

The Blessings of Obedience

General Introduction

'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Romans 5:19.

One honoured of all heaven came to this world to stand in human nature at the head of humanity, testifying to the fallen angels and to the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds that through the divine help which has been provided, every one may walk in the path of obedience to God's commands.

No one less holy than the Only-Begotten of the Father could have offered a sacrifice that would be efficacious to cleanse all, even the most sinful and degraded, who accept the Saviour as their atonement and become obedient to Heaven's law. Nothing less could have reinstated man in God's favour.

Christ gave His life to make it possible for man to be restored to the image of God. It is the power of His grace that draws men together in obedience to the truth.

God desires us to reach the standard of perfection made possible for us by the gift of Christ. He calls upon us to make our choice on the right side, to connect with heavenly agencies, to adopt principles that will restore in us the divine image. In His written Word and in the great book of nature He has revealed the principles of life. It is our work to obtain a knowledge of these principles, and by obedience to co-operate with Him in restoring health to the body as well as to the soul.

Men need to learn that the blessings of obedience, in their fullness, can be theirs only as they receive the grace of Christ. It is His grace that gives men power to obey the laws of God. It is this that enables him to break the bondage of evil habit. This is the only power that can make him and keep him steadfast in the right path.

To the heart that has become purified, all is changed. The Spirit of God produces a new life in the soul, bringing the thoughts and desires into obedience to the will of Christ; and the inward man is renewed in the image of God. Weak and erring men and women show to the world that the redeeming power of grace can cause the faulty character to develop into symmetry and abundant fruitfulness.

God's Amazing Grace, page 103.

The reason for these lessons.

The growing influence of the Calvinistic 'once saved, always saved' type of religion has led to a downplaying of the importance of obedience in the Christian life. Sometimes it is expressed quite openly; for example, Dr R. T. Kendall, in his book, *Once Saved, Always Saved*, puts it this way: 'What if we sin? That is the most obvious question. The question is then often reshaped and put like this: What if a person who is saved falls into sin, stays in sin and is found in that very condition when he dies? Will he still go to heaven? **Answer: yes.** If he was truly saved in the first place, yes. If the answer to this question is no, this book is utterly unnecessary.' [Emphasis added.] Sometimes this contempt for obedience is expressed more subtly: We shall be sinning until Jesus comes. This version of Christianity makes obedience an optional extra after salvation has already been achieved and entirely unrelated to salvation. These lessons will consider what the Word of God has to say about obedience and whether obedience is optional for the Christian or required for salvation.

Lesson 1: March 29-April 4 'The Lord God commanded the man'

MEMORY VERSE: 'But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers.' 1 Samuel 12:15.

STUDY HELP: *Review & Herald*, December 15, 1896: 'The Importance of Obedience'

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Exodus 19:3-6, Deuteronomy 26:16-19, 1 Peter 2:9-10.

LESSON AIM: To study how the Bible introduces the theme of obedience, and its importance, from beginning to end of the Scriptures.

Introduction

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

'The wages of sin is death'

1. What command did God give to Adam as soon as he was created? Genesis 2:16-17.

NOTE: 'Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, their loyalty must be tested. At the very beginning of man's existence a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan's fall. The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden, was to be a test of the obedience, faith, and love of our first parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan; but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favour with God.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 13.

2. What warning did God give to Adam of the penalty for disobedience? Genesis 2:17, last part. Compare Romans 6:23, first part.

NOTE: NOTE: The basic Bible teaching from beginning to end is: 'the wages of sin is death.' Romans 6:23. What do we understand by this? Ezekiel 18:4. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' James 1:15. 'And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.' Genesis 2:17. 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Romans 5:12. 'Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' So the Bible teaches that there is a simple cause-effect relationship between sin and death. Sin is the cause; death is the result. A cause-effect relationship is one where one thing inevitably leads to another. If you have a flash of lightning, you will get a roll of thunder. You don't get the thunder without the lightning first. The electrical discharge seen in the lightning causes the noise we call thunder. The effect, 'thunder', is caused by the flash, 'lightning.' You may have to wait for a few seconds after the flash to hear the thunder. If the flash was far away, you may have to listen very carefully. But the cause leads to the effect. In the same way, the Bible teaches that sin is the thing that causes death. Until there was sin, there was no death. The Bible says simply, 'Death by sin.' Romans 5:12.

