh] is of God: and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God and this, is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." 1 John 4:2-3. "For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist." 2 John 7, R.V. In its doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which is "the Catholic belief that the Blessed Virgin was, by a special privilege, preserved Immaculate, that is, free from the stain of original sin, from the first moment of her conception," the papacy denies that Jesus of Nazareth "took human nature from a corrupt source," and asserts that "God the Son, by assuming this perfect human nature, which He took from the Blessed Virgin, was born in the flesh." But this separates the Divine Redeemer so far from the sinful flesh in which we live that the whole human scheme of priests, saints and the Blessed Virgin with good works of many kinds become necessary in order to have communion with the Divine life. In other words, man is effectually cut off from the only saving power, the only real means of salvation, the Divine life working in sinful flesh to give victory over sin. Such is the terrible, outcome of this counterfeit gospel.' W. W. Prescott: *Present Truth*, June 14, 1900.

'In all things made like unto His brethren'

7. What does the Bible say about the nature in which Jesus was born? Hebrews 2:17-18. See also verses 9-11, 14.

NOTE: 'The Son of God was assaulted at every step by the powers of darkness. After His baptism He was driven of the Spirit into the wilderness, and suffered temptation for forty days. Letters have been coming in to me, affirming that Christ could not have had the same nature as man, for if He had, He would have fallen under similar temptations. If He did not have man's nature, He could not be our example. If He was not a partaker of our nature, He could not have been tempted as man has been. If it were not possible for Him to yield to temptation,

the way will be free from hindrances. Just as surely as we strive to serve the Lord, so surely will Satan put forth every effort in his power to accomplish our ruin. But help has been laid upon One that is mighty, and to every struggling child of His who asks Him for grace, believing, He comes with the needed aid. We have an all-powerful Saviour who was victorious in His assumed humanity, and we are to press forward in the work of overcoming in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. In His strength, which we claim by faith, we are gaining the victory over sin.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 364.

12. Who is our example in overcoming sin? Revelation 3:21; 1 Peter 2:21-22. Consider John 16:33.

NOTE: 'Although Christ gained a priceless victory on behalf of man in overcoming the temptations of Satan in the wilderness, this victory will not benefit him unless he also gains the victory on his own account. Man now has the advantage over Adam in his warfare with Satan; for he has Adam's experience in disobedience and his consequent fall to warn him to shun his example. Man also has Christ's example in overcoming appetite and the manifold temptations of Satan, and in vanquishing the mighty foe upon every point and coming off victor in every contest. If man stumbles and falls under the temptations of Satan, he is without excuse; for he has the disobedience of Adam as a warning, and the life of the world's Redeemer as an example of obedience and self-denial, and the promise of Christ that "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.'" *Confrontation*, page 64.

Lesson 13: March 22-28 'We shall be like Him'

MEMORY VERSE: 'As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.' Psalm 17:15.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 130.

LESSON AIM: To study the blessed hope of God's people, to be like Him and to see His face.

Introduction

'Christ took with Him to the heavenly courts His glorified humanity. To those who receive Him, He gives power to become the sons of God, that at last God may receive [them] as His, to dwell with Him throughout eternity. If, during this life, they are loyal to God, they will at last "see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." Revelation 22:4. And what is the happiness of heaven but to see God? What greater joy could come to the sinner saved by the grace of Christ than to look upon the face of God and know Him as Father?' *Counsels for the Church*, page 76.

9. What precious promise is given to those who overcome because they are clothed in the righteousness of Christ? Revelation 3:5.

NOTE: 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.' These words are given for the people while they are in connection with the world, subject to temptations and influences that are deceiving and deluding. While they stay their mind upon Him who is their sun and their shield, the blackness and darkness that surround them will not leave one spot or stain upon their garments. They will walk with Christ. They will pray and believe and work to save the souls that are ready to perish. These are trying to break the bands that Satan has fastened upon them, and they will not be put to shame if by faith they will make Christ their companion. Temptations and deceptions will be constantly brought up by the great deceiver to spoil the work of the human agents, but if they trust God, if they are humble and meek and lowly of heart, keeping the way of the Lord, heaven will rejoice, for they will gain the victory.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 47.

10. What distinction is promised to those who overcome? Revelation 3:12.

NOTE: 'The overcomer in this address has the promise of being made a pillar in the temple of God, and going no more out. The temple here must denote the church; and the promise of being made as pillar therein is the strongest promise that could be given of a place of honour, permanence, and safety in the church, under the figure of a heavenly building. And when the time comes that this part of the promise is fulfilled, probation with the overcomer is past; he is fully established in the truth, and sealed. "He shall go no more out;" that is, there is no more danger of his falling away; he is the Lord's forever; his salvation is sure.' *Uriah Smith, Daniel & The Revelation*, page 399.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out." Revelation 3:12. Each individual is to be a burden-bearer, since to bear a burden is the special purpose of a pillar. Many church members seem to possess the idea that they join the church for the purpose at being relieved of all responsibility of being carried. But architects do not design pillars to be carried about as a show, but for service. He who bears no burden, is not a follower of Christ.' E. J. Waggoner: *Present Truth*, February 14, 1901.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name." Then when His work of atonement is finished, the name of God is completed in the mind, and He pronounces the work finished; for what God is there, in the believer and in the Sabbath, is the sign of a finished work in sanctification.' A. T. Jones: *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 2, 1893.

'Even our faith'

11. How are our sins to be overcome? 1 John 5:4; Revelation 12:11.

NOTE: 'As we follow on step by step to know the Lord, we need not expect that

He could not be our helper. It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battles as man, on man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature.' *Select-ed Messages, book 1*, page 408.

8. What ways have been devised to preserve the essence of this Catholic error?

Some Protestants, while denying the immaculate conception of Mary, believe that Christ's own conception was immaculate, and thus He was preserved from inheriting the taint of Original Sin.

Some believe that Jesus was given the nature of Adam before his fall, and thus was like a second Adam.

Some believe that He was given a mixed nature, partly (physically) of Adam before the fall and partly (mentally and spiritually) like Adam after the fall.

NOTE: 'Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess.' *Darkness Before Dawn*, page 14.

'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.' *Desire of Ages*, page 48.

'Repent and be baptised'

9. What erroneous practice entered Christianity because of the error of Original Sin?

'Wesley says; "If infants are guilty of Original Sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; seeing, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism. It has been already proved, that this Original Sin cleaves to every child of man; and that hereby they are children of wrath and liable to eternal damnation." Quoted in J. H. Waggoner: *Thoughts on Baptism*, page 77.

NOTE: 'Baptism is not for "Original Sin." The sin of Adam brings no condemnation to his children, and baptism does not stand related to it. The gospel does not save anybody from that death which we inherit from Adam. Exceptions do not destroy the truth that "in Adam all die." We all inherit mortality from him, but not condemnation. But the gospel saves from the second death, the penalty for personal sin.' J. H. Waggoner: *Thoughts on Baptism*, page 95.

10. What, according to Peter, must precede baptism? Acts 2:37-38.

NOTE: 'As baptism stands related to repentance on the part of the subject, and the remission of sin, it cannot be appropriately administered to infants; for they have neither ability nor need to repent. Repentance is for sin committed, and remission is for those only who have committed sin; and these do not apply to innocents. To relieve the practice from this difficulty, the weak pretext has been

framed that they are baptized because of the sin of Adam!’ J. H. Waggoner: *Thoughts on Baptism*, page 75.

‘He left us an example’

11. If we are all guilty of Original Sin and right-doing is therefore impossible so long as we are in human flesh, how are we to understand Peter’s words? 1 Peter 2:21-22. Consider Revelation 3:21.

NOTE: ‘Many say that Jesus was not like us, that He was not as we are in the world, that He was divine, and therefore we cannot overcome as He overcame. But this is not true; “for verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. . . . For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:16-18). Christ knows the sinner’s trials; He knows his temptations. He took upon Himself our nature; He was tempted in all points like as we are. He has wept, He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.’ *Ye Shall Receive Power*, page 368.

12. How does Paul explain the purpose of Christ coming in the likeness of sinful flesh? Romans 8:3-4.

NOTE: “‘In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren. . . . For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” Whether temptation be from within or from without, He is the perfect shield against it all; and so saves to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, Christ taking our nature as our nature is in its sinfulness and degeneracy, and God dwelling constantly with Him and in Him in that nature, in this God has demonstrated to all people forever that there is no soul in this world so laden with sins or so lost that God will not gladly dwell with him and in him to save him from it all and to lead him in the way of the righteousness of God.’ A. T. Jones: *The Consecrated Way*, page 44.

‘We are plainly told that all who do not overcome (are not worthy) shall die again, i. e., a second time. Revelation 2:11. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” The converse is: he that does not overcome shall be hurt of the second death. See also Revelation 20:6. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power,” etc; the opposite of which is, cursed and unholy is he that hath part in the second resurrection: on such the second death shall have power.’ James M. Stephenson: *The Atonement*, page 16.

‘He that overcometh’

7. What is yet another promise made to the one who overcomes? Revelation 2:17. Compare Revelation 3:12.

NOTE: ‘The manna, falling from heaven for the sustenance of Israel, was a type of Him who came from God to give life to the world. Said Jesus, “I am that Bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven. . . . If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” John 6:48-51. And among the promises of blessing to God’s people in the future life it is written, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.” Revelation 2:17.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 297.

‘Wesley says: “Wouldst thou know what that new name will be? The way to this is plain: overcome. Till then, all thy inquiries are vain.”’ Uriah Smith: *The Biblical Institute*, page 246.

8. What further prospect is promised to the overcomer? Revelation 2:26-28. Compare Revelation 12:5; Revelation 19:5; Revelation 20:4.

NOTE: ‘How great is the kingdom of God? “The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all.” Psalm 103:19. It fills all space. Yet great as it is, the whole can be comprehended in small compass; “for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:21. Who is it, then, who rules in the kingdom of God? It is he who rules himself. He who rules himself can rule the world; there is nothing impossible for such an one. “He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; . . . even as I received of My Father.” Revelation 2:25-27. But how shall one rule himself, and thus come into possession of this glorious kingdom? The case is very simple; we win by yielding. We have no power ourselves. We rule ourselves only by allowing the Holy Spirit of God to rule in us. When the Spirit of life is in us as our own, so that God’s Spirit is our spirit, and His will the law of our life in the same manner that it is the life of the plant, we have in us the power that hovered over the face of the abyss in the beginning, and brought order out of chaos. So will there come order out of the chaos of our lives, and we shall be in perfect harmony with God’s eternal purpose, and His great work throughout the universe.’ E. J. Waggoner: *Present Truth*, {June 7, 1900.

‘My new name’

wiles of the devil.” Ephesians 6:11.’ E. J. Waggoner: *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 23, 1891.

4. What tremendous affirmation of faith did Paul make? Philippians 4:13.

NOTE: ‘The church at this time should have the faith once delivered to the saints, which will enable them to say boldly: “God is mine helper”; “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” The Lord bids us arise and go forward. Whenever the church at any period have forsaken their sins, and believed and walked in the truth, they have been honoured of God. There is in faith and humble obedience a power that the world cannot withstand. The order of God’s providence in relation to His people is progression, continual advancement in the perfection of Christian character, in the way of holiness, rising higher and higher in the clear light and knowledge and love of God, to the very close of time. Oh! why are we ever learning only the first principles of the doctrine of Christ?’ *Lift Him Up*, page 338.

‘To him that overcometh’

5. What precious promise is given to the one who overcomes? Revelation 2:7. Consider Genesis 3:17, 24.

NOTE: ‘If we keep in view the eternal joys awaiting the overcomer, and trust in Christ as we strive for the perfection of character, do you think we shall be unhappy? Should it make us unhappy to imitate Christ’s example of self-denial and ministry? We are seeking for the life that measures with the life of God; therefore our natures must be brought into conformity with the will of God. We must so conduct our life work that we can go to God in confidence and open our hearts before Him, telling Him our necessities and believing that He hears and will give us grace and strength to carry out the principles of the Word of God. What we want is heaven, the victor’s crown, an entrance through the gates to the city of God, the right to eat of the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God. We want to see the King in His beauty. Then daily let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, the perfection of human character, and laying hold of His divinity we shall have the strength of divinity to aid us in overcoming every evil tendency and desire.’ *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 365.

6. What further precious promise is made to those who overcome? Revelation 2:11. Compare Revelation 21:7-8.

NOTE: ‘While probationary time is granted us, we should put our faculties to the very highest use, that we may make of ourselves all that it is possible; and while we endeavour to reach a high standard of intelligence, we should feel our dependence upon God, for without His grace, our efforts cannot bring lasting benefit. It is through the grace of Christ that we are to be overcomers; through the merits of His blood we are to be of that number whose names will not be blotted out of the book of life. Those who are final overcomers will have the life that runs parallel with the life of God, and wear the crown of the victor. When such great and eternal reward awaits us, we should run the race with patience, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.’ *Ye Shall Receive Power*, page 362.

