

‘Walk before Me, and be thou perfect’ Lessons for 2nd Quarter, 2010

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 labour 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.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 65-69.

Compiler’s note: In studying the topic of perfection, as taught in the Scriptures, one cannot but be aware of the groundswell of opinion on this subject. In the world today, it is a modern cliché that ‘nobody’s perfect,’ and this idea is reinforced by wayside pulpits, bumper-stickers and the like. Christians have been taught by their ministers to say: we shall never be perfect. Calvinism, in particular, has a hatred for perfection; one of the worst labels they can hang on a man is to accuse him of teaching ‘perfectionism,’ as they call it. (This has a different connotation for Calvinists from the popular usage when an obsessively painstaking person is described as a perfectionist.) Finally about forty years ago, the New Theology’s leading exponent produced the dogma that perfection is impossible in this life but when Jesus returns, He will work a miracle to make His people morally perfect. These lessons have been compiled with an awareness of all these views hostile to the Scriptural topic of perfection.

If you are using the King James Bible, you should be aware that the Hebrew words for ‘perfect’ are translated in a variety of ways, e.g. upright, undefiled, sound, sincere (margin), as well as perfect. If you are using a recent version, especially those produced by those of a Calvinist bent, you will find, especially in the New Testament, that a variety of alternative words are used, to avoid using the word ‘perfect’ which is disliked by those who follow this school of thought. Thus alternative words, like complete, mature, fully trained, complete unity, attain your goal, supply, very well, equip, restore, are used, while at times the word ‘perfect’ is omitted altogether. Sometimes, as an alternative strategy, footnotes are inserted to state that perfection is impossible, e.g. ‘*Be perfect*. Christ sets up the high ideal of perfect love (see vv. 43-47) – not that we can fully attain it in this life.’ Source: NIV Study Bible: note on Matthew 5:48. These changes are introduced to conceal the Bible teaching that God seeks perfection in His people.

Lesson 1: March 28-April 3 ‘With a perfect heart’

MEMORY VERSE: 'I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt Thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.' Psalm 101:2.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 482-483.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Genesis 6:9, Job 1:8, 1 Kings 11:4, 1 Kings 15:14.

LESSON AIM: To look at some of whom Scripture testifies that they were perfect.

Introduction

'The apostle's [Paul's] desire for those to whom he addressed his letters of counsel and admonition was that they should "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine;" but that they should all come into "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." He entreated those who were followers of Jesus in heathen communities not to walk "as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God . . . because of the blindness of their heart," but "circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time." Ephesians 4:14, 13, 17, 18; 5:15, 16. He encouraged the believers to look forward to the time when Christ, who "loved the church, and gave Himself for it," would "present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," a church "holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:25, 27.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 470.

'Noah walked with God'

1. What testimony does the Scripture give of Noah's character? Genesis 6:9.

NOTE: 'With the Word of God in his hands, every human being, wherever his lot in life may be cast, may have such companionship as he shall choose. In its pages he may hold converse with the noblest and best of the human race, and may listen to the voice of the Eternal as He speaks with men. As he studies and meditates upon the themes into which "the angels desire to look" (1 Peter 1:12), he may have their companionship. He may follow the steps of the heavenly Teacher, and listen to His words as when He taught on mountain and plain and sea. He may dwell in this world in the atmosphere of heaven, imparting to earth's sorrowing and tempted ones thoughts of hope and longings for holiness; himself coming closer and still closer into fellowship with the Unseen; like him of old who walked with God, drawing nearer and nearer the threshold of the eternal world, until the portals shall open, and he shall enter there. He will find himself no stranger. The voices that will greet him are the voices of the holy ones, who, unseen, were on earth his companions, voices that here he learned to distinguish and to love. He who through the word of God has lived in fellowship with heaven, will find himself at home in heaven's companionship.' *Education*, page 127.

2. What evidence was seen that Noah was a perfect man and walked with God? Genesis 6:22, Genesis 7:5.

NOTE: 'Noah stood up nobly in the midst of a world who were disregarding God and were indulging in all manner of extravagant dissipation which led to crimes and violence of every kind. Noah the faithful preacher of righteousness unflinchingly and courageously preached to that generation that a flood of water was to deluge the world because of the unsurpassed wickedness of its inhabitants. He warned that generation to repent, to believe the warning message and find refuge in the ark. What a spectacle to the world as Noah stands forth connected with God, by his obedience in contrast to the world. . . How simple and childlike amid the unbelief of the world, was the faith of Noah. His faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. His faith was perfected by his works. He gave to the world an example in believing just what God had said.' *Signs of the Times*, December 20, 1877.

'Grace in the eyes of the LORD'

3. How did the Lord regard Noah? Genesis 6:8. Compare Genesis 8:1, Genesis 9:9.

NOTE: 'The Lord designed that Noah in his life and character should present before the antediluvian world a marked example of the results of believing the word of God. He did not walk in sparks of his own kindling. He obtained all his discernment, all his power, all his strength, from the source of all light; for he held communion with God. It was because he had faith in God, because he was a man of prayer, that he was a man of power. He kindled his taper at the divine altar, that he might be a light to the world. He had a message entrusted to him from God. In his day there was so fearful a departure from God and his ways that hatred of God's law, contempt of truth and righteousness, was well nigh world-wide. The wickedness of men was very great, yet there was hope for them if they would turn from their wickedness, and the Lord made Noah his messenger to proclaim to the inhabitants of the Old World their sins, and to set before them wherein they had provoked the wrath of God. He told them what God proposed to do in the world. He declared to them the word of God. "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man; for that he also is flesh. Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. . . . And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. . . . But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.'" *Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1895.

4. What event later in Noah's life casts a shadow on his reputation? Genesis 9:20-21.

NOTE: 'The pen of Inspiration, true to its task, tells us of the sins that overcame Noah, Lot, Moses, Abraham, David, and Solomon, and how Elijah's strong spirit sunk under temptation during his fearful trial. Jonah's disobedience and Israel's idolatry are faithfully recorded. Peter's denial of Christ, the sharp contention of Paul and Barnabas, the failings and infirmities of the prophets and apostles, are all laid bare to the gaze of succeeding generations, that they may profit by the experience of

those who preceded them. If no faults had marked their lives, they certainly would have been more than human, and we, with our sinful natures, would despair of ever reaching such a point of excellence. But, seeing where they struggled and fell, took heart again and conquered through the grace of God, we are encouraged to press on over the obstacles that degenerate nature places in our way.' *Review & Herald*, January 22, 1880

'A perfect and an upright man'

5. What was the Lord's testimony regarding Job? Job 1:8.

NOTE: 'Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavoured to prove God's principles of action to be selfish, and he deals in the same way with all who serve God. To disprove Satan's claim is the work of Christ and of all who bear His name. Very early in the history of the world is given the life-record of one over whom this controversy of Satan's was waged. Of Job, the patriarch of Uz, the testimony of the Searcher of hearts was, "There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.'" *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 95.

6. How was Job's character tested? Job 1:13-19, Job 2:7.

NOTE: 'Against this man, Satan brought scornful charge: "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast Thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" The Lord said unto Satan, "All that he hath is in thy power." "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." Thus permitted, Satan swept away all that Job possessed, flocks and herds, men-servants and maidens, sons and daughters; and he "smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." Still another element of bitterness was added to his cup. His friends, seeing in adversity but the retribution of sin, pressed on his bruised and burdened spirit their accusations of wrong-doing. "When He hath tried me," he said, "I shall come forth as gold." So it came to pass. By his patient endurance he vindicated his own character, and thus the character of Him whose representative he was.' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 95.

'His heart was not perfect'

7. What comparison do the Scriptures make between David and Solomon? 1 Kings 11:4. See also verse 9.

NOTE: 'From being one of the greatest kings that ever wielded a sceptre, whose exalted wisdom made him renowned throughout the world, Solomon became profligate and intemperate, the tool and slave of others. His character, once noble and manly, became enervated and effeminate. His faith in the living God was shaken and supplanted by atheistic doubts. Unbelief marred his happiness, weakened his principles, and degraded his life; gloomy and soul-harassing thoughts troubled him night and day. The justice and magnanimity of his early reign were changed into despotism and tyranny; and his extravagance was sustained by grinding taxes, which were imposed upon the people. Poor, frail human nature! God can do but little for men, because they so soon lose their sense of dependence upon Him. The Lord would have all learn a lesson from the record of the life of Solomon. He desires His servants to preserve their holy and peculiar character. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" is His command; "for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"' *Signs of the Times*, November 26, 1896.

8. What counsel had David given to Solomon? 1 Chronicles 28:9. Compare 1 Chronicles 29:19.

NOTE: 'David had learned by his own experience how hard is the path of him who departs from God. He had felt the condemnation of the broken law, and had reaped the fruits of transgression; and his whole soul was moved with solicitude that the leaders of Israel should be true to God, and that Solomon should obey God's law, shunning the sins that had weakened his father's authority, embittered his life, and dishonoured God. David knew that it would require humility of heart, a constant trust in God, and unceasing watchfulness to withstand the temptations that would surely beset Solomon in his exalted station; for such prominent characters are a special mark for the shafts of Satan. Turning to his son, already acknowledged as his successor on the throne, David said: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever. Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it.'" *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 750.

'Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord'

9. What testimony is recorded concerning Asa? 1 Kings 15:14.

NOTE: 'The Saviour has a boundless love for every human being. In every one He sees infinite capacity for improvement. With divine energy and hope He greets those for whom He has given His life. He places within their reach the riches of eternal life. In His strength they can live a life rich in good works, filled with the power of the Spirit. But they must separate from all scheming, all dishonesty. The grace of God alone can give you the experience that comes from a perfected character. God alone can enable you to walk before Him with a perfect heart. The Holy One has given erring finite beings rules for their guidance. These rules form a standard from which there can be no sinless swerving. He who does not make God's will paramount has yet to learn the first principles of holiness. Well-doing is possible only through the grace imparted by God. Your own wisdom is foolishness with God. Your only safety lies in a daily repentance, a daily refusal to deviate from the principles of truth.' *Pacific Union Recorder*, February 16, 1905.

10. How did Asa express his faith in the Source of his strength? 2 Chronicles 14:11.

NOTE: 'In time of peace Asa had not been giving himself to amusement and pleasure; he had been preparing for any emergency. He had an army trained for conflict; he had endeavoured to lead his people to make their peace with God. And now, although his forces were fewer in number than the enemy, his faith in the One whom he had made his trust did not weaken. Having sought the Lord in the days of prosperity, the king could now rely upon Him in the day of adversity. His petitions showed that he was not a stranger to God's wonderful power. The prayer of Asa is one that every Christian believer may fittingly offer. In life's conflict we must meet evil agencies that have arrayed themselves against the right. Our hope is not in man, but in the living God. With full assurance of faith we may expect that He will unite His omnipotence with the efforts of human instrumentalities, for the glory of His name. Clad with the armour of His righteousness, we may gain the victory over every foe.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 203.

'But not with a perfect heart'

11. How are we shown that it is not simply our actions but also our motives that should be perfect? 2 Chronicles 25:2.

NOTE: 'What I do with a perfect heart I do with love and delight, with a willing mind and with all my strength. It implies a definite purpose, and a concentrated effort, that makes everything subordinate to the one object of my choice. This is what God asks, what His saints have given, and what we must give. . . Make the promises of God's Word your own: "The God of peace sanctify you wholly" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The God, who has the power to do more than we ask or think, will open up to you the blessed prospect of a life of which He will say: His heart was perfect with the Lord his God.' Andrew Murray, *Be Perfect*, pages 15, 16.

12. What was Solomon's desire on behalf of his people? 1 Kings 8:61.

NOTE: 'In God's record of the lives of His servants, there are some of whom it is written: his heart was perfect with the Lord his God. Is this, let every reader ask, what God sees and says of me? Does my life, in the sight of God, bear the mark of intense, whole-hearted consecration to God's will and service? Does my life burn with the desire to be as perfect as it is possible for grace to make me? Let us yield ourselves to the searching light of this question. Let us believe that with this word "perfect" God means something very real and true. Let us not evade its force, or hide ourselves from its condemning power, by the vain excuse that we do not fully know what it means. We must first accept it and give up our lives to it, before we can understand it. I cannot stress too strongly that, whether in the Church at large and its teaching, or in the life of the individual believer, there can be no hope of comprehending what perfection is except as we count all things loss to be apprehended by it, to live for it, to accept it, and to possess it.' Andrew Murray, *Be Perfect*, page 15.

Lesson 2: April 4-10

'Be thou perfect'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.' Genesis 17:1.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 311-312.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Genesis 17:1-3.

LESSON AIM: To show that perfection is commanded by God.

Introduction

'We can, *we can*, reveal the likeness of our divine Lord. We can know the science of spiritual life. We can honour our Maker. But do we do it? O, what an illustrious example we have in the life that Christ lived on this earth! He has shown us what we can accomplish through co-operation with divinity. We are to seek for the union of which He speaks when He says, "Abide in Me, and I in you." This union is deeper, stronger, truer, than any other union, and is productive of all good. Those who are thus united to the Saviour are controlled by His will, and are moved by His love to suffer with those who suffer, to rejoice with those who rejoice, to feel a deep sympathy for every one in weakness, sorrow, or distress. Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. He wants our minds to be clear, our tempers sweet, our love abounding. Then the peace that passeth knowledge will flow from us to bless all with whom we come in contact. The atmosphere surrounding our souls will be refreshing.' *Review & Herald*, November 24, 1904.

'The God of all grace . . . make you perfect'

1. What command did God give to ancient Israel? Deuteronomy 18:13.

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.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 311.

2. How may a Christian become perfect? 1 Peter 5:10.

NOTE: ‘When the truth is received, it will work radical changes in life and character; for religion means the abiding of Christ in the heart, and where He is, the soul goes on in spiritual activity, ever growing in grace, ever going on to perfection. It is no real evidence that you are a Christian because your emotion is stirred, your spirit stirred by truth; the question is, Are you growing up into Christ, your living head? Is the grace of Christ manifested in your life? God gives His grace to men, that they may desire more of His grace. God’s grace is ever working upon the human heart, and when it is received, the evidence of its reception will appear in the life and character of its recipient. The grace of Christ in the heart will always promote spiritual life, and spiritual advancement will be made. We do not see the plants grow in the field, and yet we are assured that they do grow, and may we not know of our own spiritual strength and growth?’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 324.