'All that God commanded him'

3. Why was Noah marked out by the Lord as distinct from the others of his generation? Genesis 6:22, Genesis 7:5.

NOTE: 'Those who have had living faith in the messages of God for the time in which they have lived, and who have acted out their faith in obedience to His commands, have been accepted of God, and have escaped the judgments that were to fall upon the disobedient and unbelieving. The word came to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me." Noah obeyed and was saved.' *Review & Herald*, November 5, 1889.

4. How did the Lord regard Noah because of his obedience? Genesis 6:8-9. (Read verses 5-7 for contrast.) Think about Ezekiel 14:14, 20.

NOTE: 'As it was in the days of Noah, when the wickedness of men was so great that God swept from the face of the earth every living thing save that which found refuge in the ark, so also shall it be when the Son of man is revealed. Man's theories are exalted, honoured, and placed where God and His law should be. But God has not altered the thing that has gone out of His lips. His word will stand fast forever, as unalterable as His throne. When every case is decided in the courts of heaven, this covenant will be brought forth, plainly written with the finger of God. The world will be arraigned before the bar of infinite Justice to receive sentence, a life measuring with the life of God for obedience, and death for transgression.' *Review & Herald*, April 17, 1900.

'Because thou hast obeyed My voice'

5. Why was Abraham so honoured by God? Genesis 22:15-18.

NOTE: 'The Lord spoke unto him, saying: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest " "and offer him . . . for a burnt offering." The heart of the old man stood still with horror. The loss of such a son by disease would have been most heartrending to the fond father, it would have bowed his whitened head with sorrow; but now he is commanded to shed the precious blood of that son with his own hand. It seemed to him a fearful impossibility. Yet God had spoken, and His word must be obeyed. Abraham was stricken in years, but this did not excuse him from duty. He grasped the staff of faith and in dumb agony took by the hand his child, beautiful in the rosy health of youth, and went out to obey the word of God.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 56.

6. How are we shown that obedience was the theme of Abraham's life? Hebrews 11:8.

NOTE: 'It was no light test that was thus brought upon Abraham, no small sacrifice that was required of him. There were strong ties to bind him to his country, his kindred, and his home. But he did not hesitate to obey the call. He had no question to ask concerning the land of promise, whether the soil was fertile and the climate healthful; whether the country afforded agreeable surroundings and would afford opportunities for amassing wealth. God had spoken, and His servant must obey; the happiest place on earth for him was the place where God would have him to be.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 44.

'Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice?'

7. Why did the wrath of God fall upon Pharaoh? Exodus 5:2.

NOTE: 'As persons become convinced from the Scriptures that the claims of the fourth commandment are still binding, the question is often raised: Is it necessary in order to secure salvation that we keep the Sabbath? This is a question of grave importance. If the light has shone from the word of God, if the message has been presented to men, as it was to Pharaoh, and they refuse to heed that message, if they reject the light, they refuse to obey God, and cannot be saved in their disobedience. On the other hand, many have died conscientiously observing the first day of the week as the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

These will not be condemned, because they followed the best light they had. They will not be held responsible for light which they never received. Christ said to the scribes and Pharisees: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." Again He said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." *Review & Herald*, January 5, 1886.

8. How was Moses shown the importance of obedience before he went to meet Pharaoh? Exodus 4:24-26.

NOTE: 'As Moses journeyed to Egypt, the angel of the Lord met him and assumed a threatening posture, as though he would slay him. He was fearful of his life. He had yielded to the refusal of his wife to have their son circumcised, and, in compliance with her wishes, had neglected to obey God. His wife, fearful that her husband might be slain, overcame her feelings of undue affection for her son and performed the act herself. After this, the angel let Moses go. In his mission to Pharaoh, he was to be placed in a perilous position, where his life would be exposed to the will of the king, if God did not by His power, through the presence of His angels, preserve him. While Moses was living in neglect of one of God's positive commands, his life would not be secure, for God's angels could not protect him while in disobedience. Therefore, the angel met him in the way and threatened his life. He did not explain to Moses why he assumed that threatening aspect. Moses knew that there was a cause. He was going to Egypt according to God's express command, therefore the journey was right. He at once remembered that he had not obeyed God in performing the ordinance of circumcision upon his youngest son, and had yielded to his wife's entreaties to postpone the ceremony. After he had obeyed the command of God he was free to go before Pharaoh, and there was nothing in the way to hinder the ministration of angels in connection with his work.' *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 3, page 195.