Lesson 3: January 11-17
‘Son of God and Son of man’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. Philippians 2:5-7.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 19-26.

LESSON AIM: To study the importance of seeing Jesus as Son of God and Son of man.

Introduction

‘Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our “Father which is in heaven is perfect.” *Desire of Ages*, page 311.

Compiler’s note: God’s plan for man’s salvation depends on our Saviour being truly God and becoming truly man. Whichever of these great truths is surrendered, the plan of salvation is destroyed. ‘By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 24.

‘Son of God’

1. What did Mark say was the beginning of the Gospel? Mark 1:1.

NOTE: ‘The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.’ *Counsels for the Church*, page 76.

2. When challenged by the high priest as to whether He was the Son of God, how did Jesus reply? Mark 14:61-62.

NOTE: “‘When the Pharisees began to apprehend that He claimed to be the Son of God in a higher sense, they accused Him of blasphemy, and on this charge He was condemned. When brought before the Sanhedrim, He was first asked, “Art Thou the Christ?” He merely says that they themselves will one day own His claim. “Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.” This suggests to them that His claim was to something more than they ordinarily

considered to be involved in the claim to Messiahship; and at once they pass to their second question, "Art Thou the Son of God?" and on His refusing to disown this title, the high priest rends his clothes, and Jesus is there and then convicted of blasphemy." Dods, quoted in W. W. Prescott: *The Messiah is the Son of God*, January 1897.

'Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God'

3. How did the Jews understand this title? John 10:30-33.

NOTE: 'The strong denunciation of the Pharisees against Jesus was, "Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God;" and for this reason they sought to stone Him. Christ did not apologise for this supposed assumption on His part. He did not say to His accusers, "You misunderstand Me; I am not God." He was manifesting God in humanity. Yet He was the humblest of all the prophets; and He exemplified in His life the truth that the more perfect the character of human beings, the more simple and humble they will be. He has given to men a pattern of what they may be in their humanity, through becoming partakers of the divine nature.' *Youth's Instructor*, September 16, 1897.

4. On what other occasion did Christ acknowledge His Deity? John 8:58-59.

NOTE: 'With solemn dignity Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM." Silence fell upon the vast assembly. The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." Micah 5:2, margin. Again the priests and rabbis cried out against Jesus as a blasphemer. His claim to be one with God had before stirred them to take His life, and a few months later they plainly declared, "For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." John 10:33. Because He was, and avowed Himself to be, the Son of God, they were bent on destroying Him. Now many of the people, siding with the priests and rabbis, took up stones to cast at Him. "But Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.'" *Desire of Ages*, pages 469-470.

'God with us'

5. What name was applied to Jesus before He was born? Matthew 1:22-23.

NOTE: "'His name shall be called Immanuel, . . . God with us.'" "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God" is seen "in the face of Jesus Christ." From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was "the image of God," the image of His greatness and majesty, "the outshining of His glory." It was to manifest this glory that He came to our world. To this sin-darkened earth He came to reveal the light of God's love, to be "God with us." Therefore it was prophesied of Him, "His name shall be called Immanuel." By coming to

Christian, and there would therefore be much more Christianity in the church.' A. T. Jones: *Present Truth*, October 8, 1896.

2. Why did Christ come to this world? 1 John 3:5; Matthew 1:21.

NOTE: 'John did not teach that salvation was to be earned by obedience; but that obedience was the fruit of faith and love. "Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins," he said, "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. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in the heart, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God. The sanctified heart is in harmony with the precepts of God's law. There are many who, though striving to obey God's commandments, have little peace or joy. This lack in their experience is the result of a failure to exercise faith. They walk as it were in a salt land, a parched wilderness. They claim little, when they might claim much; for there is no limit to the promises of God. Such ones do not correctly represent the sanctification that comes through obedience to the truth. The Lord would have all His sons and daughters happy, peaceful, and obedient. Through the exercise of faith the believer comes into possession of these blessings. Through faith, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 563.

'Greater is He that is in you'

3. In the battle with temptation and sin, what blessed assurance has been given us? 1 John 4:4.

NOTE: 'The great trouble with us is that sometimes we are afraid that Christ will gain the victory. Why? We have some darling sin that we do not want to give up, we are willing, we think, that all the rest should go but that, and so we are afraid that Christ will gain the victory, and that that sin will have to be given up. Just think of it! We call Christ in to help us defeat our enemy, and when He comes, He finds us on the side of the enemy. But if we will give up all these things, Christ will give us something that is infinitely better. When we make up our minds from the word of God that all that God has to give us is in Christ, that He is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, we will realise that the meagre things of this earth are not worth having, compared to what is going to be given us. In 1John 4:2-4 we have reference to the wicked spirits with which we have to fight, and this assurance is given to the children of God: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." So with Elisha we know that they that are for us are more than they that are against us. "This is the victory that hath overcome the world even our faith." 1 John 5:5, RV. Do we believe that Christ has conquered everything, and that when we have Him, we have everything, and that there is no power of darkness that can do us any hurt? When this has been done, we are crucified with Him. Our own lives have been given up to Christ, but we still live. Then it must be some other life that we live, and that life is the life of Christ. That is the life in which we glory. Christ is our life, and He has the victory, and therefore we have it. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the

upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another. This love is the evidence of their discipleship.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 677-678.

Lesson 12: March 15-21 'To him that overcometh'

MEMORY VERSE: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.' Revelation 21:7.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 88.

LESSON AIM: To study what the Bible teaches about overcoming sin, in view of those who teach that overcoming is impossible.

Introduction

'Will man take hold of divine power, and with determination and perseverance resist Satan, as Christ has given him example in His conflict with the foe in the wilderness of temptation? God cannot save man against his will from the power of Satan's artifices. Man must work with his human power, aided by the divine power of Christ, to resist and to conquer at any cost to himself. In short, man must overcome as Christ overcame. And then, through the victory that it is his privilege to gain by the all-powerful name of Jesus, he may become an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ. This could not be the case if Christ alone did all the overcoming. Man must do his part; he must be victor on his own account, through the strength and grace that Christ gives him. Man must be a co-worker with Christ in the labour of overcoming.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 254.

Compiler's note: The essence of all the substitutes for Christianity is that salvation from our sins is not possible in this life. As *Nave's Study Bible*, a standard Calvinist reference-work, puts it: 'Scripture does not teach that one can become sinless in this life.' Luther summed up this expression of the belief that Christ cannot save His people from their sins in this life in the memorable phrase: 'Simul justus et peccator,' which means that the Christian is simultaneously just and a sinner. Against this, Christ repeatedly holds out exceeding great and precious promises to the overcomer.

'Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin'

1. What are we told about the one who commits sin? John 8:34; 1 John 3:8.

NOTE: 'The lesson which we are taught in these words of Scripture, and which we are expected to learn from these words, is not simply the fact of sin, but the power of it. And if people would only see this more and recognise it so, there would be more salvation from sin in the world and among those who profess to be

dwelt with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God, God's thought made audible.' *Desire of Ages*, page 19.

6. How fully is Jesus God? Colossians 2:9.

NOTE: 'In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. "He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life. All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ. It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. . . . Jesus was the light of His people, the light of the world, before He came to earth in the form of humanity. The first gleam of light that pierced the gloom in which sin had wrapped the world came from Christ. And from Him has come every ray of heaven's brightness that has fallen upon the inhabitants of the earth. In the plan of redemption, Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, "I AM THAT I AM: . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." This was the pledge of Israel's deliverance. So when He came "in the likeness of men," He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God "manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16. This unconscious babe was the promised seed, to whom the first altar at the gate of Eden pointed. This was Shiloh, the peace giver. This was He whom seers had long foretold. He was the Desire of all nations, the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star. And to us He says: "I AM the good shepherd." "I AM the living bread." "I AM the way, the truth, and the life." I AM the assurance of every promise. I AM; be not afraid. "God with us" is the surety of our deliverance from sin.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 47.

'The Word was made flesh'

7. In order for our salvation to be accomplished, what did God do? Romans 8:3-4.

NOTE: 'Ever since Adam's sin, the human race had been cut off from direct communion with God; the intercourse between heaven and earth had been through Christ; but now that Jesus had come "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3), the Father Himself spoke. He had before communicated with humanity through Christ; now He communicated with humanity in Christ. Satan had hoped that God's abhorrence of evil would bring an eternal separation between heaven and earth. But now it was manifest that the connection between God and man had been restored.' *Desire of Ages*, page 116.

8. How fully did Christ have to take the nature of those whom He came to save? Hebrews 2:17.

NOTE: 'This is a great mystery, a mystery that will not be fully, completely understood in all its greatness until the translation of the redeemed shall take place. Then the power and greatness and efficacy of the gift of God to man will be understood. But the enemy is determined that this gift shall be so mystified that it will become as nothingness.' *Lift Him Up*, page 76.

'Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is

impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents, with all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences. "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren" (Hebrews 2:17). If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are" (Hebrews 4:15). He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised on His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. He says, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psalm 40:8). As He went about doing good, and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God's law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God.' *Lift Him Up*, page 83.

'Touched with the feeling of our infirmities'

9. What does the humanity of Christ mean to us? Hebrews 4:15-16.

NOTE: "Christ is the ladder. The base is planted firmly on the earth in His humanity; the topmost round reaches to the throne of God in His divinity. The humanity of Christ embraces fallen humanity, while His divinity lays hold upon the throne of God. We are saved by climbing round after round of the ladder, looking to Christ, clinging to Christ, mounting step by step to the height of Christ, so that He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of this ladder. All these graces are to be manifested in the Christian character; and "if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'" *Maranatha*, page 84.

10. How is Christ's struggle against temptation pictured in the Scriptures? Hebrews 5:7.

NOTE: "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Isaiah 52:14. Turning away, Jesus sought again His retreat, and fell prostrate, overcome by the horror of a great darkness. The humanity of the Son of God trembled in that trying hour. He prayed not now for His disciples that their faith might not fail, but for His own tempted, agonised soul. The awful moment had come, that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance. Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. It was not yet too late. He might wipe the bloody sweat from His brow, and leave man to perish in his iniquity. He might say, Let the transgressor receive the penalty of his sin, and I will go back to My Father. Will the Son of God drink the bitter cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the consequences of the curse of sin, to save the guilty? The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus, "O My Father, if this cup may

of the vine will be manifest in fragrant fruit on the branches. "He that abideth in Me," said Jesus, "and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our lives; not one will be missing.' *Desire of Ages*, page 676.

11. What vital principle must every Christian grasp? John 15:5, last part. (Note the marginal reading.)

NOTE: "Many who are working with a very different purpose, fall into a like error. They are working for others' good; their duties are pressing, their responsibilities are many, and they allow their labour to crowd out devotion. Communion with God through prayer and a study of His word is neglected. They forget that Christ has said, "Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. They walk apart from Christ, their life is not pervaded by His grace, and the characteristics of self are revealed. Their service is marred by desire for supremacy, and the harsh, unlovely traits of the unsubdued heart. Here is one of the chief secrets of failure in Christian work. This is why its results are often so meagre.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 52.

'Herein is My Father glorified'

12. What is the purpose of our fruit-bearing? John 15:8.

NOTE: "Herein is My Father glorified," said Jesus, "that ye bear much fruit." God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labour to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him. "If ye abide in Me," He says, "and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ.' *Desire of Ages*, page 677.

13. What is the evidence that we are truly disciples of Christ? John 15:8. Compare John 13:35.

NOTE: "In this last meeting with His disciples, the great desire which Christ expressed for them was that they might love one another as He had loved them. Again and again He spoke of this. "These things I command you," He said repeatedly, "that ye love one another." His very first injunction when alone with them in the upper chamber was: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practised by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ's sojourn

12:17. But “every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.” In place of the authority of the so-called fathers of the church, God bids us accept the word of the eternal Father, the Lord of heaven and earth. Here alone is truth unmixed with error. David said, “I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts.” Psalm 119:99, 100. Let all who accept human authority, the customs of the church, or the traditions of the fathers, take heed to the warning conveyed in the words of Christ, “In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” *Desire of Ages*, page 398.

‘Except it abide in the Vine’

8. What is essential if our branch is to bring forth fruit? John 15:4.

NOTE: ‘This union with Christ, once formed, must be maintained. Christ said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.” This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the root to the branches is unobstructed and constant. Separated from the vine, the branch cannot live. No more, said Jesus, can you live apart from Me. The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 676.