‘Walk thou before Me’

3. With what words did God speak to Abraham? Genesis 17:1.

NOTE: ‘There is hope for a man who is hungering and thirsting after righteousness, who is longing for heart purity, who is desirous of having fellowship with the Spirit of God. Such a man prays, and watches unto prayer. He seeks for strength to keep the heart with all diligence knowing that out of it are the issues of life. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.” Fellowship with God means much, and those who have this fellowship with God, hear the voice of invitation saying “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” The more lowly the soul in its own estimation, the more distinctly and clearly will God be discerned. He who is in communion with God will recognise the divine excellence of heavenly things, and respond to the invitation, “Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” The word of God comes in power to the soul, impressing the mind with the exceeding great and precious promises. Those who learn of Christ look earnestly unto Him that they may catch His Spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. Their feelings become pure, their words pure and tender, and the earnest of the inheritance leads them to walk in love, drawing near to God, to listen to the voice of the true Shepherd.’ *Signs of the Times*, October 3, 1895.

4. What does it mean to be perfect with the Lord? 1 Kings 8:61.

NOTE: ‘Before the believer is held out the wonderful possibility of being like Christ, obedient to all the principles of the law. But of himself man is utterly unable to reach this condition. The holiness that God’s word declares he must have before he can be saved is the result of the working of divine grace as he bows in submission to the discipline and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth. Man’s obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ’s righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience. The part of the Christian is to persevere in overcoming every fault. Constantly he is to pray to the Saviour to heal the disorders of his sin-sick soul. He has not the wisdom or the strength to overcome; these belong to the Lord, and He bestows them on those who in humiliation and contrition seek Him for help.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 532.

‘A perfect heart’

5. What is needed if there is to be perfect obedience? 1 Chronicles 28:9.

NOTE: ‘Even your thoughts must be brought into subjection to the will of God and your feelings under the control of reason and religion. Your imagination was not given you to be allowed to run riot and have its own way without any effort at restraint or discipline. If the thoughts are wrong the feelings will be wrong; and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character. When you decide that as Christians you are not required to restrain your thoughts and feelings, you are brought under the influence of evil angels and invite their presence and their control.’ *Reflecting Christ*, page 301.

6. What counsel is given us concerning our hearts? Proverbs 4:23.

NOTE: ‘As a man “thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7. Many thoughts make up the unwritten history of a single day; and these thoughts have much to do with the formation of character. Our thoughts are to be strictly guarded; for one impure thought makes a deep impression on the soul. An evil thought leaves an evil impress on the mind. If the thoughts are pure and holy, the man is better for having cherished them. By them the spiritual pulse is quickened, and the power for doing good is increased. And as one drop of rain prepares the way for another in moistening the earth, so one good thought prepares the way for another. Wrong habits of thought, when once accepted, become a despotic power that fastens the mind as in a grasp of steel. The thoughts are not to be allowed to run riot. They must be restrained, brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Let them be placed upon holy things. Then, through the grace of Christ, they will be pure and true. We need a constant sense of the ennobling power of pure thoughts. The only security for any soul is right thinking.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 222.

‘To walk in all His ways’

7. What does it mean to walk before God? Deuteronomy 10:12.

NOTE: ‘May the Lord attract souls to Himself and impart to them individually a sense of their sacred responsibility to form such characters that Christ will not be ashamed to call them brethren. Elevate the standard, and then the heavenly benediction

will be pronounced upon you in that day when every man will receive according to the deeds done in the body. Workers for God must live as in His sight and be constantly developing in character, in true virtue and godliness. Their minds and hearts must be so thoroughly imbued with the Spirit of Christ and so solemnised by the sacred message they have to bear that every thought, every action, every motive, will be above the earthly and sensual. Their happiness will not be in forbidden, selfish gratifications, but in Jesus and His love. My prayer is: "O Lord, anoint the eyes of Thy people, that they may discern between sin and holiness, between pollution and righteousness, and come off victors at last." *Testimonies, volume 5, page 603.*

8. What promise did the Lord make to Solomon? 1 Kings 9:4-5.

NOTE: 'The Lord desires us to appreciate the great plan of redemption, to realise our high privilege as the children of God, and to walk before Him in obedience, with grateful thanksgiving. He desires us to serve Him in newness of life, with gladness every day. He longs to see gratitude welling up in our hearts because our names are written in the Lamb's book of life, because we may cast all our care upon Him who cares for us. He bids us rejoice because we are the heritage of the Lord, because the righteousness of Christ is the white robe of His saints, because we have the blessed hope of the soon coming of our Saviour.' *Christ's Object Lessons, page 299.*

'He knoweth our frame'

9. What are we told about our heavenly Father? Psalm 103:13-14.

NOTE: 'Let us glorify God that although we are defective He honours us by permitting us to advocate truth and to maintain His cause. But although we make many mistakes in that which we do, although we fail of doing it in the best way, although we neglect and leave many things undone because self is not surrendered to God, although we are creatures full of vanity and selfishness and self-esteem (and all this God despises), yet notwithstanding our many imperfections He continues to teach us, and commissions us to act a part in His cause. When tried and tempted, many have virtually cast reflections upon God, yet the Lord has not cast them off forever. He has borne long with them and has given them another trial, and provided new opportunities, and has put forth every effort to draw them nigh unto Himself, in order that they might behold Jesus and become changed into His image in spirit and character.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 13, page 279.*

'The work of a child is very defective, and yet it is a cause of joy and hope to the father. The father sees in it the proof of the child's attachment and obedience, as well as the pledge of what that spirit will do for the child when his intelligence and strength have been increased. The child has served the father with a perfect heart, though the perfect heart does not at once imply a perfect work. Even so, the Father in heaven accepts as a perfect heart the simple childlike purpose that makes His reverence and service its one object.' Murray, *Be Perfect, page 23.*

10. In recognising our defects, what are we to do about them? Psalm 19:12.

NOTE: 'Satan will tell you that you do not feel any better than you did before you went to Jesus with your troubles. But here the question arises again, What has feeling to do with it? The Lord says: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Again we read: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will" grudgingly pardon. Is that it? No, indeed! This is the way it reads: "For He will abundantly pardon." When you have thrown yourself upon the mercy of God, and taken Him at His word, and yet the enemy comes, and suggests your faults and failings, and tells you that you are no better than before you sought the Lord, you can point to Jesus, and repeat His promises, and tell what He has done for you.' *Signs of the Times, August 18, 1887.*

'Grow up into Him in all things'

11. How did Jesus illustrate the progress of Christian perfection? Mark 4:28-29.

NOTE: '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. . . 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 labour 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.' *Christ's Object Lessons, pages 65-67.*

12. What is to be our aim and highest desire? Ephesians 4:15.

NOTE: 'Our notions, our peculiarities, are wholly human and must not be humoured or indulged. Self is to be crucified, not now and then, but daily, and the physical, mental, and spiritual must be subordinate to the will of God. The glory of God, the perfection of Christian character, is to be the aim, the purpose of our life. Christ's followers must imitate Christ in disposition. The Pattern is given us to copy, and no excuse will be accepted of God as a reason for not meeting the divine standard, however contrary it may be to our own nature, our own selfish desires and inclinations. Like Christ is the watchword, not like your father or your mother, but like Jesus Christ, hid in Christ, clothed with Christ's righteousness, imbued with the Spirit of Christ.' *Daughters of God*, page 169.

'I have one deep, supreme desire, that I may be like Jesus. To this I fervently aspire, that I may be like Jesus. I want my heart His throne to be, so that a watching world may see His likeness shining forth in me. I want to be like Jesus. O perfect life of Christ my Lord! I want to be like Jesus. My recompense and my reward, that I may be like Jesus. His Spirit fill my hungering soul; His power all my life control. My deepest prayer, my highest goal, that I may be like Jesus.' T. O. Chisholm, *I Want To Be Like Jesus*.'

Lesson 3: April 11-17

'Remember now how I have walked before Thee'

MEMORY VERSE: 'I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' 2 Kings 20:3.

STUDY HELP: *Prophets & Kings*, pages 340-341.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 2 Kings 20:2-5.

LESSON AIM: To study the connection between perfection and prayer.

Introduction

'Those who at Pentecost were endued with power from on high were not thereby freed from further temptation and trial. As they witnessed for truth and righteousness they were repeatedly assailed by the enemy of all truth, who sought to rob them of their Christian experience. They were compelled to strive with all their God-given powers to reach the measure of the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Daily they prayed for fresh supplies of grace, that they might reach higher and still higher toward perfection. Under the Holy Spirit's working even the weakest, by exercising faith in God, learned to improve their entrusted powers and to become sanctified, refined, and ennobled. As in humility they submitted to the moulding influence of the Holy Spirit, they received of the fullness of the Godhead and were fashioned in the likeness of the divine.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 49.

'God is not unrighteous to forget your work'

1. What prayer did Jesus pray when His life and ministry on earth were nearing their end? John 17:4-5.

NOTE: 'In this life we are to learn to honour Him by offering our praises and thanksgiving to Him. It is only those who on earth have learned to glorify God that will be given a place in the courts of glory. If we are translated, we shall be translated just as we are. We are to be made perfect in this life; in this life our tongues are to be sanctified, our thoughts purified. Then let us take up this work of education now. Let us do those things that we shall wish we had done when the time comes that our work is finished.' *Review & Herald*, March 25, 1909.

It was because Jesus had faithfully completed the work His Father had given Him to do that He had confidence in making His request to God.

2. What are we told concerning how God views the lives of His faithful servants? Hebrews 6:10.

NOTE: 'There have been some who have done what they could with self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. God is not unmindful of their works of love and devotion. Of Cornelius it was said that his prayers and his alms had come up in remembrance before God. Every act of self-denying benevolence and loving service is precious in the sight of God. Some have ever manifested a willingness to do for His cause, and the Lord has prospered these willing ones, making them channels for His gifts, that they might continue to do and be blessed in doing. They can say with David, "What am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?" "God is not unrighteous," said the apostle Paul, "to forget your work and labour of love." Neither will He overlook the lack of these labours in the members of his church who make themselves first and His cause second. Every one will be rewarded as his works have been.' *Review & Herald*, December 14, 1886.

'Remember now how I have walked'

3. When Hezekiah was facing death, how did he pray? 2 Kings 20:3.

NOTE: 'Since the days of David, there had reigned no king who had wrought so mightily for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God in a time of apostasy and discouragement as had Hezekiah. The dying ruler had served his God faithfully, and had done much to strengthen the confidence of the people in Jehovah as their Supreme Ruler. And, like David, he could now plead: "Let my prayer come before Thee: incline Thine ear unto my cry."' *Review & Herald*, May 6, 1915.

Hezekiah knew that God would remember how he had walked before Him with a perfect heart.

4. What was the testimony given of Hezekiah's life? 2 Kings 18:3-6.

NOTE: 'Many who claim to be Christians are working at cross-purposes with God. Many are waiting for some great work to be brought to them. Daily they lose opportunities for showing their faithfulness to God; daily they fail of discharging with whole-heartedness the little duties of life, which seem to them uninteresting. While waiting for some great work in which they may exercise their supposedly great talents, and thus satisfy their ambitious longings, their life passes away. . . Do the work that lies nearest at hand. Turn your attention to some humble line of effort within your reach. Put mind and heart into the doing of this work. Force your thoughts to act intelligently on the things that you can do at home. Thus you will be fitting yourself for greater usefulness. Remember that of King Hezekiah it is written: "In every work that he began, . . . he did it with all his heart, and prospered.'" *Messages to Young People*, page 148.

'Righteous in his own eyes'

5. Into what pitfall are we in danger of falling? Isaiah 5:21. Consider Job 32:1.

NOTE: 'No one should deceive himself by thinking that his defects are not very grievous. If he does not guard against these defects, they will be his ruin, and will be reproduced in those with whom he associates. Those who do not think that God requires them to watch and pray unceasingly, striving against every imperfection, are deluded by the enemy. Until they change their attitude, they cannot grow in grace. We all need to pray earnestly for determination to overcome every defect of character. Pray that, "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; . . . ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.'" *Review & Herald*, June 11, 1901.

6. When Job encountered God, what change took place in his attitude? Job 42:5-6.

NOTE: 'No man, woman, or youth can attain to Christian perfection and neglect the study of the word of God. By carefully and closely searching His word we shall obey the injunction of Christ, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." This search enables the student to closely observe the divine Model, for they testify of Christ. The Pattern must be inspected often and closely in order to imitate it. As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself defects of character; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees he cannot be a follower without a very great change in his life. Still he studies, with a desire to be like his great Exemplar; he catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master; by beholding he becomes changed. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." It is not in looking away from Him, and in losing sight of Him, that we imitate the life of Jesus; but in dwelling upon and talking of Him, and seeking to refine the taste and elevate the character; seeking to approach through earnest, persevering effort, through faith and love, the perfect Pattern. The attention being fixed upon Christ, His image, pure and spotless, becomes enshrined in the heart as "the Chief among ten thousand and the One altogether lovely." Even unconsciously we imitate that with which we are familiar. By having a knowledge of Christ, His words, His habits, His lessons of instruction, and by borrowing the virtues of the character which we have so closely studied, we become imbued with the spirit of the Master which we have so much admired.' *Review & Herald*, November 28, 1878.

'Examine yourselves'

7. What should we do to avoid the pitfall of self-confidence? 2 Corinthians 13:5.

NOTE: 'Let every believer closely examine himself to ascertain what are his weak points. Let him cherish a spirit of humility and plead with the Lord for grace and wisdom and for the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Let him cast away all self-confidence. Self-confidence leads to a lack of watchfulness. Those who walk humbly before God, distrustful of their own wisdom, will realise their danger and will know the power of God's keeping care.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 97.

8. What important counsel did Christ give to emphasise our reliance on Him? John 15:4.

NOTE: 'But if the love of the world, if self-esteem, or any defiling thoughts or actions, obtain the victory over us, then shall we lose confidence in Jesus, or in ourselves? Is it because Jesus failed us, and did not supply us with His grace? No; it is because we did not do what the Lord has told us to do, Watch unto prayer; "Pray always;" "Pray without ceasing." How can your soul be in health, when you shut yourself away from prayer, and have no connection with Christ, the source of all spiritual light and life and power? We must have a constant connection with Christ; for He is our sustenance. He is that bread which came down from heaven. Then let us be doers of His word, and we shall have spiritual life and power. We must place ourselves often before God as suppliants, because prayer brings the soul into immediate contact with God through Jesus Christ. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. If a Christian fails, it is because he does not obey the orders of his Captain. He is off guard; he is not Christ-like. It will work disaster to the soul to neglect prayer; for you will be led to yield carelessly to temptation. But if you do yield, do not therefore cast away your confidence in God; lose confidence in yourself, and press closer to the side of Christ.' *Review & Herald*, June 28, 1892.