'A peculiar treasure to Me above all people'

9. What was the basis on which Israel's special standing before God was based? Exodus 19:3-6, Deuteronomy 26:16-19.

NOTE: 'God is no respecter of persons; but in every generation they that fear the Lord and work righteousness are accepted of Him; while those who are murmuring, unbelieving, and rebellious will not have His favour nor the blessings promised to those who love the truth and walk in it. Those who have the light and do not follow it, but disregard the requirements of God, will find that their blessings will be changed into curses and their mercies into judgments. God would have us learn humility and obedience as we read the history of ancient Israel, who were His chosen and peculiar people, but who brought their own destruction by following their own ways.' *Testimonies*, volume 3, page 172.

10. Whom does God regard as His peculiar people today? 1 Peter 2:9-10, Revelation 14:12.

NOTE: 'God's people, above all people in the world, should be patterns of piety, holy in heart and in conversation. The people whom God has chosen as His peculiar treasure, He requires to be elevated, refined, sanctified, partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. If such indulge in sin and iniquity who make so high a profession, their guilt is very great, because they have great light, and have by their profession taken their position as God's special, chosen people, having the law of God written in their hearts. They signify their loyalty to the God of Heaven by yielding obedience to the laws of His government. They are God's representatives upon the earth. Any sin or transgression in them separates them from God, and, in a special manner, dishonours His name by giving the enemies of God's holy law occasion to reproach His cause and His people, whom He has called "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," that they should show forth the praises of Him that hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.' *A Solemn Appeal*, page 143.

'Blessed are they'

11. What is the purpose of the plan for man's salvation? Romans 5:19.

NOTE: 'By transgression, man became [Satan's] captive, and man's kingdom also was betrayed into the hands of the arch rebel. Now the way seemed open for Satan to establish an independent kingdom, and to defy the authority of God and His Son. But the plan of salvation made it possible for man again to be brought into harmony with God, and to render obedience to His law, and for both man and the earth to be finally redeemed from the power of the wicked one.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 331.

12. How are we shown that only those restored to obedience will enter the New Jerusalem? Revelation 22:14.

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

It is not surprising that Satan has attacked this verse especially. By carefully tampering with a few letters in the Greek, it has been possible to remove obedience from this verse and replace it with 'wash their robes,' the reading preferred in practically all recent English versions and found in their preferred manuscript, the notoriously corrupt Codex Sinaiticus. (The book of Reve-

lation is completely absent from Codex Vaticanus.) Commandments is 'entolas', robes is 'stolas.' The difference between 'do' and 'wash' is 'poiountes' and 'pluontes.' Tertullian, living the 2nd century, and Cyprian, living in the 3rd century, both quote this verse as 'do His commandments.' But Athanasius, living in the 4th century and Primasius, at the turn of the 6th century, quote this verse as 'wash their robes.'

Lesson 2: April 5-11 **'Thou shalt not eat of it'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Genesis 2:17.

STUDY HELP: *Conflict & Courage*, page 13.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Genesis 2:16-17, 3:1-24.

LESSON AIM: To study the disobedience of Adam and Eve, and its consequences.

Introduction

'To his children, and to their children, to the ninth generation, Adam delineated the perfections of his Eden home; and also his fall and its dreadful results. He declared to them that sin would be punished, in whatever form it existed; and he entreated them to obey God, who would deal mercifully with them if they should love and fear Him. Adam was commanded to teach his descendants the fear of the Lord, and, by his example of humble obedience, lead them to highly regard the offerings which typified a Saviour to come. Adam carefully treasured what God had revealed to him, and handed it down by word of mouth to his children and children's children.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 22.