9. What will be done with those branches that do not abide in the Vine? John 15:6

NOTE: ‘There is a wide difference between a pretended union and a real connection with Christ by faith. A profession of the truth places men in the church, but this does not prove that they have a vital connection with the living Vine. A rule is given by which the true disciple may be distinguished from those who claim to follow Christ but have not faith in Him. The one class are fruit bearing, the other, fruitless. The one are often subjected to the pruning knife of God that they may bring forth more fruit; the other, as withered branches, are ere long to be severed from the living Vine.’ *A New Life*, page 44.

‘Bringeth forth much fruit’

10. What will be the result of abiding in the Vine? John 15:5.

NOTE: “‘Abide in Me, and I in you.’ Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character. The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the outermost twig. So Christ communicates the current of spiritual strength to every believer. So long as the soul is united to Christ, there is no danger that it will wither or decay. The life

not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.” Three times has He uttered that prayer. Angels beheld the Saviour’s agony. They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of satanic forces, His nature weighed down with a shuddering, mysterious dread. There was silence in heaven. No harp was touched. Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from His beloved Son, they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin. The worlds unfallen and the heavenly angels had watched with intense interest as the conflict drew to its close. Christ’s agony did not cease, but His depression and discouragement left Him. The storm had in nowise abated, but He who was its object was strengthened to meet its fury. He came forth calm and serene. A heavenly peace rested upon His bloodstained face. He had borne that which no human being could ever bear; for He had tasted the sufferings of death for every man.’ *A Call to Stand Apart*, page 33.

‘But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever’

11. How did Jesus show that He holds a position equal with the Father? John 10:30. Compare Hebrews 1:8.

NOTE: ‘Divine love had conceived a plan whereby the lost might be redeemed. The broken law of God demanded the life of sinners. In all the universe there was but One who could, on behalf of humanity, 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 humans from the curse of the law and bring them 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. Before the Father, Christ pleaded on the sinner’s behalf, while the host of heaven awaited the result with an intensity of interest that words cannot express. Long continued was that mysterious communing, “the counsel of peace” for the fallen human race. The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth, for Christ is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. Oh, the mystery of redemption! The love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love that “passeth knowledge”? God was to be manifest in Christ, “reconciling the world unto Himself.” Human beings had become so degraded by sin that it was impossible for them, in themselves, to come into harmony with Him whose nature is purity and goodness. But Christ, after having redeemed them from the condemnation of the law, could impart divine power to unite with human effort. Thus by repentance toward God and faith in Christ the fallen children of Adam might once more become “sons of God.” *Christ Triumphant*, page 30.

12. How are we shown that Christ was willing to lay aside His position as God to come and save us? Philippians 2:5-8.

NOTE: ‘Point after point Paul lingered over, in order that those who should read his epistle might fully comprehend the wonderful condescension of the Saviour in their behalf. Presenting Christ as He was when equal with God and with Him receiving the homage of the angels, the apostle traced His course until He had

reached the lowest depths of humiliation. Paul was convinced that if they could be brought to comprehend the amazing sacrifice made by the Majesty of heaven, all selfishness would be banished from their lives. He showed how the Son of God had laid aside His glory, voluntarily subjecting Himself to the conditions of human nature, and then had humbled Himself as a servant, becoming obedient unto death, “even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8), that He might lift fallen man from degradation to hope and joy and heaven.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 333.

Lesson 4: January 18-24 Son of God and Son of man

MEMORY VERSE: ‘For I think that God hath set forth us apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels, and to men.’ 1 Corinthians 4:9.

STUDY HELP: *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 79.

LESSON AIM: To consider the objections to Jesus being truly God, or Jesus being genuinely man.

Introduction

‘The ladder [of Jacob’s dream at Bethel] is the medium of communication between God and the human race. Through the mystic ladder the gospel was preached to Jacob. As the ladder stretched from earth, reaching to the highest heavens, and the glory of God was seen above the ladder, so Christ in His divine nature reached immensity and was one with the Father. As the ladder, though its top penetrated into heaven, had its base upon the earth, so Christ, though [He was] God, clothed His divinity with humanity and was in the world “found in fashion as a man.” The ladder would be useless if it rested not on the earth or if it reached not to the heavens.’ *Christ Triumphant*, page 88.

‘The Word was God’

1. How do the Jehovah’s Witnesses render John 1:1?

The official Jehovah’s Witness version, the *New World Translation* says: ‘In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.’

NOTE: In view of the above translation in the New World version, it is worth noting that the following statement was printed in *The Watchtower*: ‘The inspired Greek Scriptures did not contain the indefinite articles “a” and “an” . . . “a” and “an” are nowhere found in the original Greek text,’ *Watchtower*, 15th November, 1969.

2. What is the literal reading of John 1:1?

The *Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament’s* wording reads: “In [the] beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and

5. If we do not produce fruit, what will our Father do? John 15:2, first part.

NOTE: “‘My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.’ While the graft is outwardly united with the vine, there may be no vital connection. Then there will be no growth or fruitfulness. So there may be an apparent connection with Christ without a real union with Him by faith. A profession of religion places men in the church, but the character and conduct show whether they are in connection with Christ. If they bear no fruit, they are false branches. Their separation from Christ involves a ruin as complete as that represented by the dead branch. “If a man abide not in Me,” said Christ, “he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”’ *Desire of Ages*, page 676.

6. What does our Father do to induce us to bear even more fruit? John 15:2, last part.

NOTE: “‘And every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth [pruneth] it, that it may bring forth more fruit.’ From the chosen twelve who had followed Jesus, one as a withered branch was about to be taken away; the rest were to pass under the pruning knife of bitter trial. Jesus with solemn tenderness explained the purpose of the Husbandman. The pruning will cause pain, but it is the Father who applies the knife. He works with no wanton hand or indifferent heart. There are branches trailing upon the ground; these must be cut loose from the earthly supports to which their tendrils are fastening. They are to reach heavenward, and find their support in God. The excessive foliage that draws away the life current from the fruit must be pruned off. The overgrowth must be cut out, to give room for the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The husbandman prunes away the harmful growth, that the fruit may be richer and more abundant.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 676.

7. How will our Father deal with those that He has not planted, those that bring forth the wrong kind of fruit? Matthew 15:13; Hebrews 6:8.

NOTE: ‘He answered, “Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.” The customs and traditions so highly valued by the rabbis were of this world, not from heaven. However great their authority with the people, they could not endure the testing of God. Every human invention that has been substituted for the commandments of God will be found worthless in that day when “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:14. The substitution of the precepts of men for the commandments of God has not ceased. Even among Christians are found institutions and usages that have no better foundation than the traditions of the fathers. Such institutions, resting upon mere human authority, have supplanted those of divine appointment. Men cling to their traditions, and revere their customs, and cherish hatred against those who seek to show them their error. In this day, when we are bidden to call attention to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, we see the same enmity as was manifested in the days of Christ. Of the remnant people of God it is written, “The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation

comes the life of the branch. So the soul dead in trespasses and sins receives life through connection with Christ. By faith in Him as a personal Saviour the union is formed. The sinner unites his weakness to Christ's strength, his emptiness to Christ's fullness, his frailty to Christ's enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ. The humanity of Christ has touched our humanity, and our humanity has touched divinity. Thus through the agency of the Holy Spirit man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is accepted in the Beloved.' *Desire of Ages*, page 675.

'Herein is My Father glorified'

3. What is our heavenly Father seeking in His people? John 15:2.

NOTE: 'God desires us to reach the standard of perfection made possible for us by the gift of Christ. He calls upon us to make our choice on the right side, to connect with heavenly agencies, to adopt principles that will restore in us the divine image. In His written Word and in the great book of nature He has revealed the principles of life. It is our work to obtain a knowledge of these principles, and by obedience to co-operate with Him in restoring health to the body as well as to the soul. Men need to learn that the blessings of obedience, in their fullness, can be theirs only as they receive the grace of Christ. It is His grace that gives men power to obey the laws of God. It is this that enables him to break the bondage of evil habit. This is the only power that can make him and keep him steadfast in the right path. To the heart that has become purified, all is changed. The Spirit of God produces a new life in the soul, bringing the thoughts and desires into obedience to the will of Christ; and the inward man is renewed in the image of God. Weak and erring men and women show to the world that the redeeming power of grace can cause the faulty character to develop into symmetry and abundant fruitfulness.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 103.

4. What is the fruit that our Father seeks? Ephesians 5:9; Galatians 5:22-23.

NOTE: 'God has in a wonderful manner endowed man with reasoning powers. He who fitted the tree to bear its burden of goodly fruit has made man capable of bearing the precious fruits of righteousness. He has planted man in His garden and tenderly cared for him, and He expects him to bear fruit. In the parable of the fig tree Christ says: "Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit." For more than two years has the Owner looked for the fruit that He has a right to expect, . . . but how has His search been rewarded? How anxiously we watch a favourite tree or plant, expecting it to reward our care by producing buds, blossoms, and fruit; and how disappointed we are to find upon it nothing but leaves. With how much more anxiety and tender interest does the heavenly Father watch the spiritual growth of those whom He has made in His own image and for whom He condescended to give His Son that they may be elevated, ennobled, and glorified.' *Testimonies*, volume 5, page 250.

'Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away'

God [Gk. Theos] was the Word."

NOTE: 'For many years Jehovah's Witnesses turned for support of their 'a god' rendering to Johannes Greber: *The New Testament*, 1937, since Greber also translated it as "the Word was a god." Watchtower Society publications quote or cite Greber in support of this and other renderings, as follows: *Aid to Bible Understanding* (1969), 1134 & 1669; *Make Sure of All Things-Hold Fast to What Is Fine* (1965), page 489; *The Watchtower*, 15th September, 1962, page 554, 15th October, 1975, 15th April, 1976; *The Word-Who Is He? According to John* (1962), page 5. However, after ex-Witnesses gave considerable publicity to the fact that Greber was a spiritist who claimed that spirits showed him what words to use in his translation, *The Watchtower*, 1st April, 1983, said on page 31: "This translation was used occasionally in support of renderings of Matthew 27:52, 53 and John 1:1, as given in the *New World Translation* and other authoritative Bible versions. But as indicated in a foreword to the 1980 edition of *The New Testament* by Johannes Greber, this translator relied on 'God's Spirit World' to clarify for him how he should translate difficult passages. It is stated: 'His wife, a medium of God's Spirit World was often instrumental in conveying the correct answers from God's Messengers to Pastor Greber.'" David A Reed: *Jehovah's Witnesses Answered Verse By Verse*, page 72.

'Before Abraham was I AM'

3. How do Christadelphians regard Jesus?

'Jesus was the Word made flesh. He was not the Word or the flesh alone. Jesus was the Word become flesh. This process began in begetting and conception, and resulted in the birth of the Son of God. It was then that he personally existed for the first time.' Harry Tennant: *The Christadelphians: What They Believe and Teach*, page 100.

NOTE: 'Believing that the Father alone is God in the full sense, Christadelphians are compelled to reject Christ's deity. Though they are prepared to speak of Him as "divine" they regard His divinity as of a derived and secondary kind. To them therefore Christ occupies a position similar to that of other Elohim who by their previous lives of faith and obedience have earned the right to be raised to the divine status. This contradicts John 1:1; Hebrews 1:1-9. They claim that the Son of God is not eternal but came into existence at a distinct point in time.' Phil Bancroft: *A Christian Outlook on Christadelphianism*, page 3

4. What does the Bible say about the pre-existence of Christ before His birth in Bethlehem? Micah 5:2. Compare John 8:58.

NOTE: "'In Him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men.'" It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. "I lay it down of Myself," He said. In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived.

This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ.’ *Maranatha*, page 302.

‘The Father is greater than I’

5. Is Christ a lesser being than the Father? Consider the following Scriptures: John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Corinthians 15:28; Mark 13:32; Luke 18:19.

NOTE: A number of religious groups, and many individuals who regard themselves as Christian take the view that Christ is a lesser being than the Father. There is no particular agreement among them as to who Christ is. Some, taking an interpretation of Revelation 3:14, declare that Christ was the first created being. Jehovah’s Witnesses accept Christ as a god, even the mighty God, but certainly not the Almighty God. Instead they say that He is the Archangel Michael, a created being. Christadelphians regard Jesus as divine but not God, a human being who lived in such a distinguished way that He was promoted to divinity by God. Mormons believe in a plurality of gods, but only worship the One they refer to as “Heavenly Father”. Mormons call the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit “one God-head” but they actually believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are separate “Gods” united in will and purpose (a moral, as opposed to ontological, unity). “We worship the Father and him only and no one else. We do not worship the Son and we do not worship the Holy Ghost. I know perfectly well what the Scriptures say about worshipping Christ and Jehovah [Mormons use the name “Jehovah” for Jesus Christ only], but they are speaking in an entirely different sense, the sense of standing in awe and being reverentially grateful to him who has redeemed us. Worship in the true and saving sense is reserved for God the first [a Mormon term for the Father], the Creator.” Bruce McConkie: *Our Relationship with the Lord*, 2 March 1982. (McConkie was a leading Mormon, an Apostle.)