'In simplicity and godly sincerity'

9. How may we have the same confidence in approaching God that Hezekiah had? 2 Corinthians 1:12.

NOTE: 'The man who walks before God with a perfect heart can know it; it may be a matter of consciousness. Let us look at the testimony Scripture gives of [Hezekiah] (2 Kings 18:3-6), "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according

to all that David his father did.” Then follow the different elements of this life that was right in God’s sight. “He trusted in the Lord God of Israel. . . He clave to the Lord, and he departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him.” His life was one of trust and love, of steadfastness and obedience. And the Lord was with him. He was one of the saints of whom we read, “By faith they obtained a good report” (Hebrews 11:39). They had the witness that they were righteous, that they were pleasing to God.’ Murray, *Be Perfect*, page 26.

10. How did John express this same confidence? 1 John 3:21.

NOTE: ‘God is our strength. We must look to Him for wisdom and guidance, and keeping in view His glory, the good of the church, and the salvation of our own souls, we must overcome our besetting sins. We should individually seek to obtain new victory every day. We must learn to stand alone and depend wholly upon God. The sooner we learn this the better. Let each one find out where he fails, and then faithfully watch that his sins do not overcome him, but that he gets the victory over them. Then can we have confidence toward God.’ *Early Writings*, page 105.

‘Pleasing in His sight’

11. How does this confidence affect our prayers? 1 John 3:22.

NOTE: ‘True faith rests on the promises contained in the Word of God, and those only who obey that Word can claim its glorious promises. “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7. “Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” 1 John 3:22. We should be much in secret prayer. Christ is the vine, ye are the branches. And if we would grow and flourish, we must continually draw sap and nourishment from the Living Vine; for separated from the Vine we have no strength.’ *Early Writings*, pages 72-73.

12. What will enable us to lay aside besetting sins? Hebrews 12:1-2.

NOTE: ‘The true Christian keeps his eyes fixed on Him who searches the heart and tries the reins, who requires truth in the inward parts. His constant prayer is, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Compliments are not to be given to sinful, erring men. The glory and majesty of God should ever fill our souls with a holy awe, humbling us in the dust before Him. His condescension, His wide, deep compassion, His tenderness and love, are given us to strengthen our confidence, and remove that fear which tendeth unto bondage. The Lord wants us to give Him all there is of us, in a steady, evenly balanced Christian life, a life that illustrates the principles of His law.’ *Review & Herald*, October 23, 1900.

Lesson 4: April 18-24

‘With an upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘It is God that girdeth me with strength and maketh my way perfect.’ Psalm 18:32.

STUDY HELP: *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 242.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 18:20-32.

LESSON AIM: To understand that a perfect heart is a gift of God to be asked for.

Introduction

‘Those who at Pentecost were endued with power from on high were not thereby freed from further temptation and trial. As they witnessed for truth and righteousness they were repeatedly assailed by the enemy of all truth, who sought to rob them of their Christian experience. They were compelled to strive with all their God-given powers to reach the measure of the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Daily they prayed for fresh supplies of grace, that they might reach higher and still higher toward perfection. Under the Holy Spirit’s working even the weakest, by exercising faith in God, learned to improve their entrusted powers and to become sanctified, refined, and ennobled. As in humility they submitted to the moulding influence of the Holy Spirit, they received of the fullness of the Godhead and were fashioned in the likeness of the divine.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 49.

‘Give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart’

1. What prayer did David pray on behalf of his son, Solomon? 1 Chronicles 29:19.

NOTE: David ‘entreats the Lord to incline the heart of Solomon to His commandments. He says, “I know also, my God, that Thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart, I have willingly offered all these things. And now have I seen with joy Thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto Thee. O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee. And give unto Solomon, my son, a perfect heart, to keep Thy commandments, Thy testimonies, and Thy statutes.”’ *Spiritual Gifts, volume 4A*, page 95.

2. What command had David given to his son, Solomon? 1 Chronicles 28:9.

NOTE: 'David feels the greatest solicitude for Solomon. He fears that he may follow his example in wrong-doing. He can see with the deepest sorrow the spots and blemishes he has brought upon his character by falling into grievous sins; and he would save his son from the evil if he could. He has learned by experience that the Lord will in no case sanction wrong-doing. . . David solemnly charges his son to adhere strictly to the law of God, and to keep all his statutes. He relates to Solomon the word of the Lord, spoken unto him through His prophets: "Moreover, I will establish his kingdom forever, if he be constant to do My commandments and My judgments, as at this day. Now, therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God, that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you forever. And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 1, page 388.*

'Let my heart be sound'

3. How does the Psalmist pray for such a heart? Psalm 119:80.

NOTE: n.b. The word translated 'sound' in the King James Bible is translated as 'perfect' on eighteen occasions.

'No outward observances can take the place of simple faith and entire renunciation of self. But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mould me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul. It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves. Therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely.' *Christ's Object Lessons, page 159.*

4. How did David pray for such a heart? Psalm 51:10.

NOTE: 'Christian worth does not depend on brilliant talents, lofty birth, wonderful powers, but on a clean heart, a heart purified and refined, that does not exalt self, but, by beholding Christ, reflects the long lost image of divinity.' *Evangelism, page 135.*

'Let him ask in faith'

5. What is the source of all good gifts? James 1:17.

NOTE: 'Many are leaning upon a supposed hope without a true foundation. The fountain is not cleansed, therefore the streams proceeding from that fountain are not pure. Cleanse the fountain, and the streams will be pure. If the heart is right, your words, your dress, your acts, will all be right. True godliness is lacking. I would not dishonour my Master so much as to admit that a careless, trifling, prayerless person is a Christian. No; a Christian has victory over his besetments, over his passions. There is a remedy for the sin-sick soul. That remedy is in Jesus. Precious Saviour! His grace is sufficient for the weakest; and the strongest must also have His grace or perish. I saw how this grace could be obtained. Go to your closet, and there alone plead with God: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). Be in earnest, be sincere. Fervent prayer availeth much. Jacoblike, wrestle in prayer. Agonise. Jesus, in the garden, sweat great drops of blood; you must make an effort. Do not leave your closet until you feel strong in God; then watch, and just as long as you watch and pray you can keep these evil besetments under, and the grace of God can and will appear in you.' *God's Amazing Grace, page 318.*

6. What condition is required for answered prayer? James 1:6-7.

NOTE: 'God is behind every promise, and we cannot dishonour Him more than by questioning and hesitating, by asking and not believing, and then by talking doubt. If you do not immediately receive what you have asked for, will you go on in sullenness and unbelief? Believe; believe that God will do just what He has promised. Keep your prayers ascending, and watch, work, and wait. Fight the good fight of faith. Say to your heart, "God has invited me to come. He has heard my prayer. He has pledged His word that He will receive me, and He will fulfil His promise. I can trust God; for He so loved me that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for me. The Son of God is my Redeemer." "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"' *Fundamentals of Christian Education, page 299.*

'Them whose heart is perfect toward Him'

7. What assurance do those have whose heart is perfect towards God? 2 Chronicles 16:9, first part.

NOTE: 'The Lord has His eye upon every soul that is seeking Him. He is interested in every soul needing help, and He will not leave one in the darkness of error, but step by step will lead him into the full light of the truth that is shining from every page of the Scriptures. The Lord sees our every act. He knows just what progress we have made in the Christian pathway. How kind, how tender, our Great Shepherd is! With intense interest He looks down from His exalted throne upon the sheep of His pasture, and gives them grace and strength. Constantly the heavenly agencies are communicating with men and women on the earth. We cannot see personally the angels of God round about us; nevertheless they are with us, guiding and directing. We are

to be so fully under the influence of the Spirit of God that we shall be susceptible to His leadings.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 322.

8. How did the Psalmist explain what it means to have a perfect heart? Psalm 119:10. Compare Jeremiah 29:13.

NOTE: 'We are quietly to live out our religion, with an eye single to the glory of God. Then we shall shine as lights in the world, without noise or friction. None need fail; for One is with them who is wise in counsel, excellent in working, and mighty to accomplish His designs. He works through His agents, seen and unseen, human and divine. This work is a grand work, and will be carried forward to the glory of God, if all who are connected with it will make their works correspond to their profession of faith. Purity of thought must be cherished as indispensable to the work of influencing others. The soul must be surrounded by a pure, holy atmosphere, an atmosphere that will tend to quicken the spiritual life of all who inhale it.' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 316.

'With My whole heart'

9. How did Jeremiah show the wholeheartedness of God towards His people? Jeremiah 32:41. Compare Jeremiah 20:11.

NOTE: 'The temptations of Satan are greater now than ever before, for he knows that his time is short and that very soon every case will be decided, either for life or for death. It is no time now to sink down beneath discouragement and trial; we must bear up under all our afflictions and trust wholly in the Almighty God of Jacob. The Lord has shown me that His grace is sufficient for all our trials; and although they are greater than ever before, yet if we trust wholly in God, we can overcome every temptation and through His grace come off victorious.' *Early Writings*, page 46.

10. How will God respond to those who serve Him with a perfect heart? Psalm 18:25. Read verses 23 & 30.

NOTE: n.b. the word translated 'upright' is the same word translated as 'sound' in Psalm 119:80 and is often translated as 'perfect.'

'The Lord purifies the heart very much as we air a room. We do not close the doors and windows, and throw in some purifying substance; but we open the doors and throw wide the windows, and let heaven's purifying atmosphere flow in. The windows of impulse, of feeling must be opened up toward heaven, and the dust of selfishness and earthliness must be expelled. The grace of God must sweep through the chambers of the mind, the imagination must have heavenly themes for contemplation, and every element of the nature must be purified and vitalised by the Spirit of God.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 206.

'It is God that girdeth me with strength'

11. When concerned about our human weakness, what must we always remember? Ephesians 3:20.

NOTE: 'The Lord loves you, and His guardian angels are round about you. If you are doers of the Word you will obey the instructions of Jesus Christ. In our own strength we are perfect weakness, but, when we put our whole trust in Jesus Christ, we are kept by His power, for He is fully able to keep every soul that puts his trust in Him.' *The Upward Look*, page 19.

12. What must those who seek perfection always remember? Psalm 18:32.

NOTE: 'We have little idea of the strength that would be ours if we would connect with the Source of all strength. We fall into sin again and again, and think it must always be so. We cling to our infirmities as if they were something to be proud of. Christ tells us that we must set our face as a flint if we would overcome. He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree; and through the power He has given us, we may resist the world, the flesh, and the devil. Then let us not talk of our weakness and inefficiency, but of Christ and His strength. When we talk of Satan's strength, the enemy fastens his power more firmly upon us. When we talk of the power of the Mighty One, the enemy is driven back. As we draw near to God, He draws near to us.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 262.

Lesson 5: April 25-May 1
'His work is perfect'

MEMORY VERSE: 'He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.' Deuteronomy 32:4.

STUDY HELP: *In Heavenly Places*, page 186.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 19:7-11.

LESSON AIM: To understand that God Himself is a perfect God and will perform a perfect work in us.

Introduction

'Our Saviour understood all about human nature, and He says to every human being. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." As God is perfect in His sphere, so man is to be perfect in his sphere. Those who receive Christ are among the number to whom the words so full of hope are spoken. "As many as received Him, to them gave He

power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” These words declare to us that we should be content with nothing less than the best and highest character, a character formed after the divine similitude. When such a character is possessed, the life, the faith, the purity of the religion, is an instructive example to others.’ *Maranatha*, page 227.

‘His way is perfect’

1. What does David tell us about God’s ways? Psalm 32:30.

NOTE: ‘God’s work is perfect as a whole because it is perfect in every part, however minute. He fashions the tiny spear of grass with as much care as He would exercise in making a world. If we desire to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect, we must be faithful in doing little things. That which is worth doing at all is worth doing well.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 44.

2. What do the works of God’s creation tell us about Him? Psalm 19:1, Isaiah 40:26, Job 37:16, Romans 1:20.

NOTE: ‘God manifested His love in the work of creation. When the earth was created, it was holy and beautiful. God pronounced it “very good.” Every flower, every shrub, every tree, answered the purpose of its Creator. Everything upon which the eye rested was lovely, and filled the mind with thoughts of the love of God. Every sound was music, in perfect harmony with the voice of God. The things of nature, upon which we look today, give us but a faint conception of Eden’s beauty and glory; yet the natural world, with unmistakable voice, proclaims the love of God. Even now “the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” It still reveals the working of the great Master-Artist. It declares that One omnipotent in power, great in goodness and mercy, has created all things. The green fields, the lofty trees, the glad sunshine, the clouds, the dew, the solemn silence of the night, the glory of the starry heavens, and the moon in its beauty, all bear witness to His wonder-working power. Not a drop of rain falls, not a ray of light is shed upon our unthankful world, but it testifies to God’s long forbearance and His great love.’ *Australasian Union Conference Record*, June 1, 1900.

‘Oh that men would praise the LORD’

3. How should we respond to the evidences of God’s character around us? Psalm 107:8. See vv. 15, 21, 31.

NOTE: ‘Those professed Christians who are constantly complaining, who seem to think happiness and a cheerful countenance a sin, have not the genuine attributes of religion. Those who look upon nature’s beautiful scenery as they would upon a dead picture; who choose to look upon dead leaves rather than to gather the beautiful flowers; who take a mournful pleasure in all that is melancholy in the language spoken to them by the natural world; who see no beauty in valleys clothed in living green, and grand mountain heights clothed with verdure; who close their senses to the joyful voice that speaks to them in nature, these are not in Christ. Suppose we change this order of things. Suppose you try to count all your blessings. You have thought so little upon them, and they have been so continual, that when reverses or afflictions come, you are grieved, and think God is unjust. You do not call to mind how little gratitude you have manifested for all the blessings of God. You have not deserved them; but because they have flowed in upon you day by day, year by year, you have looked upon them as a matter of course, thinking it was your right to receive every advantage, and give nothing in return. The blessings of God are more than the hairs of our head, more than the sands of the seashore. Meditate upon His love and care for us, and may it inspire you with love that trials cannot interrupt nor afflictions quench.’ *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 116.

4. What does Paul say about those who refuse to acknowledge what creation reveals about God? Romans 1:20.

NOTE: ‘He who studies most deeply into the mysteries of nature will realise most fully his own ignorance and weakness. He will realise that there are depths and heights which he cannot reach, secrets which he cannot penetrate, vast fields of truth lying before him unentered. He will be ready to say, with Newton, “I seem to myself to have been like a child on the seashore finding pebbles and shells, while the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before me.” The deepest students of science are constrained to recognise in nature the working of infinite power. But to man’s unaided reason, nature’s teaching cannot but be contradictory and disappointing. Only in the light of revelation can it be read aright. “Through faith we understand.” Hebrews 11:3. “In the beginning God.” Genesis 1:1. Here alone can the mind in its eager questioning, fleeing as the dove to the ark, find rest. Above, beneath, beyond, abides Infinite Love, working out all things to accomplish “the good pleasure of His goodness.” 2 Thessalonians 1:11. “The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are . . . perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity.” Romans 1:20, R.V. But their testimony can be understood only through the aid of the divine Teacher. “What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:11.’ *Education*, page 134.