'The Lord God commanded the man'

1. How are we shown that obedience was required of Adam? Genesis 2:16-17.

NOTE: 'We cannot overestimate the value of simple faith and unquestioning obedience. It is by following in the path of obedience in simple faith that the character obtains perfection. Adam was required to render strict obedience to God's commandments, and no lower standard is presented to those who desire salvation today.' *Lift Him Up*, page 139.

2. What was the penalty for disobedience that God revealed to Adam? Genesis 2:17, last part.

NOTE: 'To Adam and Eve were plainly stated the laws of Paradise, with the penalty for wilful disobedience. They disobeyed, and disobedience brought its sure result. Death entered the world. Transgression is disobedience to the commands of God. Had these commands always been obeyed, there would have been no sin. The penalty of transgression is always death.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 153.

'Ye shall not surely die'

3. What question did the tempter ask Eve and what was her reply? Genesis 3:1-3.

NOTE: 'How artfully had Satan approached Eve in Eden! "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Genesis 3:1. Thus far the tempter's words were truth; but in his manner of speaking them there was a disguised contempt for the words of God. There was a covert negative, a doubt of the divine truthfulness. Satan sought to instil into the mind of Eve the thought that God would not do as He had said; that the withholding of such beautiful fruit was a contradiction of His love and compassion for man.' *Desire of Ages*, page 118.

4. How did the tempter respond to Eve's reply? Genesis 3:4-5.

NOTE: You see in Satan's words a denial of the cause-effect relationship of sin to death. Most Christian churches today perpetuate Satan's lie, often by redefining what death is (e.g. separation from God) so as to deny that death will really occur, saying that death is merely another form of living. For example, the evangelist Roger Carswell writes: 'The moment you die, you will be more alive than ever you were before you died.' *Questions & Answers from the Bible*, page 49.

'The great original lie which he [Satan] told to Eve in Eden, "Ye shall not surely die," was the first sermon ever preached on the immortality of the soul. That sermon was crowned with success, and terrible results followed. He has brought minds to receive that sermon as truth, and ministers preach it, sing it, and pray it. After the Fall, Satan bade his angels make a special effort to inculcate the belief in man's natural immortality; and having induced the people to receive this error, they were to lead them on to conclude that the sinner would live in eternal misery. Now the prince of darkness, working through his agents, represents God as a revengeful tyrant, declaring that He plunges into hell all those who do not please Him, and causes them ever to feel His wrath. A large class to whom the doctrine of eternal torment is revolting are driven to the opposite error. They see that the Scriptures represent God as a being of love and compassion, and they cannot believe that He will consign His creatures to the fires of an eternally burning hell. But holding that the soul is naturally immortal, they see no alternative but to conclude that all mankind will finally be saved. Many regard the threatenings of the Bible as designed merely to frighten men into obedience, and not to be literally fulfilled. Thus the sinner can live in selfish pleasure, disregarding the requirements of God, and yet expect to be finally received into His favour.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 178.

‘Adam and his wife hid themselves’

5. What was the reaction of Adam and Eve to their sin? Genesis 3:7-8.

NOTE: ‘In their innocence and holiness they had joyfully welcomed the approach of their Creator; but now they fled in terror, and sought to hide in the deepest recesses of the garden.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 57.

‘While he was engaged in his appointed work, he never thought of hiding from God, but responded as soon he heard His footsteps in the garden, and hastened to shorten the distance between him and his Maker. What precious communings he had with God! But after he sinned, he feared that every sound was the footstep of God. He did not want to see God, and when he heard Him coming, he did not hasten to meet Him, but hid himself. “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” This, then, was the reason. He had broken the command of God; and the light of righteousness that had encompassed him as a garment had disappeared, leaving him naked, and he was afraid to meet God. Sin is the only nakedness, the only degradation, the only dishonour, that we can know; it is the only thing that will make us afraid to meet God.’ *Review & Herald*, January 26, 1897.

6. Why was sentence pronounced on Adam and Eve? Genesis 3:17.

NOTE: ‘The principles of justice required a faithful narration of facts for the benefit of all who should ever read the Sacred Record. Here we discern the evidences of divine wisdom. We are required to obey the law of God, and are not only instructed as to the penalty of disobedience, but we have narrated for our benefit and warning the history of Adam and Eve in Paradise, and the sad results of their disobedience of God’s commands. The account is full and explicit. The law given to man in Eden is recorded, together with the penalty accruing in case of its disobedience. Then follows the story of the temptation and fall, and the punishment inflicted upon our erring parents. Their example is given us as a warning against disobedience, that we may be sure that the wages of sin is death, that God’s retributive justice never fails, and that He exacts from His creatures a strict regard for His commandments.’ *Testimonies, volume 4*, page 11.