6. How are we to understand verses which speak of Christ as inferior to the Father? John 14:28.

NOTE: ‘The word translated “greater” (*meizon*) does not mean greater in the sense of a higher type of being, but rather greater in the sense of position or authority. This is the meaning cited by modern Greek lexicons, and is exemplified by dozens of Biblical and extra-Biblical sources. Jesus repeats the phrase, “A servant is not greater than his Master,” twice in this same discourse (John 13:16; 15:20). The same Greek word (*meizon*) occurs in each of these verses. No one would suggest that a servant is a lesser being than his Master. A Master is “greater” than a servant because he occupies a position of greater status, dignity, and authority. If we let these other examples guide us, Jesus is saying that the Father is “greater” because the Father’s position in Heaven is one of greater dignity and authority than the Son occupies on earth. This meaning, then, makes clear why the disciples should rejoice. The Son is returning to the right hand of the Father, to the glory He had with the Father before His existence on earth (John 17:5). He had voluntarily *humbled* Himself in coming to earth (Philippians 2:6), taking the form of a servant (*doulos*, the same word Jesus uses in John 13:16 and

Lesson 11: March 8-14 ‘Without Me ye can do nothing’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.’ John 15:4.

STUDY HELP: *Christ Triumphant*, page 126; *Desire of Ages*, pages 674-678.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: John 15:1-11.

LESSON AIM: To study what the Bible reveals about how Christians should live.

Introduction

‘All heaven is interested in the work of those who are to be saved in the kingdom of God. “Without Me,” says Christ, “ye can do nothing.” Therefore there is not one iota of glory that we can take to ourselves. Notwithstanding you may feel your weakness, yet you may link yourself to the mighty God. I know that I am nothing, but Jesus is mighty to save. I can do nothing, but Jesus can do great things. God wants me in the work, but my efforts will be useless without His help.’ *Christ Triumphant*, page 126.

‘I am the true Vine’

1. What picture did Christ use to describe the relationship between the Father and Himself? John 15:1.

NOTE: “‘I am the true Vine, and My Father is the husbandman.’ On the hills of Palestine our heavenly Father had planted this goodly Vine, and He Himself was the husbandman. Many were attracted by the beauty of this Vine, and declared its heavenly origin. But to the leaders in Israel it appeared as a root out of a dry ground. They took the plant, and bruised it, and trampled it under their unholy feet. Their thought was to destroy it forever. But the heavenly Husbandman never lost sight of His plant. After men thought they had killed it, He took it, and replanted it on the other side of the wall. The vine stock was to be no longer visible. It was hidden from the rude assaults of men. But the branches of the Vine hung over the wall. They were to represent the Vine. Through them grafts might still be united to the Vine. From them fruit has been obtained. There has been a harvest which the passers-by have plucked.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 675.

2. What picture did Christ use to describe the relationship between Himself and His people? John 15:5.

NOTE: “‘I am the Vine, ye are the branches,’ Christ said to His disciples. Though He was about to be removed from them, their spiritual union with Him was to be unchanged. The connection of the branch with the vine, He said, represents the relation you are to sustain to Me. The scion is engrafted into the living vine, and fibre by fibre, vein by vein, it grows into the vine stock. The life of the vine be-

motive, the enmity against God, that has defiled every act of life. Then we shall know that our own righteousness is indeed as filthy rags, and that the blood of Christ alone can cleanse us from the defilement of sin, and renew our hearts in His own likeness.’ *Conflict & Courage*, page 292.

10. In contrast, how does Paul describe the true Christian life of faith? Galatians 2:20.

NOTE: ‘We hear this Apostle saying in another place, “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. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:20, 21. I cannot conceive that a man could use such language as this, who was living day by day in sin. If a man is crucified with Christ, he must be dead to sin, and such an one the Apostle has already told us is “freed from sin.” No man can say, I am fully persuaded, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” who knows himself to be living in sin. Nor can one who lives in sin say, “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.” Paul says, I do not frustrate the grace of God. I do not expect to work out a righteousness by my own unaided efforts to obey the law. I rely on the faithfulness of Christ who loves me, to keep me.’ Charles Fitch: *Views of Sanctification*, page 11.

‘Your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless’

11. What does the Bible teach about the extent of salvation? 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

NOTE: ‘When Paul wrote, “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly” 1 Thessalonians 5:23, he did not exhort his brethren to aim at a standard which it was impossible for them to reach; he did not pray that they might have blessings which it was not the will of God to give. He knew that all who would be fitted to meet Christ in peace must possess a pure and holy character. Read 1 Corinthians 9:25-27; 6:19, 20.’ *Counsels for the Church*, page 51.

12. What assurance have we been given that Christ can accomplish this in us? Jude 1:24.

NOTE: ‘The indulgence of spiritual pride, of unholy desires, of evil thoughts, of anything that separates us from an intimate and sacred association with Jesus, imperils our souls. We must “fight the good fight of faith,” if we would “lay hold on eternal life” (1 Timothy 6:12). We are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” (1 Peter 1:5). If the thought of apostasy is grievous to you, then “abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Romans 12:9); and believe in Him who is “able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 333.

15:20). Now Jesus was returning to the Father to regain His former glory, where He could accomplish all the wonderful things promised to the disciples in His final discourse. If the disciples had considered the import of Jesus’ words, they would have realised the exaltation that awaited the Son, and would have rejoiced. Thus, there is little contextual or lexical support for the idea that Jesus is teaching His ontological inferiority to the Father in this verse. He is speaking in the highest terms of the positional greatness of the Father, a position to which Jesus is soon to return, there to be an even greater blessing to the disciples and an assurance of their own paths to Heaven.’ *The Apologist’s Bible Commentary* on John 14:28.

‘In all points tempted like as we are’

7. What do those mean who describe Jesus as ‘the God-man’?

‘Could Jesus have sinned in his humanity while being God in the flesh? We need to understand that he was one person. If his humanity was separate, it could have willed to do just as Adam did. While He had the choice to sin, He did not have the ability. The humanity of Christ could never be separate from or unsupported from His deity. With Adam there was only one nature; with Christ he was supported by and anointed by deity as the Son of God. In our fallen humanity we cannot act apart from our nature. Jesus however did not have the sin nature that we have. He was free to act perfectly in all situations. He acted upon his sinless nature obeying another’s will, that of his Father. He was not able to go against God’s will because He did not have the nature of sin to have that possibility. He knew no sin (2 Cor.5:21) meaning He gained no knowledge of sin through experience. He came like a man (Rom.8:3) looking like anyone else yet without the sinful nature; there was nothing of himself on the outside that attracted people. As Jesus took upon himself another nature of humanity, it did not have the indwelling of sin that marred man (Phil.2:5-8).’ Source: <http://www.letusreason.org/Doct3.htm>

NOTE: Adam did not have a sinful nature, yet he was tempted to sin and he fell. He had gained no knowledge of sin from experience prior to his temptation, yet he fell. Adam was free to act perfectly in all situations, yet he fell. Adam held face-to-face communion with his Creator, yet he fell.

8. What does the Bible say about Christ’s nature and His experience in temptation? Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15; 5; 7-8.

NOTE: ‘Jesus did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought could he be brought to the power of Satan’s temptations. Yet it is written of Christ that He was tempted in all points like as we are. Many hold that from the nature of Christ it was impossible for Satan’s temptations to weaken or overthrow Him. Then Christ could not have been placed in Adam’s position, to go over the ground where Adam stumbled and fell; He could not have gained the victory that Adam failed to gain. Unless He was placed in a position as trying as that in which Adam stood, he could not redeem Adam’s failure. If man has in any sense a more trying conflict to endure than had Christ, then Christ is not able to succour him when tempted. Christ took humanity with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man with the possibility of yielding to temptation, and He relied upon divine power to keep Him.’ *General Conference Bulletin*, February 25, 1895.

‘In the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin’

9. What do most Reformed churches believe about the humanity of Christ?

‘It is very doubtful, however, whether the idea that Christ took a fallen human nature can be held meaningfully in any form which is not heretical. There is no practicable distinction between fallen and sinful. “Beyond a doubt,” wrote A. B. Bruce, “the theory requires that original sin should be ascribed to Christ; for original sin is a vice of fallen human nature, and the doctrine that our Lord’s human nature was fallen, means if it means anything, that it was tainted with original sin.” The truth of Bruce’s claim will appear at once if we recall the teaching of the Shorter Catechism: the Fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery (Answer 17). To be fallen means not only to be in a state of misery, but to be in a state of sin. And in what does that sinfulness consist? “The guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness and the corruption of (our) whole nature” (Answer 18). This is really the crux of the matter. A fallen nature means a corrupt nature, indeed, one which is wholly corrupt. Is that what Christ had, a nature which lacked original righteousness and was totally depraved?’ Donald Macleod: *Did Christ Have a Fallen Human Nature?*

NOTE: ‘As God He could not be tempted: but as a man He could be tempted, and that strongly, and could yield to the temptations. His human nature must pass through the same test and trial Adam and Eve passed through. His human nature was created; it did not even possess the angelic powers. It was human, identical with our own. He was passing over the ground where Adam fell. He was now where, if He endured the test and trial in behalf of the fallen race, He would redeem Adam’s disgraceful failure and fall, in our own humanity. A human body and a human mind were His. He was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.’ *Manuscript Releases, volume 6*, page 111.

10. How does the Bible speak of Christ’s humanity? Romans 8:3-4.

NOTE: ‘The Son of God lived a perfect life of obedience in this world. We need always to keep in view the truthfulness of the humanity of Christ Jesus. When Christ became our substitute and surety, it was as a human being. He came as a man, and rendered the obedience of human nature to the only true God. He came not to show us what God could do, but what God did do, and what man, when he is a partaker of the divine nature, can do. It was the human nature of Christ that endured the temptations in the wilderness, not His divine nature. In His human nature He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself. He lived a perfect human life. Jesus is everything to us, and He says to us, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” We know that the Lord Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, and He knows how to succour all who shall be tempted. In His humanity, He suffered physical weariness and weakness, hunger, thirst, and sadness. As He saw how obdurate were the hearts of men, He was filled with sorrow. He remained whole nights in prayer for those who would not pray for themselves, and who would not come unto Him that they might have life. Shall we, for whom He suffered so much, choose our own way and will and selfish gratification? Jesus speaks to us, “Learn of Me”; “Be like Me.” He was human, as you are.’ *Manu-*

6. In what language does the Bible portray the life of the Christian? 1 Timothy 1:18; 1 Corinthians 9:24; Ephesians 6:11-13.

NOTE: ‘The Christian life is a life of warfare, of continual conflict. It is a battle and a march. But every act of obedience to Christ, every act of self-denial for His sake, every trial well endured, every victory gained over temptation, is a step in the march to the glory of final victory.’ *Christ Triumphant*, page 204.

‘To forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness’

7. What does the Bible say about those who teach that all Christ offers is unlimited forgiveness? Romans 6:1-2.

NOTE: ‘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.’ *Prayer*, page 298.

8. What graphic language does the Bible use to describe those who go back to sinning after having been forgiven? 2 Peter 2:22.

NOTE: ‘All men have transgressed the law, and brought themselves into condemnation and can get no help except from God. On account of Christ’s sacrifice, however, and through His intercession, God is willing to bestow His grace upon all, and thus freely justify them. But He will not save those who are satisfied to be under condemnation; they must have a desire to be free. And how may it be known who wish to become free, and who are satisfied to remain in bondage to sin? Simply by their actions. If they love sin, and are determined not to cease violating the law, no further evidence is needed. Favour shown to such would be favour thrown away. But those who groan, as did Paul, to be free from the load of guilt that rests upon them, may with safety be given their liberty, for they will not use it as a license to sin still more.’ E. J. Waggoner: *Signs of the Times*, August 28, 1884.

‘Filthy rags’

9. What does the Bible say about those who teach that all God requires is for us to do our best and Christ will make up the deficiency? How does the Bible describe our own unaided efforts to be good? Isaiah 64:6.

NOTE: ‘We cannot provide a robe of righteousness for ourselves, for the prophet says, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). There is nothing in us from which we can clothe the soul so that its nakedness shall not appear. We are to receive the robe of righteousness woven in the loom of heaven, even the spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 24.