‘The Author and Finisher’

5. Because God is perfect, what does this mean for those who put their trust in Him? 2 Samuel 22:31.

NOTE: A buckler is a shield, a protection against the assaults of the enemy. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” God has provided abundant means for successful warfare against the evil that is in the world. The Bible is the armoury where we may equip for the struggle. Our loins must be girt about with truth. Our breastplate must be righteousness. The shield of faith must be in our hand, the helmet of salvation on our brow; and with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, we are to cut our way through the obstructions and entanglements of sin.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 502.

6. What are we told about the work of Christ for His people? Hebrews 12:2.

NOTE: 'It is the favour of God that pardons. It is the favour of God that leads us by His power to repentance. Therefore, it is all of Jesus Christ, everything of Him, and you want to just give back glory to God. Why don't you respond more when you meet together in your meetings? Why don't you have the quickening influence of the Spirit of God when the love of Jesus and His salvation are presented to you? It is because you do not see that Christ is first and last and best, and the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the very Author and Finisher of our faith. You don't realise this, and therefore you remain in your sins. Why is this? It is because Satan is here wrestling and battling for the souls of men. He casts his hellish shadow right athwart our pathway, and all that you can see is the enemy and his power.' *Faith & Works*, page 73.

'Being confident of this very thing'

7. What assurance may we have that Christ will accomplish the work He has begun in us? Philippians 1:6.

NOTE: 'Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness, all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly, by abiding in Him, that we are to grow in grace. He is not only the author, but the finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way. Do you ask, "How am I to abide in Christ?" In the same way as you received Him at first. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Colossians 2:6. "The just shall live by faith." Hebrews 10:38. You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Saviour. You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believe that He for Christ's sake did all this for you. By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him, by giving and taking. You are to give all, your heart, your will, your service, give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must take all, Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper, to give you power to obey. Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. 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. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be moulded more and more after the life of Christ.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 125.

8. What confident assertion was Paul able to make? Philippians 4:13.

NOTE: 'We must have less trust in what we ourselves can do, and more trust in what the Lord can do for and through us. You are not engaged in your own work; you are doing the work of God. Surrender your will and way to Him. Make not a single reserve, not a single compromise with self. Know what it is to be free in Christ. The mere hearing of sermons Sabbath after Sabbath, the reading of the Bible through and through, or the explanation of it verse by verse, will not benefit us or those who hear us, unless we bring the truths of the Bible into our individual experience. The understanding, the will, the affections, must be yielded to the control of the word of God. Then through the work of the Holy Spirit the precepts of the word will become the principles of the life. As you ask the Lord to help you, honour your Saviour by believing that you do receive His blessing. All power, all wisdom, are at our command. We have only to ask.' *Help in Daily Living*, page 62.

'The God of all grace make you perfect'

9. What is God's desire for His people? 1 Peter 5:10.

NOTE: 'If the human agent consents, God can and will so identify His will with all our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His Word, that when obeying His will, we are only carrying out the impulses of our minds. All such will not possess an unsanctified, selfish disposition, ready to carry out their own wills, but will have a jealous, earnest, determined zeal for the glory of God. They will not want to do anything in their own strength, and will guard strictly against the danger of promoting self.' *The Upward Look*, page 187.

10. How may we fall short of God's desire for us? Hebrews 4:1-2.

NOTE: 'Some who come to God by repentance and confession, and even believe that their sins are forgiven, still fail of claiming, as they should, the promises of God. They do not see that Jesus is an ever-present Saviour; and they are not ready to commit the keeping of their souls to Him, relying upon Him to perfect the work of grace begun in their hearts. While they think they are committing themselves to God, there is a great deal of self-dependence. There are conscientious souls that trust partly to God and partly to themselves. They do not look to God, to be kept by His power, but depend upon watchfulness against temptation and the performance of certain duties for acceptance with Him. There are no victories in this kind of faith. Such persons toil to no purpose; their souls are in continual bondage, and they find no rest until their burdens are laid at the feet of Jesus.' *Faith & Works*, page 38.

'It is God . . . that maketh my way perfect'

11. How does God regard those whose way is perfect? Psalm 119:1. See marginal reading for 'undefiled.'

NOTE: 'When farmers seek to recommend their products, they do not exhibit the poorest specimens. The women bring in their best lumps of golden butter. The men bring the best fruit and vegetables of every kind, and their appearance does the skilful workers credit. No dwarfed specimens, but the very choicest that the land can produce, are brought. And why should not Christians reveal the most attractive fruit in unselfish actions? Why should not the fruit of the commandment-keeping people of God appear in good works? Their words, their deportment, their dress, should be as fruit of the very best quality. "Ye shall

know them by their fruits.” Christ said, “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” God loves His commandment-keeping people. Through their obedience they give honour to His holy name, testifying of their love for Him.’ *Signs of the Times*, September 29, 1898.

12. What must we never forget in our desire to be godly? Psalm 18:32.

NOTE: ‘We have little idea of the strength that would be ours if we would connect with the Source of all strength. We fall into sin again and again, and think it must always be so. We cling to our infirmities as if they were something to be proud of. Christ tells us that we must set our face as a flint if we would overcome. He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree; and through the power He has given us, we may resist the world, the flesh, and the devil. Then let us not talk of our weakness and inefficiency, but of Christ and His strength. When we talk of Satan’s strength, the enemy fastens his power more firmly upon us. When we talk of the power of the Mighty One, the enemy is driven back.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 262

Lesson 6: May 2-8 **‘With my whole heart have I sought thee’**

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart.’ Psalm 119:2.

STUDY HELP: *Testimonies*, volume 5, pages 73-77.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:1-8.

LESSON AIM: To study what it means to have a perfect heart.

Introduction

‘Say with your whole heart, “I will walk in Thy truth.” Every resolution expressed in the fear of God will give strength to purpose and to faith. It will tend to stimulate and to humble, to strengthen and confirm. “I will walk in thy truth.” Truth deserves our confidence none the less because the world is flooded with fables. Because error and counterfeit are in circulation it only evidences the fact that there is truth, genuine truth, somewhere. It is not enough for us to hear the truth only. God requires of us obedience. “Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” Luke 11:28. “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” John 13:17.’ *Our High Calling*, page 33.

‘Who walk in the law of the Lord’

1. What identifies those who are undefiled? Psalm 119:1.

NOTE: The word ‘undefiled’ can also be translated ‘perfect.’ See marginal reading.

‘When you realise the transforming influence of the power of God upon your heart, it will be seen in your life. You have lacked a religious experience, but it is not too late for you now to seek God with earnest, heartfelt cries: “What shall I do to be saved?” You can never be a true Christian until you are thoroughly converted. . . . You need to learn the ways, the will and works of God. You need pure and undefiled religion; you need to cultivate devotional feelings. Cease to do evil, and learn to do well. The blessing of God cannot rest upon you until you become more like Christ.’ *Testimonies*, volume 2, page 289.

2. Why are they undefiled? Psalm 119:2, last part.

NOTE: ‘The Lord will not accept a heartless service, a round of ceremonies that are really Christless. His children must be lively stones in God’s building. If all would give themselves unreservedly to God, if they would cease to study and plan for their amusements, for excursions and pleasure-loving associations, and would study the words, “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s,” they would never hunger and thirst for excitement or change. If it is for our true interest to be spiritual, if the salvation of our soul depends on being riveted on the eternal book, had we not better be engaged in seeking for that which will hold the whole building to the chief corner stone, that we may not be confused and confounded in our faith?’ *Kress Collection*, page 66.

‘This man shall be blessed’

3. How did James explain what it means to walk in the way of the Lord? James 1:25, 27.

NOTE: ‘Hear the only correct way for each human being to do if he would have a safe, all-round experience. “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, [for there is a work to be done, that is neglected at the peril of the soul], this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” Carry this out, as a test of pure and undefiled religion, and the blessing of God will surely follow.’ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 461.

4. What examples does James give to show the difference between nominal and pure religion? James 2:15-17.

Compare Matthew 25:40, 45.

NOTE: 'Good deeds are the fruit that Christ requires us to bear: kind words, deeds of benevolence, of tender regard for the poor, the needy, the afflicted. When hearts sympathise with hearts burdened with discouragement and grief, when the hand dispenses to the needy, when the naked are clothed, the stranger made welcome to a seat in your parlour and a place in your heart, angels are coming very near, and an answering strain is responded to in heaven. Every act of justice, mercy, and benevolence makes melody in heaven. The Father from His throne beholds those who do these acts of mercy, and numbers them with His most precious treasures. "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." Every merciful act to the needy, the suffering, is regarded as though done to Jesus. When you succour the poor, sympathise with the afflicted and oppressed, and befriend the orphan, you bring yourselves into a closer relationship to Jesus.' *A Call to Stand Apart*, page 60.

'With my whole heart'

5. How did the Psalmist make clear what walking in the law of the Lord means? Psalm 119:3-8, 167-168,

NOTE: 'How may we witness for God? By rendering pure, wholehearted obedience to God's law. If we will let Him, He will manifest Himself in us, and we shall be witnesses, before the universe of heaven and before an apostate world who are making void the law of God, to the power of redemption. There is but one power that can bring us into conformity to the likeness of Christ, that can make us steadfast and keep us constant. It is the grace of God that comes to us through obedience to the law of God.' *My Life Today*, page 100.

6. How did the Psalmist explain what it means to be wholehearted? Psalm 119:10, 34, 58, 69, 145.

NOTE: 'Every soul who is saved must surrender his own plans, and follow where Christ leads the way. The understanding must be yielded up to Christ for Him to cleanse and refine and purify. This will always be done when we receive aright the teachings of Christ. O, how much we need a more intimate acquaintance with Him! We need to enter into His purpose, and to carry out His will, saying with the whole heart, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The child of God is to reach out for higher and still higher attainments. He is to confess every sin, that by his example others may be helped to confess their sins and cherish the faith that works by love to purify the soul. He is to be constantly on guard, never standing still, never turning back, but ever pressing on to the mark of the high calling of God in Christ. We should keep ever before us the fact that time is short. Iniquity is increasing on every hand. The righteous are set as lights in the world. Through them the glory of God is to be revealed to the world.' *This Day With God*, page 322.

'I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right'

7. What attitude will the wholehearted follower of Christ have? Psalm 119:128.

NOTE: 'None can depend upon their profession of faith as proof that they have a saving connection with Christ. We are not only to say, "I believe," but to practise the truth. It is by conformity to the will of God in our words, our deportment, our character, that we prove our connection with Him. Whenever one renounces sin, which is the transgression of the law, his life will be brought into conformity to the law, into perfect obedience. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The light of the word carefully studied, the voice of conscience, the strivings of the Spirit, produce in the heart genuine love for Christ, who gave Himself a whole sacrifice to redeem the whole person, body, soul, and spirit. And love is manifested in obedience. The line of demarcation will be plain and distinct between those who love God and keep His commandments, and those who love Him not and disregard His precepts.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 295.

8. In what climate of opinion did the Psalmist write these words? Psalm 119:126.

NOTE: 'Like David, we may now pray, "It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law." Men have gone on in disobedience to God's law until they have reached a point of insolence that is unparalleled. Men are training in disobedience, and are fast approaching the limit of God's forbearance and love; and God will surely interfere. He will surely vindicate His honour and repress the prevailing iniquity. Will God's commandment-keeping people be carried away with the prevailing iniquity? Will they be tempted, because universal scorn is placed upon the law of God, to think less of that law which is the foundation of His government both in heaven and in earth? No. To His church His law becomes more precious, holy, honourable, as men cast upon it scorn and contempt. Like David they can say, "They have made void Thy law. Therefore I love Thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.'" *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 21.

'I hate every false way'

9. What things will the wholehearted follower of Christ avoid? Psalm 119:101, 104, 163.

NOTE: 'We shall be individually, for time and eternity, what our habits make us. The lives of those who form right habits, and are faithful in the performance of every duty, will be as shining lights, shedding bright beams upon the pathway of others. There is no need of being spiritual dwarfs if the mind is continually exercised in spiritual things. But merely praying for this, and about this, will not meet the necessities of the case. You must habituate the mind to concentration upon spiritual things. Exercise will bring strength. Many professed Christians are in a fair way to lose both worlds. To be half a Christian and half a worldly man makes you about one-hundredth part a Christian and all the rest worldly. The mind must be educated and disciplined to love purity. A love for spiritual things should be encouraged; yea, must be encouraged, if you would grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. The will must be exercised in the right direction. I will be a whole-hearted Christian. I

will know the length and breadth, the height and depth, of perfect love. Listen to the words of Jesus: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Matthew 5:6. Ample provisions are made by Christ to satisfy the soul that hungers and thirst for righteousness.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 152.

10. How will the genuine follower of Christ be distinguished from the false? Jeremiah 17:5-8.

NOTE: ‘Every trial made by the refining, purifying process upon professed Christians proves some to be dross. The fine gold does not always appear. In every religious crisis some fall under temptation. The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves. Prosperity multiplies a mass of professors. Adversity purges them out of the church. As a class, their spirits are not steadfast with God. They go out from us because they are not of us; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, many are offended.’ *Testimonies, volume 4*, page 89.

‘When the testing time shall come, those who have made God’s word their rule of life will be revealed. In summer there is no noticeable difference between evergreens and other trees; but when the blasts of winter come, the evergreens remain unchanged, while other trees are stripped of their foliage. So the false-hearted professor may not now be distinguished from the real Christian, but the time is just upon us when the difference will be apparent. Let opposition arise, let bigotry and intolerance again bear sway, let persecution be kindled, and the half-hearted and hypocritical will waver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, than in days of prosperity.’ *Great Controversy*, page 602.

n.b. the word ‘professor’ is used in the above notes, not to denote a university teacher but one who makes a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

‘In keeping of them there is great reward’

11. Of what was David certain concerning God’s commandments? Psalm 19:11

NOTE: ‘We shall rightly understand the teaching of God’s word, and esteem the truth as the most valuable treasure with which to store the mind. We shall have a constant well-spring of the waters of life. We shall pray as did the psalmist, “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law,” [Psalm 119:18.] and shall find as he did that “the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.” [Psalm 119:9-11.]’ *Review and Herald*, Nov. 24, 1891.