‘The soul that sinneth, it shall die’

7. Why has death passed upon all men? Romans 5:12.

NOTE: Many, reading hastily, claim that we all die because of Adam’s sin. But this is not what Paul writes. We all die because we, like Adam, have sinned. Though Adam’s sin wrought great changes in the natural order of things, yet no man can lay the blame for his sins upon Adam. We are each responsible for our own sins and must give account for our sins before God.

‘Do you mean to cast reproach upon God? Well, you say, It was Adam’s sin. You say, I am not guilty of that, and I am not responsible for his guilt and fall. Here all these natural tendencies are in me, and I am not to blame if I act out these natural tendencies. Who is to blame? Is God? Why did God let Satan have this power over human nature? These are accusations against the God of heaven, and He will give you an opportunity, if you want it, of finally bringing your accusations against Him. Then He will bring His accusations against you when you are brought into His court of judgment.’ *Selected Messages, book 3*, page 179.

‘Our first parents by their disobedience opened the floodgates of woe to the race, and notwithstanding we have before us their sad experience in transgression, and the terrible result, we do not cease to sin; but while we deplore the sin of Adam, which was attended with such fearful consequences, we follow in the same course and realise the penalty of our own sins; for which suffering we alone are accountable. The providence of God is not responsible for the woes of man; his own course of action brings the sure result.’ *Forest Park Reporter*, March 30, 1879.

8. How are we shown that we do not die for the sin of Adam? Ezekiel 18:20.

NOTE: Here is the divine principle of justice. No one is required by God to bear the iniquity of another. Each of us must bear the guilt of our own sins. Only Christ, by His spotless life, is qualified to bear the sins of others.

‘The Lord clothed them’

9. What provision did the Lord make so that Adam and Eve did not die on the day they sinned? Consider Genesis 3:21.

NOTE: A little thought will show that the only way these coats of skins could be made was through the deaths of those innocent creatures whose skins were used. And so the Lord taught the first lesson about redemption. If man were not to die for his sins, an innocent substitute must take his place. When man sinned, he became aware of his nakedness before God. He strove to conceal his nakedness by making a covering through sewing together fig leaves. But this man-made covering did not take away the shame of their nakedness. Only the covering that the Lord provided, produced by shedding the blood of an innocent substitute, provided an adequate covering for the shame of their nakedness and guilt.

‘Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering. This is what the transgressors of God’s law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God. But this they can never do. Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Only the covering which Christ Him-

self has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. "I counsel thee," He says, "to buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Revelation 3:18. This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 310-311.

10. How are we shown that this principle of the death of the Innocent Substitute was understood by Adam's family? Genesis 4:4.

NOTE: 'Fallen man, because of his guilt, could no longer come directly before God with his supplications; for his transgression of the divine law had placed an impassable barrier between the holy God and the transgressor. But a plan was devised that the sentence of death should rest upon a Substitute. In the plan of redemption there must be the shedding of blood, for death must come in consequence of man's sin. The beasts for sacrificial offerings were to prefigure Christ. In the slain victim, man was to see the fulfilment for the time being of God's word, "Thou shalt surely die." And the flowing of the blood from the victim would also signify an atonement. There was no virtue in the blood of animals; but the shedding of the blood of beasts was to point forward to a Redeemer who would one day come to the world and die for the sins of men. And thus Christ would fully vindicate His Father's law.' *Confrontation*, page 21.

'The tree of life'

11. What was lost to Adam and Eve because of their sin? Genesis 3:22-24.

NOTE: 'The dwellers in Eden had been placed upon probation; their happy estate could be retained only on condition of fidelity to the Creator's law. They could obey and live, or disobey and perish. God had made them the recipients of rich blessings; but should they disregard His will, He who spared not the angels that sinned could not spare them; transgression would forfeit His gifts, and bring upon them misery and ruin. Adam and Eve transgressed the law of God. This made it necessary for them to be driven from Eden and be separated from the tree of life, to eat of which after their transgression would perpetuate sin.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 179.