‘We may have flattered ourselves, as did Nicodemus, that our life has been upright, that our moral character is correct, and think that we need not humble the heart before God, like the common sinner: but when the light from Christ shines into our souls, we shall see how impure we are; we shall discern the selfishness of

life.” Why was the life of Christ given? “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Then Christ gave His life that we might have life. Where is that life? What is that life? And where can we get it? In John 1:4 we read: “In Him was life and the life was the light of men.” He alone has life and He gives that life to as many as will accept it. John 17:2. Then Christ has the life and He is the only one who has it, and He is willing to give it to us. Now what is that life? Verse 3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” Has a person who knows Christ eternal life? That is what the word of God says. Again he says in John 3:36: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. How do we know that we have this life? This is an important question. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” E. J. Waggoner: *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 16, 1891.

4. What Bible verses show us that salvation is yet to be fully accomplished? Romans 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Hebrews 9:28.

NOTE: ‘Those who accept Christ, and in their first confidence say, I am saved, are in danger of trusting to themselves. They lose sight of their own weakness and their constant need of divine strength. They are unprepared for Satan’s devices, and under temptation many, like Peter, fall into the very depths of sin. We are admonished, “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” 1 Corinthians 10:12. Our only safety is in constant distrust of self, and dependence on Christ.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 155.

‘We are never to rest in a satisfied condition, and cease to make advancement, saying, “I am saved.” When this idea is entertained, the motives for watchfulness, for prayer, for earnest endeavour to press onward to higher attainments, cease to exist. No sanctified tongue will be found uttering these words till Christ shall come, and we enter in through the gates into the city of God. Then, with the utmost propriety, we may give glory to God and to the Lamb for eternal deliverance.’ *Maranatha*, page 236.

‘Strive to enter in’

5. Does the Bible teach that it is easy to be saved but hard to be lost? Luke 13:24. (Note the marginal reading for ‘strive’: ‘strive as in agony’.) Contrast Matthew 7:13-14.

NOTE: ‘Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavourable trait to remain uncorrected.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 331.

script Releases, volume 14, page 334.

‘He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one’

11. What is the reasoning of those who teach that Jesus took the nature of Adam before the fall?

‘When God became man He partook of the same moral nature that Adam possessed before the fall. Adam was created holy, and so was Christ. for He became the second Adam. . . . When the incarnate God broke into human history and became one with the race, it is our understanding that He possessed the sinlessness of the nature with which Adam was created in Eden.’ R. A. Anderson: ‘God with Us,’ *Ministry*. April, 1957.

‘He [Jesus] had a sinless spiritual nature, the same as Adam had before his fall, concerning propensity or tendency to sin. Therefore it was natural for Jesus to be good. [As a child of the fallen Adam], I was born with a sinful spiritual nature and it’s natural for me to be bad.’ Morris Venden, *Salvation by Faith and Your Will*, page 86.

NOTE: “‘God the Son, by assuming this perfect human nature, which He took from the blessed virgin, was born in the flesh.’ Catholic Belief, 208. Thus by shutting Christ away from the same flesh and blood which we have (compare Heb. 2:14), modern Babylon really denies the vital truth of Christianity, although pretending to teach it. Such is the mystery of iniquity.’ *International Sabbath School Quarterly*, “God Manifested in the Flesh” (Senior Division, Second Quarter, 1913).

‘By its dogma concerning the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary, the Roman Catholic Church gives to the Son of God in the incarnation a perfect human nature: and thereby separates Him from those He came to save. This denial of the perfect union of Christ with sinful flesh opens the way for a series of subsidiary mediators whose duty it is to bring the sinner into saving touch with Christ.’ *International Sabbath School Quarterly*, “The Incarnation and the Priesthood” (Senior Division, First Quarter, 1913).

12. How does the Scripture identify Christ with those He came to save? Hebrews 2:9, 11, 16. Compare Romans 1:3.

NOTE: ‘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.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 48.

Lesson 5: January 25-31 'In Him is no sin'

MEMORY VERSE: 'For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.' 1 Peter 2:21-23.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 114.

LESSON AIM: To study how Christ lived.

Introduction

"I am the true Vine," He says. Instead of choosing the graceful palm, the lofty cedar, or the strong oak, Jesus takes the vine with its clinging tendrils to represent Himself. The palm tree, the cedar, and the oak stand alone. They require no support. But the vine entwines about the trellis, and thus climbs heavenward. So Christ in His humanity was dependent upon divine power. "I can of Mine own self do nothing," He declared. John 5:30.' *Desire of Ages*, page 674.

'That holy Thing'

1. How was Jesus described even before His conception? Luke 1:35.

NOTE: 'The humanity of Christ is called "that holy thing." The inspired record says of Christ, "He did no sin," he "knew no sin," and "in him was no sin." He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He tabernacled among men. This testimony concerning Christ plainly shows that He condemned sin in the flesh.' *Signs of the Times*, January 16, 1896.

2. How is Christ described in terms of His qualification to be our great High Priest? Hebrews 7:26.

NOTE: 'By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfil His word. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has

merits, we are clothed with His righteousness, and we are saved. "Oh, yes," some say, "we are saved in doing nothing. In fact, I am saved. I need not keep the law of God. I am saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ." Christ came to our world to bring all men back to allegiance to God. To take the position that you can break God's law, for Christ has done it all, is a position of death, for you are as verily a transgressor as anyone.' *Faith & Works*, page 71.

'Christ's righteousness will not cover the unrighteousness of any one. "All unrighteousness is sin," and "sin is the transgression of the law," therefore, those who are breaking the law of God and teaching others to break it, will not be covered with the garments of Christ's righteousness. He came not to save men in their sins; but from their sins. "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. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him." These utterances are weighty, and should be duly considered.' *Review & Herald*, July 24, 1888.

2. How is the truth of this explained in the Bible? Zechariah 3:1-4.

NOTE: 'If those whose errors are pointed out make confession of their wrongdoing, the spell of the enemy may be broken. If they will repent and forsake their sins, God is faithful and just to forgive their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer, will remove the filthy garments from them, give them change of raiment, and set a fair mitre upon their head. But so long as they refuse to turn from iniquity they cannot develop a character that will stand in the great day of judgment.' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 52.

'Christ loves His church. He will give all needed help to those who call upon Him for strength for the development of Christlike character. But His love is not weakness. He will not serve with their sins, nor give them prosperity while they continue to follow a wrong course of action. Only through faithful repentance will their sins be forgiven; for God will not cover evil with the robe of His righteousness. He will honour faithful service. He will abundantly bless those who reveal to their fellow-men His justice, mercy, and love. Let those who are engaged in His service walk before Him in true humility, following faithfully in His footsteps, cherishing the holy principles which will live through the eternal ages. Let them in word and action show that they obey the laws which are obeyed in heaven.' *Signs of the Times*, November 13, 1901.

'Saved by His life'

3. What does the Bible say about those who claim that Christ's whole work of salvation was completed on the cross? Romans 5:10.

NOTE: 'Many act and talk as if Christ was dead and irrecoverably dead. Yes, He died, but He rose again and lives forever more. Christ is not in Joseph's new tomb. We have a risen Saviour. What does the death of Christ do for us? Reconciles us to God. It is the death of Christ that brings us to God. He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Now mark! It is the death of Christ that brings us to God; what is it that keeps us there? It is the life of Christ. We are saved by His life. Now hold these words in your minds: "Being reconciled, we shall be saved by His

cannot, by mere human effort, effect a radical change in himself. He must accept the provisions of the gospel; he must be reconciled to God through obedience to His law and faith in Jesus Christ. His life from thenceforth must be governed by a new principle. Through repentance, faith, and good works he may perfect a righteous character, and claim, through the merits of Christ, the privileges of the sons of God. The principles of divine truth, received and cherished in the heart, will carry us to a height of moral excellence that we had not deemed it possible for us to reach. "And it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." *Testimonies, volume 4*, page 294.

Lesson 10: March 1-7 'Certain men crept in unawares'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.' Jude 1:3.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 116.

LESSON AIM: To study five alternatives to righteousness by faith in the light of the Scriptures.

Introduction

'Here are the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life. Your obedience to God's commandments will prove your right to an inheritance with the saints in light. God has elected a certain excellence of character; and every one who, through the grace of Christ, shall reach the standard of His requirement, will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of glory. All who would reach this standard of character will have to employ the means that God has provided to this end. If you would inherit the rest that remaineth for the children of God, you must become a co-labourer with God. You are elected to wear the yoke of Christ, to bear His burden, to lift His cross. You are to be diligent "to make your calling and election sure." [2 Peter 1:10.] Search the Scriptures, and you will see that not a son or a daughter of Adam is elected to be saved in disobedience to God's law. The world makes void the law of God; but Christians are chosen to sanctification through obedience to the truth. They are elected to bear the cross, if they would wear the crown.' *Christian Education*, page 118.

'Whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy'

1. What does the Bible say about those who teach that we can never stop sinning but Christ's righteousness will cover our sinning? Proverbs 28:13. Consider Romans 4:7 and contrast Isaiah 30:1.

NOTE: 'By living faith, by earnest prayer to God, and depending upon Jesus'

carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the "Son of man" who shares the throne of the universe. It is the "Son of man" whose name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. The I AM is the Daysman [Job 9:33] between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love.' *Desire of Ages*, page 25.

'Which of you convinceth Me of sin?'

3. What challenge did Jesus make to the Jews? John 8:46, first part.

NOTE: 'The fall of our first parents broke the golden chain of implicit obedience of the human will to the divine. Obedience has no longer been deemed an absolute necessity. The human agents follow their own imaginations which the Lord said of the inhabitants of the old world were evil and that continually. The Lord Jesus declares, "I have kept my Father's commandments." How? As a man. Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. To the accusations of the Jews He stood forth in His pure, virtuous, holy character and challenged them, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"' *Reflecting Christ*, page 56.

4. What further testimonies were borne by those who spoke of Him? 1 Peter 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5;

NOTE: 'No man can say that he is hopelessly subject to the bondage of sin and Satan. Christ has assumed the responsibilities of the human race, and the sins of all that believe are charged to Him. He has engaged to be liable for them. He obeyed every jot and tittle of the law, to testify before unfallen worlds, before holy angels, before the fallen world, that those who believe in Him, who accept Him as their sin-offering, who rely upon Him as their personal Saviour, will be advantaged by His righteousness, and become partakers of His divine nature. He testifies that through His imputed righteousness the believing soul shall obey the commandments of God. John pointed to Christ, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" The Son of the infinite God does not remove from man his obligation to keep all of God's commandments. But with Christ formed within, the apostle declares, "Ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power." All our transgressions are transferred to Christ. While He who knew no sin was made sin for us, and the sinless is accounted sinful, the righteousness of Christ is placed upon the undeserving, so that the repenting sinner is declared to be sinless before God.' *Signs of the Times*, January 16, 1896.

'I have kept My Father's commandments'

5. What encouraging testimony did Jesus give to His closest companions? John 15:10.

NOTE: 'Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 311.

6. What was said of Jesus at His trial? Luke 23:4; John 19:4, 6.

NOTE: 'The priests hired people to testify under oath to falsehood, that Jesus might be condemned. But on this occasion, truth came to the help of Christ. Thus it was shown that the testimonies borne against Him were false, that the witnesses had been hired by men who cherished in their hearts the basest elements of corruption. It was God's design that the men who delivered Jesus should hear the testimony of His innocence. "I find no fault in him," Pilate declared. And Judas, throwing at the feet of the priests the money he had received for betraying Christ, bore testimony, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.'" *Christ Triumphant*, page 269

'I can of Mine own self do nothing'

7. What did Jesus say about His own powers? John 5:30.

NOTE: 'The language of Christ on many occasions shows that He was placed in the same position that we are. He had to walk by faith, as we walk by faith; and when temptations came to Him with overwhelming power, He used the language that every child of earth must use. "The Son can do nothing of Himself," Christ declared, "but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." "I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things.'" *Youth's Instructor*, December 28, 1899.

8. What did Jesus say about His words and teachings? John 7:16. Compare John 8:28; John 12:50.

NOTE: 'He emptied Himself so entirely that, when He had come, He could truly say of Himself: "I can of Mine of self do nothing." John 5:30. To men He says: "Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. And of Himself He said: "I can of Mine own self do nothing." This shows that He so entirely emptied Himself that, in this world, He was of Himself just as helpless to do righteousness as is the man who is without God. And, accordingly, He could truly say: "The Son can do nothing of Himself" (John 5:19); and, "I do nothing of Myself." John 8:28. He emptied Himself so entirely that He could truly say: "The words that I speak unto you

victory by faith, and you are free." With that Word it is possible to be delivered, and eternally delivered from sin. Not in some future time, but now. Some time ago I attended a service, and was much struck by the hymn. It was an excellent one, inspiring and uplifting; it showed the presence of Christ, but the last verse, and I am sorry to say that the people sang it with more gusto than any other, was:

"Oh when wilt Thou ever
Make My heart thy home?
When we get to Heaven,
Then the time will come."