12. How are we shown that this whole-heartedness is what God expects of all who profess to be His? Deuteronomy 6:5. Compare Mark 12:29-30.

NOTE: ‘The Lord requires our undivided affections. If men are not wholehearted, they will fail in the day of test and proving and trial. When the enemy shall put his forces in array against him, and the battle seems to go hard, at the very time when all the strength of intellect and capability, and all the tact of wise generalship, is needed to repulse the enemy, those who are half-hearted will turn their weapons against their own soldiers; they weaken the hands that should be strong for warfare. God is testing all who have a knowledge of the truth to see if they can be depended on to fight the battles of the Lord when hard pressed by principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world and wicked spirits in high places. Perilous times are before us, and our only safety is in having the converting power of God every day, yielding ourselves fully to Him to do His will, and walk in the light of His countenance (see 1 Peter 2:9).’ *This Day With God*, page 13.

Lesson 7: May 9-15 ‘As your Father’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ Matthew 5:48.

STUDY HELP: *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pages 76-77.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:20-48.

LESSON AIM: To study what it means to be perfect as our Father is perfect.

Introduction

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48. 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.’ *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 76.

‘Love your enemies’

1. What practical example does Jesus give of what it means to be perfect, as our Father is perfect? Matthew 5:44-45.

NOTE: In the Old Testament verses we have studied thus far, we have seen expressions like perfect before God, perfect with

God, perfect toward God. Now that God has walked upon this earth in human flesh, we are lifted to a higher level, not simply perfect towards God, but perfect as God. Christ holds before us a yet more wonderful prospect. And yet it is a prospect that casts down all hopes of perfection as a mere human attainment. Instead it focuses our mind on the One who has the will and the power to make us like Himself.

'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. How does Jesus show that our love must be of a higher quality than that of the world? Matthew 5:46-47.

NOTE: 'The children of God are those who are partakers of His nature. It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity. Even sinners whose hearts are not utterly closed to God's Spirit will respond to kindness; while they may give hate for hate, they will also give love for love. But it is only the Spirit of God that gives love for hatred. To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the royalty of heaven, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 75.

'Resist not evil'

3. How did Jesus teach us to respond to those who intend evil against us? Matthew 5:39-41.

NOTE: 'Jesus did not contend for His rights. Often His work was made unnecessarily severe because He was willing and uncomplaining. Yet He did not fail nor become discouraged. He lived above these difficulties, as if in the light of God's countenance. He did not retaliate when roughly used, but bore insult patiently.' *Desire of Ages*, page 89.

'It is wise to seek humility and meekness, and carefully to avoid raising a combative spirit, which will close hearts and ears to the truth. Hold your mouth as with a bridle when the wicked are before you. When tempted to say sarcastic things, refrain. Censure no one; condemn no one. Let the life argue for Jesus, and the lips be opened with wisdom to defend the truth. The consistent life, the long forbearance, the spirit unruffled under provocation, is always the most conclusive argument and the most solemn appeal. We are often brought into positions that are trying, where human nature longs to break forth, but in such cases, be still, do not retaliate.' *Gospel Workers, 1892 ed.*, page 467.

4. How did Jesus demonstrate this kind of love? Luke 22:50-51, Luke 23:34.

NOTE: 'The example of Jesus was a practical illustration of the lesson here taught; contumely and persecution never caused Him to retaliate upon His enemies.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2*, page 223.

'While the soldiers were doing their fearful work, Jesus prayed for His enemies, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." His mind passed from His own suffering to the sin of His persecutors, and the terrible retribution that would be theirs. No curses were called down upon the soldiers who were handling Him so roughly. No vengeance was invoked upon the priests and rulers, who were gloating over the accomplishment of their purpose. Christ pitied them in their ignorance and guilt. He breathed only a plea for their forgiveness, "for they know not what they do.'" *Desire of Ages*, page 744.

'As your Father also is merciful'

5. How did Jesus set out another aspect of being like our Father in heaven? Luke 6:36-37.

NOTE: 'Mercy is an attribute that the human agent may share with God. As did Christ, so man may lay hold on the divine arm and be in communication with divine power. To us has been given a service of mercy to perform for our fellow man. In performing this service, we are labouring together with God. We do well, then, to be merciful, even as our Father in heaven is merciful. "I will have mercy," God says, "and not sacrifice" (Matthew 9:13). Mercy is kind, pitiful. Mercy and the love of God purify the soul, beautify the heart, and cleanse the life from selfishness. Mercy is a manifestation of divine love and is shown by those who, identified with God, serve Him by reflecting the light of heaven upon the pathway of their fellow creatures. The condition of many persons calls for the exercise of genuine mercy. Christians, in their dealing with one another, are to be controlled by principles of mercy and love.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 238.

6. How did Jesus explain simply what it means to be perfect? Luke 6:40.

NOTE: 'To take Jesus as Master, with the distinct desire and aim to be and live and act like Him, this is true Christianity. This is something more than accepting Him as Saviour and Helper. It is far more even than acknowledging Him as Lord and Master. A servant may obey the commands of his master most faithfully, while he has little thought of rising up through them into the master's likeness. This alone is full discipleship, to long in everything to be as like the Master as possible, to count His life as the true expression of all that is perfect and to aim at nothing less than the perfection of being perfect as He was. "Every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.'" Murray: *Be Perfect*, page 51.

'Give to him that asketh thee'

7. What further aspect of our Father's character should we seek to imitate? Matthew 5:42.

NOTE: 'Jesus added, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." The same

lesson had been taught through Moses: "Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth." Deuteronomy 15:7, 8. This scripture makes plain the meaning of the Saviour's words. Christ does not teach us to give indiscriminately to all who ask for charity; but He says, "Thou shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need;" and this is to be a gift, rather than a loan; for we are to "lend, hoping for nothing again." Luke 6:35. "Who gives himself with his alms feeds three, himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me." *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 72.

8. How did Jesus express the boundless generosity of our Father? Matthew 7:11. Think about John 3:16, Romans 5:8.

NOTE: Jesus 'pointed His hearers to the Ruler of the universe, under the new name, "Our Father." He would have them understand how tenderly the heart of God yearned over them. He teaches that God cares for every lost soul; that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Psalm 103:13. Such a conception of God was never given to the world by any religion but that of the Bible. Heathenism teaches men to look upon the Supreme Being as an object of fear rather than of love, a malign deity to be appeased by sacrifices, rather than a Father pouring upon His children the gift of His love. Even the people of Israel had become so blinded to the precious teaching of the prophets concerning God that this revelation of His paternal love was as an original subject, a new gift to the world. The Jews held that God loved those who served Him, according to their view, those who fulfilled the requirements of the rabbis, and that all the rest of the world lay under His frown and curse. Not so, said Jesus; the whole world, the evil and the good, lies in the sunshine of His love. This truth you should have learned from nature itself; for God "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 74.

'When we view the generosity of Christ to the poor and suffering, His patience with the rude and ignorant, His self-denial and sacrifice, we are lost in admiration and reverence. What a gift has God lavished upon man, alienated from Him by sin and disobedience! Well may the heart break and the tears flow in contemplation of such inexpressible love! Christ abased Himself to humanity that He might reach man sunken into the depths of woe and degradation, and lift him into a nobler life, give him moral strength to resist the power of Satan and overcome sin in his name.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2*, page 286.

'Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay'

9. What did Jesus emphasise that we should be people of our word? Matthew 5:37.

NOTE: 'These words condemn all those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity. They condemn the deceptive compliments, the evasion of truth, the flattering phrases, the exaggerations, the misrepresentations in trade, that are current in society and in the business world. They teach that no one who tries to appear what he is not, or whose words do not convey the real sentiment of his heart, can be called truthful. If these words of Christ were heeded, they would check the utterance of evil surmising and unkind criticism; for in commenting upon the actions and motives of another, who can be certain of speaking the exact truth? How often pride, passion, personal resentment, colour the impression given! A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood. Even facts may be so stated as to convey a false impression. And "whatsoever is more than" truth, "is of the evil one." Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight. Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan; and whoever in any way departs from the straight line of truth is betraying himself into the power of the wicked one. Yet it is not a light or an easy thing to speak the exact truth. We cannot speak the truth unless we know the truth; and how often preconceived opinions, mental bias, imperfect knowledge, errors of judgment, prevent a right understanding of matters with which we have to do! We cannot speak the truth unless our minds are continually guided by Him who is truth.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 68.

10. What are we told about the reliability of God's Word? Isaiah 40:8, 1 Peter 1:25. Consider Matthew 7:24-27.

NOTE: 'It is not enough, [Jesus] says, for you to hear My words. By obedience you must make them the foundation of your character. Self is but shifting sand. If you build upon human theories and inventions, your house will fall. By the winds of temptation, the tempests of trial, it will be swept away. But these principles that I have given will endure. Receive Me; build on My words.' *Desire of Ages*, page 314.

'As He is, so are we in this world'

11. How did John explain the role of God's people in the world? 1 John 4:17.

NOTE: 'Now that Jesus has ascended to heaven, His disciples are His representatives among men, and one of the most effective ways of winning souls to Him is in exemplifying His character in our daily life. A consistent life, characterised by the meekness of Christ, is a power in the world.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 280.

12. What was Paul's aim in his evangelism and pastoral work? Colossians 1:28.

NOTE: 'Ministers who labour in towns and cities to present the truth should not feel content, nor that their work is ended, until those who have accepted the theory of the truth realise indeed the effect of its sanctifying power, and are truly converted to God. God would be better pleased to have six truly converted to the truth as the result of their labours, than to have sixty make a nominal profession, and yet not be thoroughly converted. These ministers should devote less time to preaching sermons, and reserve a portion of their strength to visit and pray with those who are interested, giving them godly instruction, to the end that they may "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.'" *Evangelism*, page 320.

'We should cultivate a spirit of prayer, not merely praying in our closets, at the family altar, or in public, but having our minds constantly centred on God, taking hold upon His strength, pleading for His grace, confiding in His promises. Let us put on the whole armour of righteousness, which the Captain of our salvation has prepared for us. While we realise our weakness, let us

rely upon His strength, and overcome by the grace which He imparts. There is help in God for every seeker. Great promises are left on record for us. We should keep faith in constant exercise, and it will increase and strengthen. Our hope is in Christ, "whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." *Review & Herald*, August 28, 1883.

Lesson 8: May 16-22

'Be ye holy'

MEMORY VERSE: 'The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.' Luke 6:40.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 529-533.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 1:13-23.

LESSON AIM: To study why man cannot perfect himself and from whence our salvation from our sins comes.

Introduction

'Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 51.

'The carnal heart'

1. What is the problem which afflicts us all? Romans 8:7.

NOTE: 'Those who possess the carnal mind cannot comprehend the sacred force of vital truth upon which their salvation depends, because they cherish pride of heart, love of the world, love of ease, selfishness, covetousness, envy, jealousy, lust, hatred, and every evil. If they would overcome these they might be partakers of the divine nature. Many leave the plain truths of God's word and neglect to follow the light that shines clearly upon their pathway; they try to pry into secrets not plainly revealed and conjecture and talk and dispute in regard to questions which they are not required to understand, for they have no special reference to their salvation. Thousands have been beguiled in this way by Satan. They have neglected present faith and present duty which are clear and comprehensive to all who have their reasoning powers; they have dwelt upon doubtful theories and scriptures which they could not comprehend, and have erred concerning the faith; they have a mixed faith.' *Testimonies*, volume 2, page 694.

2. How is this problem described in Hebrews? Hebrews 3:12.

NOTE: 'When the Redeemer of the world walked among men, many who identified themselves with Him as His disciples afterward forsook Him and became His bitterest enemies. The Saviour tested their faith and developed the real characters of the most ardent believers by applying spiritual truths to their hearts. They must be Christlike, meek and lowly of heart, self-denying, self-sacrificing; they must walk in the narrow path trodden by the Man of Calvary if they would share in the gift of life and the glory of heaven. But the test was too great. They walked no more with Him. They could not hear the saying nor comprehend the nature of the truth He taught. The work of apostasy begins in some secret rebellion of the heart against the requirements of God's law. Unholy desires, unlawful ambitions, are cherished and indulged, and unbelief and darkness separate the soul from God. If we do not overcome these evils, they will overcome us. Men who have long been advancing in the path of truth will be tested with trial and temptation. Those who listen to the suggestions of Satan and swerve from their integrity begin the downward path, and some masterful temptation hastens them on in the way of apostasy, till their descent is marked and rapid. We need to be constantly on our guard, to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. 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.' *That I May Know Him*, page 254.

'I know that in me dwelleth no good thing'

3. What is the first essential step required to enter upon the path of perfection? Romans 7:18.

NOTE: 'It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Job 14:4; Romans 8:7. Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behaviour, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness. The Saviour said, "Except a man be born from above," unless he shall receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3, margin. The idea that it is necessary only to develop the good that exists in man by nature, is a

fatal deception. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Corinthians 2:14; 3:7.' *Steps to Christ*, page 18.

4. How did Paul describe the hopelessness of the unconverted heart to come into harmony with God's will? Romans 7:19.

NOTE: 'By nature the heart is evil, and "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Job 14:4. No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19. The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.' *Desire of Ages*, page 172.

'Every feeling of my heart, in my natural state, is entire opposition to God, there is in me the carnal mind, which is enmity against Him; how shall this hatred be made to give place to adoring, enraptured love? There are in me by nature all the elements of hell. Kindled by the touch of God's deserved wrath, they will burn in an unquenchable fire. How shall I have a nature fit for heaven? I acknowledge my full obligation to cease hating God instantaneously, and to love Him at once and forever with a full and undivided heart. "But I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:18-24).' Charles Fitch, *Sin Shall Not Have Dominion Over You*, page 2.

'Where the tree falleth, there it shall be'

5. What illustration does Solomon give that should warn us against the idea that we shall be perfected morally only when this mortal life ends? Ecclesiastes 11:3.

NOTE: 'I know of nothing, on which I can safely rest the belief, that death is to be regarded as the means, or the times, of sanctification. I believe that, "as the tree falleth, so it lieth" (Ecclesiastes 11:3), that "there is neither work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither we go" (Ecclesiastes 9:10); and that if a man leaves the world in his sins, he remains a sinner forever. I believe that, that I must **here** be saved from sin, or never see God's face in peace. I believe, therefore, that my everlasting interests are pending on the question, whether God has made provision to save me from sin, before I leave this world.' Charles Fitch, *Sin Shall Not Have Dominion Over You*, page 2.

6. How does Paul warn us that it is in this life that we should prepare for God's judgement? Hebrews 9:26-28.

NOTE: 'When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have reserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honour, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 243.