12. When and to whom will the Tree of life be restored? Revelation 22:14.

NOTE: 'Adam was driven from Eden, and the angels who, before his transgression, had been appointed to guard him in his Eden home, were now appointed to guard the gates of paradise and the way of the tree of life, lest he should return, gain access to the tree of life, and sin be immortalised. Sin drove man from paradise; and sin was the cause of the removal of paradise from the earth. In consequence of transgression of God's law, Adam lost paradise. In obedience to the Father's law, and through faith in the atoning blood of His Son, paradise may be regained. "Repentance toward God," because His law has been transgressed, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, as man's only Redeemer, will be acceptable with God. Notwithstanding man's sinfulness, the merits of God's dear Son in his behalf will avail with the Father.' *Confrontation*, page 15.

Lesson 3: April 12-18
'According to all that God commanded him'

MEMORY VERSE: 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' Hebrews 11:7.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, page 634.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Genesis 6:9-7:9.

LESSON AIM: To study the obedience of Noah.

Introduction

'God has always given men warning of coming judgments. Those who had faith in His message for their time, and who acted out their faith, in obedience to His commandments, escaped the judgments that fell upon the disobedient and unbelieving. The word came to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me." Noah obeyed and was saved.' *Maranatha*, page 36.

‘The wickedness of man was great’

1. What was the state of the world in which Noah lived? Genesis 6:5, 12.

NOTE: ‘Men put God out of their knowledge and worshiped the creatures of their own imagination; and as the result, they became more and more debased. The psalmist describes the effect produced upon the worshiper by the adoration of idols. He says, “They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.” Psalm 115:8. It is a law of the human mind that by beholding we become changed. Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower. The worshipers of false gods clothed their deities with human attributes and passions, and thus their standard of character was degraded to the likeness of sinful humanity. They were defiled in consequence. “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. . . . The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence.” God had given men His commandments as a rule of life, but His law was transgressed, and every conceivable sin was the result. The wickedness of men was open and daring, justice was trampled in the dust, and the cries of the oppressed reached unto heaven.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 91.

2. How did God respond to the all-pervading corruption of the earth of Noah’s day? Genesis 6:6-7, 12-13.

NOTE: ‘God is full of love and plenteous in mercy; but He will by no means acquit those who neglect the great salvation He has provided. The long-lived antediluvians were swept from the earth because they made void the divine law. God will not again bring from the heavens above and the earth beneath waters as His weapons to use in the destruction of the world; but when next His vengeance shall be poured out against those who despise His authority, they will be destroyed by fire concealed in the bowels of the earth, awakened into intense activity by fires from heaven above.’ *Our High Calling*, page 252.

‘Every day you remain in sin you are grieving God by your impenitence. Will you not remember that the time is just upon you when the last day of mercy will come? Then God will rise up out of His place to punish the world for its iniquity. Then the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. The clouds of wrath which have been gathering will burst with pitiless fury upon the world.’ *Review & Herald*, December 1, 1896.

‘A preacher of righteousness’

3. What was the work that God called Noah to do? 2 Peter 2:5.

NOTE: ‘The message of Noah was to him a reality. Amid the scoffs and jeers of the world, he was an unbending witness for God. His meekness and righteousness were in bright contrast to the revolting crimes, intrigue, and violence continually practised around him. A power attended his words; for it was the voice of God to man through His servant. Connection with God made him strong in the strength of infinite power, while for one hundred and twenty years his solemn warning voice fell upon the ears of the men of that generation in regard to events, which, so far as human wisdom could judge, seemed impossible. Some were deeply convicted, and would have heeded the words of warning; but there were so many to jest and ridicule that they partook of the same spirit, resisted the invitations of mercy, refused to reform, and were soon among the boldest and most defiant scoffers; for none are so reckless, and go to such lengths in sin, as those who have once had light, but have resisted the convicting Spirit of God. How simple and childlike, amid the unbelief of a scoffing world, was the faith of Noah. He gave to the world an example of believing just what God said.’ *Reflecting Christ*, page 322.