That is putting it too far off. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Here then, is the possibility of living without sin. But you ask me "Do you never expect to sin?" I reply that I do not make any provision for it. I cannot discern the future, and I have no right to say what will happen to-morrow, or that I never will sin; but I make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, and I know that as long as I live by faith in Him, He can keep me. "Not I, but Christ." "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." Who is it, then, that is living? Christ; not I; and that solves the whole problem. Can you keep the commandments of God? "Not I, but Christ;" He can. O, give Him the glory continually. He can do it; and so there is no self-boasting. Yet "my soul shall make her boast in the Lord." E. J. Waggoner: *Present Truth*, August 2, 1900.

'The end of your faith'

11. What is the aim or end-product of righteousness by faith? 1 Peter 1:9.

NOTE: "'By whom [Christ] also we have access by faith into this grace [unmerited forgiveness and favour] wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Righteousness can be wrought in men day by day by the same power by which Isaac was born of parents who were practically dead. When people once gain this experience, the next thing they will be constrained to rejoice in the hope of the coming of the Lord. We live in the present, not in the future. Read 1 Peter 1:5-9. Salvation belongs to us to-day just as much as it will when in the kingdom of God. No one but ourselves can deprive us of it. Says Peter, "Receiving [present time] the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Our present salvation is our only hope of a future salvation. "Kept by the power of God" is the expression used by Peter, and it denotes precisely the same condition "being justified by faith" in the fifth chapter of Romans. The same power that will make men immortal in the life to come justifies them, makes them conformable to the law, by being in harmony with it every day. Says Paul in the letter to the Philippians, chapter three, verse twenty-one: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." E. J. Waggoner: *Present Truth*, January 14, 1892.

12. What will be the evidence that God's people have become righteous by faith? 1 John 3:2-3.

NOTE: 'Man, who has defaced the image of God in his soul by a corrupt life,

NOTE: 'And what is it to believe? It is to fully accept that Jesus Christ died as our sacrifice; that He became the curse for us, took our sins upon Himself, and imputed unto us His own righteousness. Therefore we claim this righteousness of Christ, we believe it, and it is our righteousness. He is our Saviour. He saves us because He said He would. Are we going to go into all the explanations as to how He can save us? Do we have the goodness in ourselves that will make us better and cleanse us from the spots and stains of sin, enabling us then to come to God? We simply cannot do it.' *Faith & Works*, page 70.

8. What assurance do we have that, when we pray such a prayer in faith, we will receive the righteousness of Christ? 1 John 1:9; Romans 3:22-25

NOTE: 'It is the righteousness of Christ that makes the penitent sinner acceptable to God and works his justification. However sinful has been his life, if he believes in Jesus as his personal Saviour, he stands before God in the spotless robes of Christ's imputed righteousness. The sinner so recently dead in trespasses and sins is quickened by faith in Christ. He sees by faith that Jesus is his Saviour, and alive forevermore, able to save unto "the uttermost [all] that come unto God by Him." In the atonement made for him the believer sees such breadth and length and height and depth of efficiency, sees such completeness of salvation, purchased at such infinite cost, that his soul is filled with praise and thanksgiving. He sees as in a glass the glory of the Lord and is changed into the same image as by the Spirit of the Lord. He sees the robe of Christ's righteousness, woven in the loom of heaven, wrought by His obedience, and imputed to the repenting soul through faith in His name.' *Faith & Works*, page 106.

'Going about to establish their own righteousness'

9. Can we make ourselves righteous without faith in Christ? Romans 10:3; Ezekiel 33:13. Consider Philippians 3:8-9.

NOTE: 'No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19. The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.' *Desire of Ages*, page 172.

10. How did Paul explain the secret of a successful Christian life? Galatians 2:20.

NOTE: 'Mark this: when a man comes to the Lord and prays to be delivered from a sin, at that very moment Christ says, "That thing that you are praying to be delivered from, I also prayed to be delivered from, and I was heard; I gained the victory over that sin; it is vanquished, and all you have to do is to lay hold of My

I speak not of Myself." John 14:10. "The word which ye hear is not Mine." John 14:24. He emptied Himself so entirely that no influence went forth as from Himself, that could draw anyone to Himself; and, therefore, He could truly say: "No man can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent Me draw him." John 6:44. He emptied Himself so entirely that He could truly say that "no man ["no one," literally] knoweth the Son, but the Father." Matthew 11:27. This is "the faith of Jesus." This is the way of Christ. This only is Christianity. Therefore "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Let this be your mind always, and only: that you are called of God; that you are sent of God; that you go not in your own name, but only in the name of Him that sent you; that you seek not your own glory, but only His glory that sent you; that of your own self you can do nothing, not even to speak; that no influence shall go forth as from yourself that can draw anyone to yourself; that none can come to you, except the Father, who hath sent you, draw him; that none can know you but God, and that all that shall be known of you shall be of God.' A. T. Jones: *Review & Herald*, November 27, 1900.

'Yet learned He obedience'

9. What are we told of Christ's growth to manhood? Luke 2:52

NOTE: Here we are shown Christ's growth in physical, mental and moral power in His youth.

'Wonderful in its significance is the brief record of His early life: "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." In the sunlight of His Father's countenance, Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke 2:52. His mind was active and penetrating, with a thoughtfulness and wisdom beyond His years. Yet His character was beautiful in its symmetry. The powers of mind and body developed gradually, in keeping with the laws of childhood.' *Desire of Ages*, page 68.

10. What are we told about His moral growth? Hebrews 5:8.

NOTE: 'He served in suffering; suffering was set Him as a task, and He was submissive to it. "He Himself hath suffered being tempted." It was thus that He learned obedience; for suffering caused Him (as it does everyone) to know His own weakness; and as He was continually conscious of having no power in Himself (John v. 30), He rested on the Father for support; and this trust is obedience. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." He suffered in temptation. All suffering is temptation to doubt God, and to murmur against Him; but rightly viewed it is a source of strength, because it makes us realise the strength of God. Thus the temptation itself is a means by which we find the way of escape that is provided, that we maybe able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13); and thus it is that we can "count it all joy" when we fall into divers temptations. James 1:2. Christ, as a Son in all things "made like unto His brethren," learned through suffering that trust in God gives perfect victory.' E. J. Waggoner: *Present Truth*, June 25, 1903.

'So to walk, even as He walked'

11. How does John say that the professed Christian ought to live? 1 John 2:4-6.

NOTE: 'We have before us the highest, holiest example. In thought, word, and deed Jesus was sinless. Perfection marked all that He did. He points us to the path that He trod, saying, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Matthew 16:24. Christ unites in His person the fullness and perfection of the Godhead and the fullness and perfection of sinless humanity. He met all the temptations by which Adam was assailed, and overcame these temptations because in His humanity He relied upon divine power. This subject demands far more contemplation than it receives. Christians strike too low. They are content with a superficial spiritual experience, and therefore they have only the glimmerings of light, when they might discern more clearly the wonderful perfection of Christ's humanity, which rises far above all human greatness, all human power. Christ's life is a revelation of what fallen human beings may become through union and fellowship with the divine nature. Men and women frame many excuses for their proneness to sin. Sin is represented as a necessity, an evil that cannot be overcome. But sin is not a necessity. Christ lived in this world from infancy to manhood, and during that time He met and resisted all the temptations by which man is beset. He is a perfect pattern of childhood, of youth, of manhood. The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 219.

12. What testimony of Jesus was borne by one who knew Him well? 1 Peter 2:21-23.

NOTE: 'How was it that Christ could be thus "compassed with infirmity" (Hebrews 5:2) and still know no sin? Some may have thought, while reading thus far, that we were depreciating the character of Jesus by bringing Him down to the level of sinful man. On the contrary, we are simply exalting the "Divine power" of our blessed Saviour, who Himself voluntarily descended to the level of sinful man in order that He might exalt man to His own spotless purity, which He retained under the most adverse circumstances. His humanity only veiled His Divine nature, by which He was inseparably connected with the invisible God and which was more than able successfully to resist the weaknesses of the flesh. There was in His whole life a struggle. The flesh, moved upon by the enemy of all righteousness, would tend to sin, yet His Divine nature never for a moment harboured an evil desire nor did His Divine power for a moment waver. Having suffered in the flesh all that men can possibly suffer, He returned to the throne of the Father as spotless as when He left the courts of glory. When He lay in the tomb, under the power of death, "it was impossible that he should be holden of it," because he "knew no sin." But someone will say, "I don't see any comfort in this for me. To be sure, I have an example, but I can't follow it, for I haven't the power that Christ had. He was God even while here on earth; I am but a man." Yes, but you may have the same power that He had if you want it. He was "compassed with infirmity," yet He "did no sin," because of the Divine power constantly dwelling within Him.' E. J. Waggoner: *Christ and His Righteousness*, page 28.

97.

4. What choice does God set before us? Romans 6:16.

NOTE: "'To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey.'" If we indulge anger, lust, covetousness, hatred, selfishness, or any other sin, we become servants of sin. "No man can serve two masters." If we serve sin, we cannot serve Christ. The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit; but the Spirit striveth against the flesh, keeping up a constant warfare. Here is where Christ's help is needed. Human weakness becomes united to divine strength, and faith exclaims, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"' *Lift Him Up*, page 144.

'I have not found so great faith'

5. What is faith? Matthew 8:5-10.

NOTE: "'The knowledge of what the Scripture means, when arguing upon us the necessity of cultivating faith, is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired.'" The centurion desired that the Lord should do for him a certain thing. The Lord said, "I will come," and do it. The centurion said, No; "speak the word only," and it shall be done. The centurion, then, expected "the word only" to do the work. He depended upon "the word only" for the fulfilment of his desire. And Jesus said that that is "faith," even "great faith." And by all this it is perfectly plain that faith is the expectation that the word of God will do what that word says; and that it is the depending upon that word to do what it says.' A. T. Jones: *Review & Herald*, December 13, 1898.

6. How does Jesus say that our faith in Him may be expressed? John 15:7.

NOTE: 'Prayer and faith are closely allied, and they need to be studied together. In the prayer of faith there is a divine science; it is a science that everyone who would make his lifework a success must understand. Christ says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God's will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received. We need look for no outward evidence of the blessing. The gift is in the promise, and we may go about our work assured that what God has promised He is able to perform, and that the gift, which we already possess, will be realised when we need it most.' *Education*, pages 257-258

'That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him'

7. What is the sinner's first need of righteousness? Romans 7:23-25. Consider 2 Corinthians 5:21.

ennoble the whole man.' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 374.

'Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God'

1. Why is righteousness so important? 1 John 3:10.

NOTE: 'All are to be judged according to their works, not according to their profession. What revelations will be made in the day of Judgment! Many who have called themselves Christians will be found to have been not servants of God, but servants of themselves. Self has been their centre; self-service has been their life-work. By living to please themselves and to gain all they could for themselves, they have crippled and dwarfed the capabilities and powers entrusted to them by God. They have not dealt honestly with God. Their lives have been one long system of robbery. These now complain against God and their fellow men, because they are not recognised and favoured as they think they ought to be. But their unfaithfulness will be revealed in that day when the Lord judges the cases of all. He will return "and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not.'" *Review & Herald*, January 5, 1897.

2. What is the standard by which righteousness is to be measured? 1 John 3:7. See the contrast in verse 8.

NOTE: 'Whatever our profession may be, it amounts to nothing if Christ is not revealed in the actions, in works of righteousness. "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him (because we claim to keep God's commandments? No), because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.'" *Youth's Instructor*, December 8, 1898.

'He that doeth righteousness is righteous'

3. What is righteousness? 1 John 2:29. Consider the contrast in Hebrews 1:9, first part. Consider Romans 8:4.

NOTE: Righteousness is something that you do (1 John 2:29). It is the opposite of iniquity (Hebrews 1:9) and it is defined by the Law of God (Romans 8:4).

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

'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.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page

Lesson 6: February 1-7 'Able to keep you from falling'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 531-532.

LESSON AIM: To study whether Christ can truly save His people from all their sins.

Compiler's note: The promises of Revelation 2 & 3 are only for the overcomers. It is common, especially among those whose beliefs are influenced by Calvinism, to deny that complete victory over temptation and sin is possible. Many deny that Christ is our example in how to live above sin. But what Jesus promises His followers is the power to be victorious over sin, even whilst living within the carnal tent of flesh, as He did. If He did not come in our sinful flesh, Jesus is asking us to do something which He Himself dared not to attempt, to live a victorious life in sinful flesh.

Introduction

'The work of gaining salvation is one of co-partnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 482.