'That He might redeem us from all iniquity'

7. Where is the only place we may look for power to perfect our characters? Titus 2:13-14.

NOTE: 'Christ gave Himself for the redemption of the race, that all who believe in Him may have everlasting life. Those who appreciate this great sacrifice receive from the Saviour that most precious of all gifts, a clean heart. They gain an experience that is more valuable than gold or silver or precious stones. They sit together in heavenly places in Christ, enjoying in communion with Him the joy and peace that He alone can give. They love Him with heart and mind and soul and strength, realising that they are His blood-bought heritage. Their spiritual eyesight is not dimmed by worldly policy or worldly aims. They are one with Christ as He is one with the Father. Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). He made an offering so complete that through His grace every one may reach the standard of perfection. Of those who receive His grace and follow His example it will be written in the book of life, "Complete in Him, without spot or stain." *In Heavenly Places*, page 7.

8. How did Christ explain our inability to achieve any spiritual growth apart from Him? John 15:5.

NOTE: 'Unless a man is renewed in the spirit of his mind by the power of the Holy Spirit, he will become restless and dissatisfied, because he has not died to self. Only in Christ can we find true rest. "Come unto Me," He cried, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." And again He says: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." "For without Me ye can do nothing." Without Christ we can do nothing correctly, any more than could Cain. Of what advantage is any system of religion to one who has not been transformed in character by the Holy Spirit's power? It is saying without doing; it is a profession of faith without works.'

‘That we should be holy and without blame’

9. What has always been God’s purpose for His people? Ephesians 1:4.

NOTE: ‘God desires that the beings made in His image shall render obedience to Him. He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” For this He gave His only begotten Son to this world, that in His strength men might have power to obey. He has “blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” *Review & Herald*, December 15, 1896.

10. How was this purpose expressed to Abraham? Luke 1:73-75.

NOTE: ‘Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the covenant was made that all who were obedient, all who should through the abundant grace provided, become holy in character, and without blame before God, by appropriating that grace, should be children of God. This covenant, made from eternity, was given to Abraham hundreds of years before Christ came. With what interest and what intensity did Christ in humanity study the human race to see if they would avail themselves of the provision offered.’ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 403.

‘Without which no man shall see the Lord’

11. Who did Jesus say will be the ones who will see God? Matthew 5:8.

NOTE: ‘The pure in heart shall see God. Every impure thought defiles the soul, impairs the moral sense, and tends to obliterate the impressions of the Holy Spirit. It dims the spiritual vision, so that men cannot behold God. The Lord may and does forgive the repenting sinner; but though forgiven, the soul is marred. All impurity of speech or of thought must be shunned by him who would have clear discernment of spiritual truth. Some will acknowledge the evil of sinful indulgences, yet will excuse themselves by saying that they cannot overcome their passions. This is a terrible admission for any person to make who names Christ. “Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” 2 Timothy 2:19. Why is this weakness? It is because the animal propensities have been strengthened by exercise until they have gained the ascendancy over the higher powers. Men and women lack principle. They are dying spiritually because they have so long pampered their natural appetites that their power of self-government seems gone. The lower passions of their nature have taken the reins, and that which should be the governing power has become the servant of corrupt passion. The soul is held in lowest bondage. Sensuality has quenched the desire for holiness and withered spiritual prosperity.’ *Counsels for the Church*, page 107.

12. Why is it important for us to be holy? Hebrews 12:14.

NOTE: ‘I have, I can have, I ought to have, no expectation of dwelling where God dwells, of being an object of His love forever, and a sharer of the eternal blessedness which He only can give, unless I have a character fully assimilated to His, unless I love, with a full and undivided heart, what He loves, and hate what He hates, and all that He hates, with a hatred, full, entire, uniform, perpetual, like His own. There must not be in me an approach to any thought or feeling which is not in perfect, full-hearted and joyous agreement, with everything that God is, and with everything that God does. This must be my character, or I will never see God’s face in peace.’ Fitch, *Sin Shall Not Have Dominion Over You*, page 2.

Lesson 9: May 23-29

‘He shall save His people from their sins’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.’ Hebrews 7:25.

STUDY HELP: *Maranatha*, page 79.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 John 3:1-10.

LESSON AIM: To study whether God has made sufficient provision for us to be saved from all our sins.

Introduction

‘Jesus died to save His people from their sins, and redemption in Christ means to cease the transgression of the law of God and to be free from every sin; no heart that is stirred with enmity against the law of God is in harmony with Christ, who suffered on Calvary to vindicate and exalt the law before the universe.’ *Faith & Works*, page 95.

‘The Lamb of God’

1. Has God made provision to save His people from their sins? Matthew 1:21.

NOTE: ‘We are all sinful, and of ourselves are unable to do the words of Christ. But God has made provision whereby the condemned sinner may be freed from spot and stain. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the

righteous.” “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” But while Christ saves the sinner, He does not do away with the law which condemns the sinner. It is the work of redemption to exalt that law, and Christ’s great sacrifice was made in order that man might be a doer of that law. The law shows us our sins, as a mirror shows us that our face is not clean. The mirror has no power to cleanse the face; that is not its office. So it is with the law. It points out our defects, and condemns us, but it has no power to save us. We must come to Christ for pardon. He will take our guilt upon His own soul, and will justify us before God. And not only will He free us from sin, but He will give us power to render obedience to God’s will.’ *Signs of the Times*, September 24, 1896.

2. How did John the Baptist describe the role of Jesus? John 1:29.

NOTE: ‘The one who breaks with Satan is to give no place to his temptations. Let the souls who come to Christ consider that He is the Sin-bearer, “wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” All this is done for the sinner, and as the sinner comes to Christ, helpless, penitent, and humble; as he views the expensive expiation made in his behalf, let the repenting soul lay hold by faith of the provision made to save him, not in his sin, but from his sin. Christ as the sin-bearer must take away the sin and rescue the sinner from his morbid spiritual condition. As he asks for a change of heart, the answer comes, “My son, give Me thine heart.” “A new heart will I give thee.” I will restore you to a pure, holy atmosphere, that you, being dead to sin, may live unto righteousness.’ *Manuscript Releases*, volume 6, page 157.

‘That we should be holy and without blame’

3. How did Paul describe God’s purpose for His people? Ephesians 1:4.

NOTE: ‘Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the covenant was made that all who were obedient, all who should through the abundant grace provided, become holy in character, and without blame before God, by appropriating that grace, should be children of God. This covenant, made from eternity, was given to Abraham hundreds of years before Christ came. With what interest and what intensity did Christ in humanity study the human race to see if they would avail themselves of the provision offered. “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”’ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 403.

4. To what extent does Christ plan His church to be purified? Ephesians 5:25-27.

NOTE: ‘That [Christ] might by His own example condemn sin in the flesh, He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh. Constantly He beheld the character of God; constantly He revealed this character to the world. Christ desires His followers to reveal in their lives this same character. In His intercessory prayer for His disciples He declared: “The glory [character] which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me” (John 17:22, 23). Today it is still His purpose to sanctify and cleanse His church “that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Ephesians 5:26, 27). No greater gift than the character that He revealed can Christ ask His Father to bestow upon those who believe on Him. What largeness there is in His request! What fullness of grace every follower of Christ has the privilege of receiving! O that we might more fully appreciate the honour Christ confers upon us! By wearing His yoke and learning of Him, we become like Him in aspiration, in meekness and lowliness, in fragrance of character.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 322.

‘Who gave Himself for us’

5. Why did Christ give Himself to mankind? Titus 2:13-14.

NOTE: ‘Christ “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). He made an offering so complete that through His grace every one may reach the standard of perfection. Of those who receive His grace and follow His example it will be written in the book of life, “Complete in Him, without spot or stain.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). What is there left for us to ask, that is not included in this merciful, abundant provision? Through the merits of Christ we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. It is our privilege to draw nigh to God, to breathe in the atmosphere of His presence. Nothing short of abiding in the presence of Christ will bring peace, freedom, courage, and power.’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 7.

6. How did John express his understanding of this truth? 1 John 3:5.

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.

‘I will put My laws into their hearts’

7. How does Christ achieve this goal of purifying His people? Hebrews 10:16-17. Compare Jeremiah 31:33.

NOTE: ‘The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up, the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. Often the question arises, Why, then, are there so many, claiming to believe God’s word, in whom there is not seen a reformation in words, in spirit, and in character? Why are there so many who cannot bear opposition to their purposes and plans, who manifest an unholy temper, and whose words are harsh, overbearing, and passionate? There is seen in their lives the same love of self, the same selfish indulgence, the same temper and hasty speech, that is seen in the life of the worldling. There is the same sensitive pride, the same yielding to natural inclination, the same perversity of character, as if the truth were wholly unknown to them. The reason is that they are not converted. They have not hidden the leaven of truth in the heart. It has not had opportunity to do its work. Their natural and cultivated tendencies to evil have not been submitted to its transforming power. Their lives reveal the absence of the grace of Christ, an unbelief in His power to transform the character.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 98-99.

8. What must we understand about ourselves if Christ is to accomplish this work in us? Romans 7:18.

NOTE: ‘Men who have lived the nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God has honoured with divine light and power, have confessed the sinfulness of their nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ. So will it be with all who behold Christ. The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone and shall make the apostle’s confession our own: “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.” “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Romans 7:18; Galatians 6:14.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 561.

‘Who shall deliver me?’

9. How did Paul express his utter helplessness to purify his own life? Romans 7:24.

NOTE: ‘Paul realised his weakness, and well he might distrust his own strength. Referring to the law, he says, “The commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.” He had trusted in the deeds of the law. He says, concerning his own outward life, that as “touching the law” he was “blameless”; and he put his trust in his own righteousness. But when the mirror of the law was held up before him, and he saw himself as God saw him, full of mistakes, stained with sin, he cried out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”’ *Lift Him Up*, page 40.

10. What precious insight was brought to Paul when he encountered the risen Christ? Romans 8:2-4.

NOTE: ‘There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness. The idea that it is necessary only to develop the good that exists in man by nature, is a fatal deception. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14. Of Christ it is written, “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men”, the only “name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” John 1:4; Acts 4:12. Paul the apostle longed for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and he cried out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” Romans 7:24, margin. Such is the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages. To all, there is but one answer, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 96.

‘Perfect and complete in all the will of God’

11. How did Paul describe the goal of the Christian’s life? Colossians 4:12, last part.

NOTE: ‘Christ says to us, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). He is our example. During His life on earth He was ever kind and gentle. His influence was ever fragrant, for in Him dwelt perfect love. He was never sour and unapproachable, and He never compromised with wrong to obtain favour. If we have His righteousness, we shall be like Him in gentleness, in forbearance, in unselfish love. Shall we not, by dwelling in the sunshine of His presence, become mellowed by His grace? Let us honour our profession of faith. Let us adorn our lives with beautiful traits of character. Harshness of speech and action is not of Christ, but of Satan. Shall we, by clinging to our imperfections and deformities, make Christ ashamed of us? His grace is promised to us. If we will receive it, it will beautify our lives. Deformity will be exchanged for goodness, perfection. Our lives will be adorned with the graces that made Christ’s life so beautiful.’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 31.

12. How did Paul make clear that this goal is only achieved through the power of Christ? Colossians 2:9-10.

NOTE: 'The Infinite One, He who alone was able to bring order and beauty out of the chaos and confusion of nature's darkness, is able to subdue the rebellious heart of man and bring his life into conformity to the divine will. His Spirit can quell man's rebellious temper. Day by day we are building characters, and we are building for eternity. God desires us in our lives to give the people of the world an example of what they should be and of what they can be through obedience to the gospel of Christ. Let us place ourselves in God's hands, to be dealt with as He sees best. "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). If we build in co-operation with Him, the structure that we rear will day by day grow more beautiful and more symmetrical under the hand of the Master Builder, and through all eternity it will endure.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 31.

Lesson 10: May 30-June 5 **'Abide in Me'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.' Jude vv. 24-25.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, page 311.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: John 15:1-14.

LESSON AIM: To study how we may lay hold on God's provision to save us from our sins.

Introduction

'Do you ask, "How am I to abide in Christ?" In the same way as you received Him at first. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Colossians 2:6. "The just shall live by faith." Hebrews 10:38. You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Saviour. You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believe that He for Christ's sake did all this for you. By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him, by giving and taking. You are to give all, your heart, your will, your service, give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must take all, Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper, to give you power to obey.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 125.

'In holiness and righteousness before Him'

1. What oath did God swear to Abraham? Luke 1:73-75.

NOTE: 'Jesus came to bring moral power to combine with human effort, and in no case are His followers to allow themselves to lose sight of Christ, who is their example in all things. He said, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19). Jesus presents the truth before His children that they may look upon it, and by beholding it, may become changed, being transformed by His grace from transgression to obedience, from impurity to purity, from sin to heart-holiness and righteousness of life.' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 262.

2. What are we warned concerning those who do not believe that God will keep His word? 1 John 5:10.

NOTE: 'The promise is sure and steadfast. When you say you have not faith in God you make God a liar and show that you have no confidence in the Holy Spirit's work, which is always ready to help our infirmities. He is always waiting at your door, always knocking for admittance. Let Him in. All you have to do is to put your will over on the Lord's side. You need the promise, but it is the infinite One behind the promise in whom you are to have perfect confidence. Say it: "I am the Lord's. I do believe." Crowd out every doubt from the soul. Have faith in God. He loves you. Never, never allow yourself to doubt or distrust Him.' *This Day With God*, page 158.

'Him that is able to keep you from falling'

3. What prayer may we pray to lay hold on God's provision to save us from our sins? Jude v.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. *Maranatha*, page 225

4. What admission must we make about ourselves? Romans 7:18. Compare 1 Corinthians 10:12.

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.

‘A new heart’

5. What precious promises has God made to His people? Ezekiel 36:25-27, 29, first part.

NOTE: ‘You are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You believe that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You will to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfil His word to you. If you believe the promise, believe that you are forgiven and cleansed, God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it. Do not wait to feel that you are made whole, but say, “I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised.” Henceforth you are not your own; you are bought with a price. “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18, 19. Through this simple act of believing God, the Holy Spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are as a child born into the family of God, and He loves you as He loves His Son.’ *A Call To Stand Apart*, page 30.

6. How did Paul describe the receiving of the new heart and the effect this has on the life? Romans 12:2.

NOTE: ‘The gospel is not without a sign of its divine origin. Is it not a miracle that we can break from the bondage of Satan? Enmity against Satan is not natural to the human heart; it is implanted by the grace of God. When one who has been controlled by a stubborn, wayward will is set free, and yields himself wholeheartedly to the drawing of God’s heavenly agencies, a miracle is wrought; so also when a man who has been under strong delusion comes to understand moral truth. Every time a soul is converted, and learns to love God and keep His commandments, the promise of God is fulfilled, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” Ezekiel 36:26. The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Saviour, working to rescue souls. A consistent life in Christ is a great miracle. In the preaching of the word of God, the sign that should be manifest now and always is the presence of the Holy Spirit, to make the word a regenerating power to those that hear. This is God’s witness before the world to the divine mission of His Son.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 407.