4. How was the preaching of Noah received by his contemporaries? 1 Peter 3:20. Consider 2 Peter 3:3-6.

NOTE: ‘Noah, by his preaching and example in building the ark, condemned the world. God gave all who chose an opportunity to repent and turn to Him. But they believed not the preaching of Noah. They mocked at his warnings, and ridiculed the building of that immense vessel on dry land. Noah’s efforts to reform his fellow-men did not succeed. But for more than one hundred years he persevered in his efforts to turn men to repentance and to God. Every blow struck upon the ark was preaching to the people. Noah directed, he preached, he worked, while the people looked on in amazement, and regarded him as a fanatic.’ *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 1*, page 70.

‘Noah walked with God’

5. What commended Noah in God’s sight? Genesis 6:8-9. Compare Genesis 5:22.

NOTE: ‘Noah had faith in God. His position was a trying one; he had to fight the good fight of faith at every step. One hundred and twenty years of probation was granted to the inhabitants of the world, and Noah was to live through that generation. Everything around him was in confusion. On all sides was sin and wickedness, disregard of God and His holy law; but he was to live among men, and not be a partaker of their wicked works, but to be an example of righteousness, and faith, and entire obedience to God. Amid world-wide contempt of God, he was a faithful preacher of righteousness, exemplifying to the world what a man’s life could be by reposing confidence in the sure word of God, by rendering obedience to all His commandments. Nearly the whole world was against Noah.’ *Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1895.

6. What testimony is given regarding Noah’s obedience? Genesis 6:22, Genesis 7:5, 9, 16.

NOTE: ‘What constituted the difference between Enoch and Noah, and those who were destroyed by the flood? Enoch and Noah were obedient to the law of God; the others walked in the imagination of their own hearts, and corrupted their ways before the Lord, disregarding all His requirements. By their disobedience they separated themselves from Him, and provoked Him to destroy them. Enoch and Noah were found righteous when tested by the law of God. Had the antediluvians kept the

way of God, had they obeyed His commandments, they too would have been found righteous, and would have received the Lord's commendation. In his letter to the Romans Paul writes of the obedient and the disobedient. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," he says; "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith." These are the obedient. As faith in God increases, the more distinctly we endure the seeing of Him who is invisible, and we are strengthened to obey Him.' *Signs of the Times*, February 11, 1897.

'Thee have I seen righteous before Me'

7. When the whole world was condemned to destruction, why was Noah saved with his household? Genesis 7:1.

NOTE: 'The world is no more favourable today for the development of Christian character than in Noah's day. Then wickedness was so widespread that God said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. . . . Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Yes, amid the corruption of that degenerate age, Noah was a pleasure to his Creator.' *Notebook Leaflets, volume 1*, page 33.

8. While the wicked and degenerate antediluvians were destroyed by God, what are we told concerning Noah? Genesis 8:1, first part.

NOTE: 'The sons of men gave way to the indulgence of appetite, which set on fire their passions. They became violent, basely corrupt, and hardened. Their thoughts and acts were evil, and God finally visited His wrath upon the children of disobedience, and washed the earth of its moral pollution by a flood. But God acknowledged the few on earth who were righteous. Noah and his family were saved. In the midst of His wrath and retributive justice God remembered mercy, and left not the righteous and faithful to perish with the wicked.' *Signs of the Times*, August 1, 1878.

'Not again any more'

9. How did God respond to Noah's sacrifice after the Flood? Genesis 8:20-22. Compare Isaiah 54:9-10.

NOTE: 'With the assurance given to Noah concerning the Flood, God Himself has linked one of the most precious promises of His grace: "As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith Jehovah that hath mercy on thee." Isaiah 54:9, 10.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 107.

10. What special covenant did God make with Noah? Genesis 9:9. Read verses 9-17.

NOTE: 'God calls upon us to receive and impart the love which passeth knowledge. He is looking upon His prostrate law, upon His Sabbath trampled under foot by a race of rebellious subjects. He could have come forth out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity. He could have swept them away by a flood, as He did in Noah's day. But He did not do this. He has spared them because of the covenant made with Noah. The Lord God is full of compassion, mercy, and love. When His servants, the stewards of his business misrepresent Him, and act contrary to His arrangements, they greatly dishonour Him. History will testify against them. Those who are in the service of God, who profess to believe the truth, should closely examine themselves, to see whether they are in the faith, whether they are using sacred or common fire. At the death of Nadab and Abihu, Moses declared to Aaron, "This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified." Let all who name the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' *General Conference Bulletin*, October 1, 1899.