'I in them'

1. What goal does Christ hold out for those who follow Him? Matthew 5:48.

NOTE: Notice how Christ has gone far deeper in verses 19-47 than the letter of the Law.

'The word "therefore" implies a conclusion, an inference from what has gone before. Jesus has been describing to His hearers the unfailing mercy and love of God, and He bids them therefore to be perfect. Because your heavenly Father "is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35), because He has stooped to lift you up, therefore, said Jesus, you may become like Him in character, and stand without fault in the presence of men and angels. The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden, perfect righteousness, harmony

with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament. This standard is not one to which we cannot attain. In every command or injunction that God gives there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the command. God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 76.

2. What must happen in order for a follower of Christ to achieve perfection of character? John 17:23.

NOTE: 'God justly condemns all who do not make Christ their personal Saviour; but He pardons every soul who comes to Him in faith, and enables him to work the works of God, and through faith to be one with Christ. Jesus says of these, "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one [this unity brings perfection of character]; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." The Lord has made every provision whereby man may have full and free salvation, and be complete in Him. God designs that His children shall have the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness, that all may have the light of truth. God has provided salvation for the world at infinite cost, even through the gift of His only begotten Son. The apostle asks, "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?" Then if we are not saved, the fault will not be on the part of God, but on our part, that we have failed to co-operate with the divine agencies. Our will has not coincided with God's will.' *Review & Herald*, November 1, 1892.

'Him that is able to keep you from falling'

3. What exceeding great and precious assurance is offered to all those who put their trust in Christ? Jude 1:24.

NOTE: 'Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. Through the plan of redemption, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong. The strongest temptation is no excuse for sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel any one to sin. The will must consent, the heart must yield, or passion cannot overbear reason, nor iniquity triumph over righteousness. If you will stand under the bloodstained banner of Prince Emmanuel, faithfully doing His service, you need never yield to temptation; for One stands by your side who is able to keep you from falling. We need not retain one sinful propensity. As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we

way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." 2 Peter 2:15. Here is a class of whom the apostle warns, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." 2 Peter 2:21. There is truth to be received if souls are saved. The keeping of the commandments of God is life eternal to the receiver. But the Scriptures make it plain that those who once knew the way of life and rejoiced in the truth are in danger of falling through apostasy, and being lost. Therefore there is need of a decided, daily conversion to God. All who seek to sustain the doctrine of election, once in grace, always in grace, do this against a plain, "Thus saith the Lord." *The Faith I Live By*, page 157.

Lesson 9: February 22-28

'The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Philippians 3:8-9.

STUDY HELP: *Faith & Works*, pages 70-71.

LESSON AIM: To outline what is meant by righteousness by faith.

Introduction

'In order to meet the requirements of the law, our faith must grasp the righteousness of Christ, accepting it as our righteousness. Through union with Christ, through acceptance of His righteousness by faith, we may be qualified to work the works of God, to be co-labourers with Christ. If you are willing to drift along with the current of evil, and do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies in restraining transgression in your family, and in the church, in order that everlasting righteousness may be brought in, you do not have faith. Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Through faith the Holy Spirit works in the heart to create holiness therein; but this cannot be done unless the human agent will work with Christ. We can be fitted for heaven only through the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart; for we must have Christ's righteousness as our credentials if we would find access to the Father. In order that we may have the righteousness of Christ, we need daily to be transformed by the influence of the Spirit, to be a partaker of the divine nature. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to elevate the taste, to sanctify the heart, to

enters into a relationship with Christ, he is eternally secure, no matter what sins he may subsequently commit. The reasoning goes thus: a couple get married and enter a mutual relationship. In the eyes of the law they remain married, no matter what infidelities either partner engages in. Adulterous affairs do not affect the legal status of their relationship unless, and until, either partner seeks a divorce. Thus this ‘relationship theology’ minimises the importance of sin. Relationship Theology teaches that even before a person enters this relationship, his life of sin is merely the inevitable consequence of ‘a broken relationship.’ Since there was no relationship to break before the sinner came to Christ, this theology is merely a novel way of restating the error of Original Sin.

10. How are we shown that sin causes our relationship with God to break, rather than being the effect of a broken relationship that we are all born with? Isaiah 59:2.

NOTE: ‘The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. “Sin is the transgression of the law.” And “whosoever sinneth [transgresseth the law] hath not seen Him, neither known Him” (1 John 3:6). Though John in his Epistles dwells so fully upon love, yet he does not hesitate to reveal the true character of that class who claim to be sanctified while living in transgression of the law of God. “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected” (chap. 2:4, 5). Here is the test of every man’s profession. We cannot accord holiness to any man without bringing him to the measurement of God’s only standard of holiness in heaven and in earth. If men feel no weight of the moral law, if they belittle and make light of God’s precepts, if they break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, they shall be of no esteem in the sight of Heaven, and we may know that their claims are without foundation.’ *Our Father Cares*, page 287.

‘If they shall fall away’

11. What is perhaps the most prevalent of the false ‘gospels’ today?

‘I therefore state categorically that the person who is saved – who confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes in his heart that God raised Him from the dead – **will go to heaven when he dies no matter what work (or lack of work) may accompany such faith.** In other words, no matter what sin (or absence of Christian obedience) may accompany such faith.’ R. T. Kendall: *Once Saved, Always Saved*, page 16.

NOTE: This false gospel is also known as ‘The perseverance of the saints’ and ‘The assurance of salvation’.

12. Does the Bible teach that one who has expressed belief in Christ can never be lost? Hebrews 6:4-6.

NOTE: ‘There is no such thing in the Word of God as unconditional election, once in grace, always in grace. In the second chapter of Second Peter the subject is made plain and distinct. After a history of some who followed an evil course, the explanation is given: “Which have forsaken the right way, . . . following the

are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we co-operate with God in overcoming Satan’s temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God.’ *Maranatha*, page 225.

4. What help can we rely on, in times of temptation? Hebrews 2:18. See also 1 Corinthians 10:13.

NOTE: ‘Christ was tempted in all points like as we are. As man’s representative He stood the closest test and proving of God. He met the strongest force of Satan. His most wily temptations Christ has tested and conquered on behalf of man. It is impossible for man to be tempted above what he is able to bear while he relies upon Jesus, the infinite Conqueror.’ *Confrontation*, page 31.

‘Without Me ye can do nothing’

5. What important truth must we remember in our battle with temptation? John 15:5. Consider Philippians 4:13.

NOTE: ‘Believing in Jesus as his personal Saviour, accepting of His righteousness by faith, the sinner becomes a partaker of the divine nature, and escapes the corruption that is in the world through lust. It is through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that the Christian is enabled to resist temptation and to work righteousness. Without the divine nature, without the influence of the Spirit of God, man cannot work out his own salvation; for God must work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. Christ has said, “Without Me ye can do nothing.”’ *The Messenger*, April 26, 1893.

6. What precious promise may we rely on in times of trial and temptation? Psalm 50:15.

NOTE: ‘Temptation is not sin. Jesus was holy and pure; yet He was tempted in all points as we are, but with a strength and power that man will never be called upon to endure. In His successful resistance He has left us a bright example, that we should follow His steps. If we are self-confident or self-righteous, we shall be left to fall under the power of temptation; but if we look to Jesus and trust in Him we call to our aid a power that has conquered the foe on the field of battle, and with every temptation He will make a way of escape. When Satan comes in like a flood, we must meet his temptations with the sword of the Spirit, and Jesus will be our helper and will lift up for us a standard against him. The father of lies quakes and trembles when the truth of God, in burning power, is thrown in his face.’ *Testimonies, volume 5*, page 425.

‘The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ’

7. What exhortation does Christ give to all who follow Him? Matthew 5:48.

NOTE: ‘God calls for whole-souled consecration to His ways. Our highest powers are to be carefully cultivated. Our talents are lent us by God for use, not to be perverted or abused. They are to be improved by use, that they may do the work of

God. We are to give ourselves to the service of God, and we should seek to make the offering as nearly perfect as possible. God will not be pleased with anything less than the best we can offer. Those who love Him with all the heart will desire to give Him the best service of the life, and they will be constantly seeking to bring every power of their being into harmony with the laws that will promote their ability to do His will. Personal consecration is necessary, and we cannot have this unless heart holiness is cultivated and cherished. Let your prayer be, "Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee." This is a daily matter.' *My Life Today*, page 6.

8. What is the measure of Christian character? Ephesians 4:13-15.

NOTE: 'God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. The tempter's agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life. Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of man; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was God in the flesh. His character is to be ours. The Lord says of those who believe in Him, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 2 Corinthians 6:16.' *Desire of Ages*, page 311.

'We shall be like Him'

9. How did John describe those who will be able to see the Lord face to face when He returns? 1 John 3:2-3. Compare Matthew 5:8.

NOTE: 'The lesson book, the Bible, contains the instruction of the character they must have, the moral excellence of character which must be cultivated, which God and heaven require. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.'" *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 385.

10. How does the Bible contrast those who will not be able to see Him as He is? Revelation 6:15-17.

'Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil'

7. What further version of the 'gospel' is being taught today?

'Neither at conversion or thereafter are we to try to obey God, His commandments, standards, or Scriptural principles. Even to begin to do so is a works programme and legalism, and will only injure us and keep us from heaven if we continue to do so. . . . Only effortless, spontaneous obedience is genuine obedience.' Morris Vendon: *Obedience of Faith. Contrast with this version of the 'gospel' Hebrews 12:1-4.*

NOTE: 'After reading the chapter on "Victory, Overcoming and Perfection", then go on to the later chapters that tell how it is to be done. There you will learn that 1) it can only be done by God, not us, and 2) this obedience must come without any effort on our part, and 3) our only part is to come to Christ and wait for deliverance without doing anything about our sins. When Morris says that "we cannot resist temptation or conquer sin by our unaided efforts," he really means that we cannot overcome temptation or sin if we use any effort of our own. It must be done solely by the Holy Spirit without any push, try, effort or force of will on our part. That is how we are to obey "in His strength.'" Sdadefend.com

8. How does the Bible show that human effort must be allied to divine power? Philippians 2:12-13; James 4:7.

NOTE: 'The work of gaining salvation is one of co-partnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness. God wishes us to have the mastery over ourselves. But He cannot help us without our consent and co-operation. The divine Spirit works through the powers and faculties given to man. Of ourselves, we are not able to bring the purposes and desires and inclinations into harmony with the will of God; but if we are "willing to be made willing," the Saviour will accomplish this for us, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 482.

'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God'

9. What further alternative 'gospel' has been taught in these last days?

'The problem of sin is a broken relationship between God and man. The goal of salvation is to restore the relationship between God and man. Jesus wants to get married.' Morris Vendon: *95 Theses on Righteousness by Faith*, No. 95, page 298.

NOTE: Underlying this 'broken relationship' theory is the idea that once a person

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." 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. All sin may be overcome by the Holy Spirit's power.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 118.

'Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it'

5. What similar alternative 'gospel' is being preached today? 'Justification has to do with one hundred percent righteousness, but such is never in us. It is in Christ, our Lord, and he reckons it to us by grace. Sanctification (Christian growth) is different. It is the righteousness within us, but it is never one hundred percent.' Desmond & Gillian Ford: *For the Sake of the Gospel*, page 187.

NOTE: 'What father would counsel his enquiring daughter before her first date: "My child, when you go out tonight, I must inform you that in spite of your best efforts to be good, you will end up doing the things you don't want to do and you will be unable to do the things you have been taught from your childhood." Even a child would know this thinking is messed up. What missionary would knock on a door and tell the people: "I have something wonderful to share. If you follow the God of this Bible, you will continually fall short of the mark, and your flesh will rule in spite of your best intentions to change your life." They would look at you and say, "Don't need it; I've got this experience already."' Glen Striemer: *Nature of Christ*, April 10, 2014.

6. How does the Bible show the falseness of this 'gospel'? 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.

NOTE: 'Let none deceive themselves with the belief that God will pardon and bless them while they are trampling upon one of His requirements. The wilful commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. Whatever may be the ecstasies of religious feeling, Jesus cannot abide in the heart that disregards the divine law. God will honour those only who honour Him. When Paul wrote, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly" 1 Thessalonians 5:23, he did not exhort his brethren to aim at a standard which it was impossible for them to reach; he did not pray that they might have blessings which it was not the will of God to give. He knew that all who would be fitted to meet Christ in peace must possess a pure and holy character. Read 1 Corinthians 9:25-27; 6:19, 20.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 51.

NOTE: 'A terrible doom awaits the sinner, and therefore it is necessary that we know what sin is, in order that we may escape from its power. John says, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Here we have the true definition of sin; it is "the transgression of the law." How often the sinner is urged to leave his sins, and come to Jesus; but has the messenger who would lead him to Christ clearly pointed out the way? Has he clearly pointed out the fact that "sin is the transgression of the law," and that he must repent and forsake the breaking of God's commandments?' *Faith & Works*, page 117.

'Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it'

11. For what did Paul pray on behalf of the Thessalonian believers? 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.

NOTE: 'Our Saviour claims all there is of us; He asks our first and holiest thoughts, our purest and most intense affection. If we are indeed partakers of the divine nature, His praise will be continually in our hearts and upon our lips. Our only safety is to surrender our all to Him and to be constantly growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. The sanctification set forth in the Sacred Scriptures has to do with the entire being, spirit, soul, and body. Here is the true idea of entire consecration. Paul prays that the church at Thessalonica may enjoy this great blessing. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Thessalonians 5:23.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 50.

12. What examples does the Bible give of ones that God regarded as perfect? Genesis 6:9; 1 Kings 15:14; Job 1:1, 8; Job 2:3. Consider Job 9:20-21.

NOTE: 'The more of the Spirit of Christ we have, the more humble we shall become. When we obtain clear views of Christ, no words of self-exaltation will escape our lips. When the Lord gave to Job a view of His majesty, Job ceased to vindicate his own righteousness. He felt his sinfulness, and humbled himself before the purity and holiness of God. "I abhor myself," he said, "and repent in dust and ashes." Yet by the pen of inspiration, God presents Job as perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil. "There is none like him in the earth."' *Signs of the Times*, August 11, 1898.

Lesson 7: February 8-14 'The Gospel of Christ'

MEMORY VERSE: 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.' Romans 1:16.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 112.

LESSON AIM: To study what the Gospel is.

Introduction

“The gospel is the power of God unto salvation; . . . for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” No man can live by anything which does not bring and give life to him: no man can live from a thing from which he draws no life. no man can live by that which has no life in it. Consequently as we live by faith, that shows on the face of it that the faith which God gives is a living thing, and brings life, even the divine life, “the life of God,” to the man who receives and exercises it. This faith, which is the gift of God, is a faith having the divine energy in it, and therefore it is a “faith which works.” Justification through Jesus Christ is not by faith and works, but by “faith which works.” Galatians 5:6; James 2:22. It is a faith that lives and brings divine power to create man a new creature unto good works, and to keep him in the way of righteousness (1 Peter 1:5); it brings divine energy, and is therefore itself able to work; and it moves him who has it, onward, as the apostle said, with an irresistible force to do the will of God, to work the works of God, in the world everywhere that he is. And so it is written: “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.” John 6:29.’ A. T. Jones: *The Home Missionary*, December 1893.

‘The law of sin and death’

1. What is the common problem of the entire human race? Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12; Psalm 14:2-3.

NOTE: ‘The commandments of God are comprehensive and far reaching; in a few words they unfold the whole duty of man. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mark 12:30, 31). In these words the length and breadth, the depth and height, of the law of God is comprehended; for Paul declares, “Love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10). The only definition we find in the Bible for sin is that “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). The Word of God declares, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “There is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Romans 3:12). Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realise that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God.’ *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 320.

2. What is the result of sinning? Romans 6:23; James 1:15.

NOTE: ‘If the transgressor is to be treated according to the letter of this covenant, then there is no hope for the fallen race; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. The fallen race of Adam can behold nothing else in the letter of this covenant than the ministration of death; and death will be the reward of everyone who is seeking vainly to fashion a righteousness of his own that will fulfil the claims of the law. By His word God has bound Himself to execute the penalty of

back to the faith, prepared to take their position intelligently for the truth. Paul’s object was to preach the righteousness that comes by faith on Jesus Christ. He took the position that every soul must have a genuine experience in this righteousness.’ *Manuscript Releases, volume 7*, page 356.

2. What did Paul say of those who preach alternative ‘gospels’? Galatians 1:8-9.

NOTE: ‘Those who engage in the work of God’s cause today will meet just such trials as Paul endured in his work. By the same boastful and deceptive work Satan will seek to draw converts from the faith. Theories will be brought in that it will not be wise for us to handle. Satan is a cunning worker, and he will bring in subtle fallacies to darken and confuse the mind and root out the doctrines of salvation. Those who do not accept the Word of God just as it reads will be snared in his trap. Today we need to speak the truth with holy boldness. The testimony borne to the early church by the Lord’s messenger, His people are to hear in this time: “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8).’ *Selected Messages, volume 2*, page 52.

‘He was manifested to take away our sins’

3. What is one of the alternative ‘gospels’ preached today?

‘The basic doctrine of the Christian faith is salvation by grace alone. . . . Salvation by grace alone means that absolute perfection and sinlessness cannot be realised here and now.’ Edward Heppenstall: “Is Perfection Possible?” *Signs of the Times*, December 1963.

NOTE: “‘The prince of this world cometh,” said Jesus, “and hath nothing in Me.” John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 123.

4. What does the apostle John say about sinning and being a Christian? 1 John 3:4-6. See also 1 John 1:7-2:3.

NOTE: ‘While Christ opens heaven to man, the life which He imparts opens the heart of man to heaven. Sin not only shuts us away from God but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. All this work of evil it is Christ’s mission to undo. The faculties of the soul, paralysed by sin, the darkened mind, the perverted will, He has power to invigorate and to restore. He opens to us the riches of the universe, and by Him the power to discern and to appropriate these treasures is imparted.’ *Mind, Character & Personality, volume 1*, page 13.

‘There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ, and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realise that their character is imperfect,

to combine with his instrumentality. So with Jesus Christ; He could lay hold of divine power. He came not to our world to give the obedience of a lesser God to a greater, but as a man to obey God's Holy Law, and in this way He is our example. The Lord Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what a God could do, but what a man could do, through faith in God's power to help in every emergency. Man is, through faith, to be a partaker in the divine nature, and to overcome every temptation wherewith he is beset. The Lord now demands that every son and daughter of Adam, through faith in Jesus Christ, serve Him in human nature which we now have. The Lord Jesus has bridged the gulf that sin has made. He has connected earth with heaven, and finite man with the infinite God. Jesus, the world's Redeemer, could only keep the commandments of God in the same way that humanity can keep them.' *Our High Calling*, page 48.

Lesson 8: February 15-21 'Another gospel: which is not another'

MEMORY VERSE: 'I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.' Galatians 1:6-7.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, page 520.

LESSON AIM: To examine in the light of God's Word some of the alternatives to the Gospel being preached today.

Introduction

'The position that it is of no consequence what men believe is one of Satan's most successful deceptions. He knows that the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver; therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel. From the beginning the servants of God have contended against false teachers, not merely as vicious men, but as inculcators of falsehoods that were fatal to the soul. Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, firmly and fearlessly opposed those who were turning men from the word of God. That liberality which regards a correct religious faith as unimportant found no favour with these holy defenders of the truth.' *Great Controversy*, page 520.

'Let him be accursed'

1. What warning did Paul give about alternative 'gospels'? Galatians 1:6-7.

NOTE: 'For a time Paul lost his hold on the minds of those who had been deceived; but relying on the word and power of God, and refusing the interpretations of the apostate teachers, he was able to lead the converts to see that they had been deceived, and thus defeat the purposes of Satan. The new converts came

the law on all transgressors. Again and again men commit sin, and yet they do not seem to believe that they must suffer the penalty for breaking the law.' *Signs of the Times*, September 5, 1892.

'He is faithful and just'

3. What assurance does the Bible give to those who have sinned? 1 John 1:9. Read Psalm 51:1-3.

NOTE: 'Satan had represented the chosen and loyal people of God as being full of defilement and sin. He could depict the particular sins of which they had been guilty. Had he not set the whole confederacy of evil at work to lead them, through his seductive arts, into these very sins? But they had repented, they had accepted the righteousness of Christ. They were therefore standing before God clothed with the garments of Christ's righteousness, and "He answered and spake unto those that stood before Him, saying, 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." Every sin of which they had been guilty was forgiven, and they stood before God as chosen and true, as innocent, as perfect, as though they had never sinned.' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 39.

4. What testimony did David give of this experience? Psalm 32:5.

NOTE: 'David was pardoned of his transgression because he humbled his heart before God in repentance and contrition of soul and believed that God's promise to forgive would be fulfilled. He confessed his sin, repented, and was reconverted. In the rapture of the assurance of forgiveness he exclaimed, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." The blessing comes because of pardon; pardon comes through faith that the sin, confessed and repented of, is borne by the great Sin-bearer. Thus from Christ cometh all our blessings. His death is an atoning sacrifice for our sins. He is the great medium through whom we receive the mercy and favor of God. He, then, is indeed the Originator, the Author, as well as the Finisher, of our faith.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 150.

'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'

5. What is required in addition to confession of our sins? Revelation 2:5; Isaiah 55:7. See Luke 13:5.

NOTE: 'Truth is efficient only as it is carried out in practical life. If the Word of God condemns some habit you have indulged, a feeling you have cherished, a spirit you have manifested, turn not from the Word of God, but turn away from the evil of your doings, and let Jesus cleanse and sanctify your heart. Confess your faults, and forsake them.' *Our High Calling*, page 37.

6. How does the Bible describe repentance? Ezekiel 18:30-32.

NOTE: 'Repentance is one of the first-fruits of saving grace. Repentance includes

sorrow for sin, and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin until we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life. Repentance is the only process by which infinite purity reflects the image of Christ in His redeemed subjects.’ *Signs of the Times*, June 28, 1905.

7. How important is repentance? Consider the following verses: Mark 1:4, 14-15; Luke 5:32; Mark 6:12; Luke 13:3, 5; Luke 15:7; Acts 2:37-38; Acts 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 3:19.

NOTE: ‘Repent, repent, was the message rung out by John the Baptist in the wilderness. Christ’s message to the people was, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” Luke 13:5. And the apostles were commanded to preach everywhere that men should repent. The Lord desires His servants today to preach the old gospel doctrine, sorrow for sin, repentance, and confession. We want old-fashioned sermons, old-fashioned customs, old-fashioned fathers and mothers in Israel. The sinner must be laboured for, perseveringly, earnestly, wisely, until he shall see that he is a transgressor of God’s law, and shall exercise repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.’ *Evangelism*, page 179.

‘Thou shalt call His name Jesus’

8. Why was Jesus given this name? Matthew 2:21.

NOTE: The name ‘Jesus’, the equivalent in Greek of the Hebrew name ‘Joshua’, means ‘The Lord saves.’

“‘Thou shalt call his name Jesus:’” (i.e., Saviour) “for He shall save His people from their sins.” For this very purpose, then, He is my Saviour, to save me from my sins; and this is just the Saviour that I need. When John the Baptist pointed out Christ, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” This is what I need, a Saviour to take away my sins. We read also in the Epistle to the Ephesians, that His people were “chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love .” That He “loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish .” In the Epistle to Titus, we read that “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Charles Fitch: *Views of Sanctification*, page 8.

9. What alternative to sinning is placed before those who choose to believe in Jesus? Romans 8:3-4.

NOTE: ‘Jesus said, Be perfect as your Father is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God’s children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest “in our mortal flesh” (2 Corinthians 4:11). That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with eve-

ry precept of His law; for “the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul” (Psalm 19:7, margin). Through love “the righteousness of the law” will be “fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:4).’ *Reflecting Christ*, page 73.

‘Walk as He walked’

10. How are those who believe in Jesus to live? Titus 2:12; 1 John 2:6.

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

11. How are we enabled to live like this? John 1:12; Galatians 2:20.

NOTE: ‘By all who are obedient to Christ the words of the inspired John will be experienced: “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” The Lord Jesus came to strengthen every earnest seeker for truth, to reveal the Father. He allowed nothing to divert His mind from the great work of restoring to men and women the moral image of God. And every human agent must see that the great and important work for them in this life is to receive the divine likeness, to prepare a character for the future life.’ *Christ Triumphant*, page 33.

‘Able to keep you from falling’

12. What assurances are given to those who lay hold on that power? 2 Peter 2:9, first part; Jude 1:24.

NOTE: ‘Here is where the work of the Holy Ghost comes in, after your baptism. You are baptised in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. You are raised up out of the water to live henceforth in newness of life, to live a new life. You are born unto God, and you stand under the sanction and the power of the three holiest Beings in heaven, who are able to keep you from falling. You are to reveal that you are dead to sin; your life is hid with Christ in God. Hidden “with Christ in God”, wonderful transformation. This is a most precious promise.’ *Sermons & Talks, volume 1*, page 367.

Who is our example in overcoming temptation and sin? 1 Peter 2:21-24.

NOTE: ‘The obedience of Christ to His Father was the same obedience that is required of man. Man cannot overcome Satan’s temptations without divine power