‘Henceforth we should not serve sin’

7. How does Paul describe the end of the former life with its motives and passions? Romans 6:6. Read verses 1-18.

NOTE: “‘How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?’ And John declares: “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.” Romans 6:2; 1 John 5:3. In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with God, as it is brought into accord with His law. When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. The old life of alienation from God has ended; the new life of reconciliation, of faith and love, has begun. Then “the righteousness of the law” will “be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:4. And the language of the soul will be: “O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.” Psalm 119:97.’ *Great Controversy*, page 468.

8. What do our actions reveal about our true allegiance? Romans 6:16.

NOTE: ‘Very many who profess to be servants of Christ are none of His. They are deceiving their souls to their own destruction. While they profess to be servants of Christ, they are not living in obedience to His will. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Many, while professing to be servants of Christ, are obeying another master, working daily against the Master whom they profess to serve. “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Earthly and selfish interests engage the soul, mind, and strength of God’s professed followers. To all intents and purposes they are servants of mammon. They have not experienced a crucifixion to the world, with its affections and lusts. But few among the many who profess to be Christ’s followers can say in the language of the apostle: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” “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.” If willing obedience and true love characterise the lives of the people of God, their light will shine with a holy brightness to the world.’ *Testimonies, volume 2*, page 442.

‘Take up his cross daily’

9. Did Christ teach that the new birth is a once-for-all-time, irreversible experience (once saved, always saved)? Luke 9:23. Consider 2 Peter 2:20-21.

NOTE: ‘Some have advanced the idea that if we are once in grace, we are always in grace. But our work is to overcome every

day. Temptations press upon every hand; do we resist them, and come off victor in the name of Christ?' *Signs of the Times*, August 6, 1885.

'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 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.

10. What warning are we given concerning those who, having received the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives, fall away from the truth? Hebrews 6:4-6.

NOTE: 'He who rests satisfied with his own present imperfect knowledge of the Scriptures, thinking this sufficient for his salvation, is resting in a fatal deception. There are many who are not thoroughly furnished with Scriptural arguments, that they may be able to discern error, and condemn all the tradition and superstition that has been palmed off as truth. Satan has introduced his own ideas into the worship of God, that he might corrupt the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. A large number who claim to believe the present truth, know not what constitutes the faith that was once delivered to the saints, Christ in you the hope of glory. They think they are defending the old landmarks, but they are lukewarm and indifferent. They know not what it is to weave into their experience and to possess the real virtue of love and faith. They are not close Bible students, but are lazy and inattentive. When differences of opinion arise upon the passages of Scripture, these who have not studied to a purpose and are not decided as to what they believe, fall away from the truth. We ought to impress upon all the necessity of inquiring diligently into divine truth, that they may know that they do know what is truth. Some claim much knowledge, and feel satisfied with their condition, when they have no more zeal for the work, no more ardent love for God, and for souls for whom Christ died, than if they had never known God. They do not read the Bible in order to appropriate the marrow and fatness to their own souls. They do not feel that it is the voice of God speaking to them. But, if we would understand the way of salvation, if we would see the beams of the Sun of righteousness, we must study the Scriptures for a purpose, for the promises and prophecies of the Bible shed clear beams of glory upon the divine plan of redemption, which grand truths are not clearly comprehended.' *1888 Materials*, page 403.

'Without Me ye can do nothing'

11. What counsel did Jesus give to His followers concerning their spiritual life? John 15:4-5.

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. "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 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.

12. What, according to John, will come as a result of abiding in Christ? 1 John 3:6.

NOTE: '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.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 563. 'It is through faith in Jesus Christ that the truth is accepted in the heart, and the human agent is purified and cleansed. He has an abiding principle in the soul that enables him to overcome temptation. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." 1 John 3:6. God has power to keep the soul that is in Christ who is under temptation.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 130.

Lesson 11: June 6-12

'The God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do His will'

MEMORY VERSE: 'But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.' James 1:4.

STUDY HELP: *Lift Him Up*, page 273.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 John 2:1-11.

LESSON AIM: To study whether the Bible teaches that perfection of character is possible.

Introduction

'None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through co-operation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 531.

'A perfect and an upright man'

1. What testimony did the Lord repeatedly give concerning Job? Job 1:8. Compare Job 2:3.

NOTE: 'Very early in the history of the world is given the life-record of one over whom this controversy of Satan's was waged. Of Job, the patriarch of Uz, the testimony of the Searcher of hearts was, "There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil." Against this man, Satan brought scornful charge: "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast Thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" The Lord said unto Satan, "All that he hath is in thy power." "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." Thus permitted, Satan swept away all that Job possessed, flocks and herds, men-servants and maidens, sons and daughters; and he "smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." Still another element of bitterness was added to his cup. His friends, seeing in adversity but the retribution of sin, pressed on his bruised and burdened spirit their accusations of wrong-doing. "When He hath tried me," he said, "I shall come forth as gold." So it came to pass. By his patient endurance he vindicated his own character, and thus the character of Him whose representative he was.' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 95.

2. How did Job's character manifest itself in his conduct? Read Job 31.

NOTE: 'True worship consists in working together with Christ. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The love of Christ, dwelling in the heart, will be manifested in earnest effort to accomplish the work which Jesus came to do. Kind words, deeds of benevolence, of tender care for the needy and the afflicted, this is the fruit that grows naturally upon the good tree. Such was the fruit manifest in the life of that righteous man of whom God Himself declared, "There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man." Job says, "I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out.'" *The Home Missionary*, July 1, 1891.

'If I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse'

3. What was Job's testimony concerning himself? 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.

4. How did his 'friends' regard Job? Job 32:1. Consider Job 19:19.

NOTE: 'Job was not understood by his friends. He flings back upon them their reproaches. He shows them that if they are defending God by avowing their faith in Him and their consciousness of sin, he has a more deep and thorough knowledge of it than they ever had. "Miserable comforters are ye all," is the answer he makes to their criticisms and censures. "I also," says Job, "could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you." But he declares that he would not do this. "I," he says, "would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief." Brethren and sisters who are well meaning, but who have narrow conceptions and look only at externals, may attempt to help matters of which they have no real knowledge. Their limited experience cannot fathom the feelings of a soul who has been urged out by the Spirit of God, who has felt to the depths that earnest and inexpressible love and interest for the cause of God and for souls that they have never experienced, and who has borne burdens in the cause of God that they have never lifted. Some short-sighted, short-experienced friends cannot, with their narrow vision, appreciate the feelings of one who has been in close harmony with the soul of Christ in connection with the salvation of others. His motives are misunderstood and his actions misconstrued by those who would be his friends, until, like Job, he sends forth the earnest prayer: Save me from my friends.' *Testimonies*, volume 3, pages 508-509.

'Not as though I had already attained'

5. What testimony did Paul bear of himself? Philippians 3:12. Consider verse 15.

NOTE: 'The apostle Paul had been caught up to the third heaven and had seen and heard things that could not be uttered, and yet his unassuming statement is: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after." Philippians 3:12. Let the angels of heaven write of Paul's victories in fighting the good fight of faith. Let heaven rejoice in his steadfast tread heavenward, and that, keeping the prize in view, he counts every other consideration dross. Angels rejoice to tell his triumphs, but Paul makes no boast of his attainments. The attitude of Paul is the attitude that every follower of Christ should take as he urges his way onward in the strife for the immortal crown.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 562.

6. Did Paul teach that it is impossible to be perfect? 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Compare Colossians 1:28.

NOTE: 'Paul knew that his warfare against evil would not end so long as life should last. Ever he realised the need of putting a strict guard upon himself, that earthly desires might not overcome spiritual zeal. With all his power he continued to strive against natural inclinations. Ever he kept before him the ideal to be attained, and this ideal he strove to reach by willing obedience to the law of God. His words, his practices, his passions, all were brought under the control of the Spirit of God. It was this single-hearted purpose to win the race for eternal life that Paul longed to see revealed in the lives of the Corinthian believers. He knew that in order to reach Christ's ideal for them, they had before them a life struggle from which there would be no release. He entreated them to strive lawfully, day by day seeking for piety and moral excellence. He pleaded with them to lay aside every weight and to press forward to the goal of perfection in Christ.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 314-315.

'A perfect man'

7. What practical evidence of perfection of character did James propose? James 3:2.

NOTE: 'When we are brought into adverse circumstances, when our natural feelings are stirred, and we want to give vent to them, then our faith is tried; then we are to manifest the meekness and gentleness of Christ. Not by one word are we to give expression to the feelings of the natural heart. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2), the whole man. What we want is to be under the control of Jesus. We do not want our own way. I have heard some plead as an excuse for their wrong course, "You know that it is my temperament, it is my disposition, transmitted to me from my parents." Yes; and they have cultivated it and educated themselves in it and thus excused all their wrongdoing. Instead of yielding to temptation, they should lay hold upon the arm of Infinite Power, saying, "I will come to God just as I am, and plead with Christ to give me the victory. I shall be more than conqueror through Him that loved me." *In Heavenly Places*, page 270.

8. What evidence of perfection of character did John suggest? 1 John 4:11-12.

NOTE: 'There is among us a very limited amount of real, unselfish love. The Lord says: "Everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." 1 John 4:7, 8, 12. It is not pleasing to God to see man looking only upon his own things, closing his eyes to the interests of others.' *Counsels on Health*, page 309.

'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. With untold love our God has loved us, and our love awakens toward Him as we comprehend something of the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that passeth knowledge. By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith. He tells us to be perfect as He is, in the same manner. We are to be centres of light and blessing to our little circle, even as He is to the universe. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines upon us, and we are to reflect its brightness.' *Reflecting Christ*, page 73.

'The love of God perfected'

9. What further evidence of perfection is to be seen in the life of the true Christian? 1 John 2:5.

NOTE: 'This is the true test, the doing of the words of Christ. And it is the evidence of the human agent's love to Jesus, and he that doeth His will giveth to the world the practical evidence of the fruit he manifests in obedience, in purity, and in holiness of character.' *Faith & Works*, page 113.

'The tremendous issues of eternity demand of us something besides an imaginary religion, a religion of words and forms, where the truth is kept in the outer court, to be admired as we admire a beautiful flower; they demand something more than a religion of feeling, which distrusts God when trials and difficulties come. Holiness does not consist in profession, but in lifting the cross, doing the will 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" (1 John 2:4, 5).' *In Heavenly Places*, page 131.

10. What may be required to test the quality of our characters? 1 Peter 5:10, Psalm 34:19. Compare Job 23:10.

NOTE: 'The assaults of Satan are fierce and determined, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye is upon His people, and His ear listens to their cries. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but the Refiner will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. God's love for His children during the period of their severest trial is as strong

and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; their earthliness must be consumed, that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected.' *Great Controversy*, page 621.

'Your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless'

11. What parable did Jesus tell to warn against self-righteousness? Luke 18:9-14.

NOTE: 'The claim to be without sin is, in itself, evidence that he who makes this claim is far from holy. It is because he has no true conception of the infinite purity and holiness of God or of what they must become who shall be in harmony with His character; because he has no true conception of the purity and exalted loveliness of Jesus, and the malignity and evil of sin, that man can regard himself as holy. The greater the distance between himself and Christ, and the more inadequate his conceptions of the divine character and requirements, the more righteous he appears in his own eyes.' *Great Controversy*, page 473.

12. What kind of perfection did Paul pray to see in those he preached to? 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

NOTE: 'The sanctification set forth in the Scriptures embraces the entire being, spirit, soul, and body. Paul prayed for the Thessalonians that their "whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Again he writes to believers: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." Romans 12:1. In the time of ancient Israel every offering brought as a sacrifice to God was carefully examined. If any defect was discovered in the animal presented, it was refused; for God had commanded that the offering be "without blemish." So Christians are bidden to present their bodies, "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." In order to do this, all their powers must be preserved in the best possible condition. Every practice that weakens physical or mental strength unfits man for the service of his Creator. And will God be pleased with anything less than the best we can offer? Said Christ: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Those who do love God with all the heart will desire to give Him the best service of their 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. They will not, by the indulgence of appetite or passion, enfeeble or defile the offering which they present to their heavenly Father.' *Great Controversy*, page 473.

Lesson 12: June 13-19 'The trial of your faith'

MEMORY VERSE: 'But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.' Job 23:10.

STUDY HELP: *Christ Triumphant*, page 199.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 4:12-19.

LESSON AIM: To study why God permits His people to be tested.

Introduction

'In the religious life of every soul who is finally victorious there will be scenes of terrible perplexity and trial; but his knowledge of the Scriptures will enable him to bring to mind the encouraging promises of God, which will comfort his heart and strengthen his faith in the power of the Mighty One. He reads: "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:7). The trial of faith is more precious than gold. All should learn that this is a part of the discipline in the school of Christ, which is essential to purify and refine them from the dross of earthliness.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 81.

'The peaceable fruit'

1. What is God's purpose in permitting trials and temptations to come to His people? Hebrews 12:11.

NOTE: 'Before we are delivered from Satan's power without, we must be delivered from his power within. The Lord permits trials in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from harsh, unchristlike traits of character. He suffers the deep waters of affliction to go over our souls in order that we may know Him and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, in order that we may have deep heart longings to be cleansed from defilement, and may come forth from the trial purer, holier, happier. Often we enter the furnace of trial with our souls darkened with selfishness; but if patient under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine character. When His purpose in the affliction is accomplished, "He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Psalm 37:6.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 174.

2. Of what are we assured concerning our trials and temptations? Proverbs 3:11-12. Compare Hebrews 12:4-6.

NOTE: 'Trial is part of the education given in the school of Christ, to purify God's children from the dross of earthliness. It is because God is leading His children that trying experiences come to them. Trials and obstacles are His chosen methods of discipline, and His appointed conditions of success. He who reads the hearts of men knows their weaknesses better than they themselves can know them. He sees that some have qualifications which, if rightly directed, could be used in the advancement of His work. In His providence He brings these souls into different positions and varied circumstances, that they may discover

the defects that are concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to overcome these defects and to fit themselves for service. Often He permits the fires of affliction to burn, that they may be purified.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 524.

'Think it not strange'

3. What counsel did Peter give us for times of temptation and trial? 1 Peter 4:12-13.

NOTE: 'The fact that we are called upon to endure trial shows that the Lord Jesus sees in us something precious which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name, He would not spend time in refining us. He does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He refines. God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 64.

4. What should be our response if the Lord chastens us? Revelation 3:19.

NOTE: 'Those who are reproved by the Spirit of God should not rise up against the humble instrument. It is God, and not an erring mortal, who has spoken to save them from ruin. Those who despise the warning will be left in blindness to become self-deceived. But those who heed it, and zealously go about the work of separating their sins from them in order to have the needed graces, will be opening the door of their hearts that the dear Saviour may come in and dwell with them.' *Testimonies, volume 3*, page 257.

'Through the valley of the shadow of death'

5. What assurance may we have in life's darkest times? Psalm 23:4.

NOTE: 'I must trust in Him irrespective of the changes of my emotional atmosphere. I must show forth the praises of Him who has called me out of darkness into His marvellous light. My heart must be steadfast in Christ, my Saviour, beholding His love and gracious goodness. I must not trust Him now and then, but always, that I may manifest the results of abiding in Him who has bought me with His precious blood. We must learn to believe the promises, to have an abiding faith. Let us live in the sunlight of the cross of Calvary. Let us no longer dwell in the shadow, complaining of our sorrows, for this only deepens our trouble. Let us never forget, even when we walk in the valley, that Christ is as much with us when we walk trustingly there as when we are on the mountaintop.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 52.

6. What expression of faith did Job make in his darkest hour? Job 13:15, first part.

NOTE: 'When depression settles upon the soul, it is no evidence that God has changed. He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." You are sure of the favour of God when you are sensible of the beams of the Sun of righteousness; but if the clouds sweep over your soul, you must not feel that you are forsaken. Your faith must pierce the gloom. Your eye must be single, and your whole body shall be full of light. The riches of the grace of Christ must be kept before the mind. Treasure up the lessons that His love provides. Let your faith be like Job's, that you may declare, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Lay hold on the promises of your heavenly Father, and remember His former dealing with you and with His servants; for "all things work together for good to them that love God." *Review & Herald*, January 24, 1888.

'He who died that we might live forever in heaven, is now standing before His Father, pleading in our behalf. He ever lives to make intercession for us, and to dispense to us grace and blessing in abundant measure. He will give His children the help that He sees they need. He has promised, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." He lays upon them no burden greater than they are able to bear.' *Signs of the Times*, September 2, 1903.

'Thou art Mine'

7. What precious promises has God given us for times when the situation seems dark? Isaiah 43:1-2.

NOTE: 'When trouble comes upon us, how often we are like Peter! We look upon the waves, instead of keeping our eyes fixed upon the Saviour. Our footsteps slide, and the proud waters go over our souls. Jesus did not bid Peter come to Him that he should perish; He does not call us to follow Him, and then forsake us. "Fear not," He says; "for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Isaiah 43:1-3.' *Desire of Ages*, page 382.

8. What assurance are we given to make sense of the bewildering experiences in our lives? Romans 8:28.

NOTE: 'The fact that we are called upon to endure trial shows that the Lord Jesus sees in us something precious which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name, He would not spend time in refining us. He does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He refines. God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 64.

'Found unto praise and honour and glory'

9. What does the Bible tell us is the outcome of all our trials and temptations? 1 Peter 1:7.

NOTE: 'Not in freedom from trial, but in the midst of it, is Christian character developed. Exposure to rebuffs and opposition leads the follower of Christ to greater watchfulness and more earnest prayer to the mighty Helper. Severe trial endured by the grace of God develops patience, vigilance, fortitude, and a deep and abiding trust in God. It is the triumph of the Christian faith that it enables its followers to suffer and be strong; to submit, and thus to conquer; to be killed all the day long, and yet to live; to bear the cross, and thus to win the crown of glory.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 467.

10. How will our suffering here compare with what God has in store for us? 2 Corinthians 4:17.

NOTE: 'Some hardly know as yet what self-denial or sacrifice is, or what it is to suffer for the truth's sake. But none will enter heaven without making a sacrifice. A spirit of self-denial and sacrifice should be cherished. Some have not sacrificed themselves, their own bodies, on the altar of God. They indulge in hasty, fitful temper, gratify their appetites, and attend to their own self-interest, regardless of the cause of God. Those who are willing to make any sacrifice for eternal life will have it; and it will be worth suffering for, worth crucifying self for, and sacrificing every idol for. The far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory swallows up everything and eclipses every earthly pleasure.' *Maranatha*, page 42.

'That we also may be glorified'

11. What prospect did Paul hold up before those who suffer as Christ did in the battle with sin? Romans 8:17.

NOTE: 'All who have borne with Jesus the cross of sacrifice will be sharers with Him of His glory. It was the joy of Christ in His humiliation and pain that His disciples should be glorified with Him. They are the fruit of His self-sacrifice. The outworking in them of His own character and spirit is His reward, and will be His joy throughout eternity. This joy they share with Him as the fruit of their labour and sacrifice is seen in other hearts and lives. They are workers together with Christ, and the Father will honour them as He honours His Son.' *Desire of Ages*, page 624.

12. In contemplating the theme of perfection of character, what should be our chief aim? Ephesians 1:12.

NOTE: 'You may have a living testimony to bear: "Hear what the Lord has done for my soul." The Lord is ready to impart still greater blessings. He permitted all His goodness to pass before Moses. He proclaimed His character to him as a God full of mercy, long-suffering and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Moses was to represent this character to the people of Israel, and we are to do the same. We are to go forth to proclaim the goodness of God and to make plain His real character before the people. We are to reflect His glory. Let us declare the character of God to the people as Moses did to Israel, both in spirit and life. We are to catch the light of His countenance, full of compassion and love, and reflect it to perishing souls.' *That I May Know Him*, page 370.

'God calls for all to come into harmony with Himself. He will receive them if they will put away their evil actions. By a union with the divine nature of Christ, they may escape the corrupting influences of this world. It is time for every one of us to decide whose side we are on. The agencies of Satan will work with every mind that will allow itself to be worked by him. But there are also heavenly agencies waiting to communicate the bright rays of the glory of God to all that are willing to receive Him. It is truth that we want, precious truth in all its loveliness. Truth will bring liberty and gladness.' *To Be Like Jesus*, page 378.

Lesson 13: June 20-26
'They shall see God'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.' Matthew 5:8.

STUDY HELP: *In Heavenly Places*, page 286.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 21:1-22:5.

LESSON AIM: To study what awaits those who by God's grace attain to perfection of character.

Introduction

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." [Matthew 5:8.] For three hundred years Enoch had been seeking purity of heart that he might be in harmony with heaven. For three centuries he had walked with God. Day by day he had longed for a closer union; nearer and nearer had grown the communion, until God took him to Himself. He had stood at the threshold of the eternal world, only a step between him and the land of the blest; and now the portals opened, the walk with God, so long pursued on earth, continued, and he passed through the gates of the holy city, the first from among men to enter there. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; . . . for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." [Hebrews 11:5.] To such communion God is calling us. As was Enoch's, so must be their holiness of character who shall be redeemed from among men at the Lord's second coming.' *Gospel Workers*, pages 53-54.

'Blessed are the pure in heart'

1. What awaits those who are pure in heart? Matthew 5:8.

NOTE: 'The Lord is coming with power and great glory. All who have made Christ their refuge will reflect His image, and they will be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is. They are to be presented to Him without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27).' *That I May Know Him*, page 61.

2. What quality of character is required of all those who will see the Lord? Hebrews 12:14.

NOTE: 'Well may you ask, "Is my name written there?" It is registered in that book of life if you have a character that is pure and holy like the character of Christ. Faith in the truth alone will not save us. We must be like Christ if we shall one day see Him as He is. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." Any hope aside and separate from purity and righteousness is a snare of Satan, sophistry, and fatal delusion. Jesus came to our world, and graciously stands inviting us to come unto Him and learn of Him, believe in Him; and as we come, He grafts us into His life and into His character. Our drawing nigh to Christ is faith, and the grafting process is adoption; and by this mutual act we become sons of God and joint heirs with Christ, partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' *Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour, Divorce & Adultery*, pages 134-135.

'We shall see Him as He is'

3. How does the apostle John describe those who see the Lord face to face? 1 John 3:2.

NOTE: 'Christ is soon coming in the clouds of heaven, and we must be prepared to meet Him, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. . . The converting power of God must be upon our hearts. We must study the life of Christ, and imitate the divine Pattern. We must dwell upon the perfection of His character, and be changed into His image. No one will enter the kingdom of God unless his passions are subdued, unless his will is brought into captivity to the will of Christ. Heaven is free from all sin, from all defilement and impurity; and if we would live in its atmosphere, if we would behold the glory of Christ, we must be pure in heart, perfect in character through His grace and righteousness. We must not be taken up with pleasure and amusement, but be fitting up for the glorious mansions Christ has gone to prepare for us. If we are faithful, seeking to bless others, patient in well-doing, at His coming Christ will crown us with glory, honour, and immortality.' *Ye Shall Receive Power*, page 99.

4. How does John describe those who are unable to look into the Lord's face? Revelation 6:15-17.

NOTE: 'If you would be a saint in heaven, you must first be a saint on earth. The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection. You will come up from the grave with the same disposition you manifested in your home and in society. Jesus does not change the character at His coming. The work of transformation must be done now. Our daily lives are determining our destiny.' *The Adventist Home*, page 16.

'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.

'He that hath clean hands and a pure heart'

5. How does David describe those who will dwell with the Lord? Psalm 15:1-5. Compare Psalm 24:3-5.

NOTE: 'What is it to be a Christian? It is to be Christlike; it is to do the works of Christ. Some fail on one point, some on another. Some are naturally impatient. Satan understands their weakness, and manages to overcome them again and again. But let none be discouraged by this. Whenever little annoyances and trials arise, ask God in silent prayer to give you strength and grace to bear them patiently. There is a power in silence; do not speak a word until you have sent up your petition to the God of heaven. If you will always do this, you will soon overcome your hasty temper, and you will have a little heaven here to go to heaven in. God wants His people to cleanse their hands and purify their hearts. Will it make them unhappy to do this? Will it bring unhappiness into their families if they are kind and patient, courteous and forbearing? Far from it. The kindness they manifest toward their families will be reflected upon themselves. This is the work that should be carried forward in the home. If the members of the family are not prepared to dwell in peace here, they are not prepared to dwell in the family that shall gather around the great white throne. Sin always brings darkness and bondage; but right-doing will bring peace and holy joy.' *Lift Him Up*, page 341.

6. What are we told concerning those who will have no right to enter the kingdom of heaven? Revelation 21:27.

NOTE: 'Christ asks for unreserved consecration, for undivided service. He demands the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength. Outward observances can not take the place of simple faith and entire renunciation of self. But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, "Lord, take my heart; for I can not keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristianlike self. Mould me, fashion me, raise me into a pure, holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul." It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves. Therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heart-breaking confession of sin, and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by a constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely. There are many who do not make an entire surrender. They do not die to self that Christ may live in them. They adopt His name, they wear His badge, but they are not partakers of His nature. They have not overcome their unholy ambition and their love for the world. They do not take up the cross and follow

Christ in the path of self-denial and self-sacrifice. Almost Christians, yet not fully Christians, they seem near the kingdom of heaven, but they cannot enter there. Almost, but not wholly saved, means to be wholly lost.' *Signs of the Times*, January 6, 1904.

'The things which God hath prepared'

7. What are we told concerning the reward of those who enter the kingdom of God? 1 Corinthians 2:9.

NOTE: 'Language is altogether too feeble to attempt a description of heaven. As the scene rises before me, I am lost in amazement. Carried away with the surpassing splendour and excellent glory, I lay down the pen, and exclaim, "Oh, what love! What wondrous love!" The most exalted language fails to describe the glory of heaven or the matchless depths of a Saviour's love.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 352.

8. What things will be gone forever in God's eternal kingdom? Revelation 21:4. Compare Revelation 7:16-17.

NOTE: 'There will be no sadness in the city of God. No wail of sorrow, no dirge of crushed hopes and buried affections, will evermore be heard. Soon the garments of heaviness will be changed for the wedding garment. Soon we shall witness the coronation of our King. Those whose lives have been hidden with Christ, those who on this earth have fought the good fight of faith, will shine forth with the Redeemer's glory in the kingdom of God. It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centred. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness. Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 362.

'So shall we ever be with the Lord'

9. What precious promise did Jesus make before He left His disciples? John 14:2. Compare Matthew 25:34.

NOTE: "'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," [1 John 5:4.] It is faith that enables us to look beyond the present, with its burdens and cares, to the great hereafter, where all that now perplexes us shall be made plain. Faith sees Jesus standing as our Mediator at the right hand of God. Faith beholds the mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for those who love Him. Faith sees the robe and crown prepared for the overcomer, and hears the song of the redeemed.' *Gospel Workers*, page 259.

10. What assurance do those faithful to Christ have? 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

NOTE: 'Through faith the children of God obtain a knowledge of Christ and cherish the hope of His appearing to judge the world in righteousness, until it becomes a glorious expectation; for they shall then see Him as He is, and be made like Him, and ever be with the Lord. The sleeping saints shall then be called forth from their graves to a glorious immortality. When the day of deliverance shall come, then shall ye return and discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. When Christ shall come, it will be to be admired of all those that believe, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Those who are looking for the revelation of Christ in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords, in life and character will seek to represent Him to the world. "And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3). They will hate sin and iniquity, even as Christ hated sin. They will keep the commandments of God, as Christ kept His Father's commandments. They will realise that it is not enough to acquiesce in the doctrines of truth, but that the truth must be applied to the heart, practised in the life, in order that the followers of Christ may be one with Him, and that men may be as pure in their sphere as God is in His sphere.' *Faith & Works*, page 115.

'Being confident of this very thing'

11. What words will burst from the lips of God's people when they finally see Him face to face? Isaiah 25:8-9.

NOTE: 'While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing. The unsullied light will shine from His splendour, and Christ the Redeemer will be admired by all who have served Him. While the wicked flee from His presence, Christ's followers will rejoice. The patriarch Job, looking down to the time of Christ's second advent, said, "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not a stranger." Job 19:27, margin. To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts. With uplifted heads, with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness shining upon them, with rejoicing that their redemption draweth nigh, they go forth to meet the Bridegroom, saying, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." Isaiah 25:9.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 420-421.

12. What assurance do we have that the Lord will complete the work He has begun in us? Philippians 1:6. Compare Hebrews 12:2.

NOTE: '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, 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.

'The Bible contains instruction regarding the character God's children must possess. "Blessed are the pure in heart," it declares, "for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14. "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." 1 John 3:2, 3.' *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, page 429.