'I will remember My covenant'

11. What lasting token remains of God's covenant with Noah? Genesis 9:13-17.

NOTE: 'How great the condescension of God and His compassion for His erring creatures in thus placing the beautiful rainbow in the clouds as a token of His covenant with men! The Lord declares that when He looks upon the bow, He will remember His covenant. This does not imply that He would ever forget; but He speaks to us in our own language, that we may better understand Him. It was God's purpose that as the children of after generations should ask the meaning of the glorious arch which spans the heavens, their parents should repeat the story of the Flood, and tell them that the Most High had bended the bow and placed it in the clouds as an assurance that the waters should never again overflow the earth. Thus from generation to generation it would testify of divine love to man and would strengthen his confidence in God. In heaven the semblance of a rainbow encircles the throne and overarches the head of Christ. The prophet says, "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about [the throne]. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah." Ezekiel 1:28. The Revelator declares, "Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. . . . There was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." Revelation 4:2, 3. When man by his great wickedness invites the divine judgments, the Saviour, interceding with the Father in his behalf, points to the bow in the clouds, to the rainbow around the throne and above His own head, as a token of the mercy of God toward the repentant sinner.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, pages 106-107.

12. How does the Bible single out Noah for special mention? Ezekiel 14:14, 20.

NOTE: 'While Noah was giving his warning message to the world, his works testified of his sincerity. It was thus that his faith was perfected and made evident. He gave the world an example of believing just what God says. All that he possessed, he invested in the ark. Every blow struck upon the ark was a witness to the people.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 38.

'Noah's warnings had been rejected by the world, but his influence and example resulted in blessings to his family. As a reward for his faithfulness and integrity, God saved all the members of his family with him. What encouragement to parental fidelity!' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 98.

Lesson 4: April 19-25 **'Because that Abraham obeyed'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.' Genesis 25:4-5.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 115.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Genesis 22:1-18.

LESSON AIM: To study the part played by obedience in the life of Abraham.

Introduction

'James writes of Abraham and says, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:21-24). In order for man to be justified by faith, faith must reach a point where it will control the affections and impulses of the heart; and it is by obedience that faith itself is made perfect.' *Faith & Works*, page 100.

'As the LORD had spoken unto him'

1. What did God command Abraham when he was first called? Genesis 12:1.

NOTE: 'In order that God might qualify him for his great work as the keeper of the sacred oracles, Abraham must be separated from the associations of his early life. The influence of kindred and friends would interfere with the training which the Lord purposed to give His servant. Now that Abraham was, in a special sense, connected with heaven, he must dwell among strangers. His character must be peculiar, differing from all the world. He could not even explain his course of action so as to be understood by his friends. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and his motives and actions were not comprehended by his idolatrous kindred.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 126.

2. How did Abraham respond to God's command? Genesis 12:4, Hebrews 11:8.

NOTE: 'It was no light test that was thus brought upon Abraham, no small sacrifice that was required of him. There were strong ties to bind him to his country, his kindred, and his home. But he did not hesitate to obey the call. He had no question to ask concerning the land of promise, whether the soil was fertile and the climate healthful; whether the country afforded agreeable surroundings and would afford opportunities for amassing wealth. God had spoken, and His servant must obey; the happiest place on earth for him was the place where God would have him to be.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 44.

'The patriarch obeyed. He forsook his country, his home, his relatives, and all pleasant associations connected with his early life, to become a pilgrim and a stranger. Abraham might have reasoned and questioned the purposes of God in this. But he showed that he had perfect confidence that God was leading him; he did not question whether it was a fertile, pleasant country or whether or not he should have ease. He went at God's bidding. This is a lesson to every one of us.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 112.

'God is with thee in all that thou doest'

3. What reputation did Abraham have among the heathen? Genesis 21:22.

NOTE: 'God called Abraham, and prospered and honoured him; and the patriarch's fidelity was a light to the people in all the countries of his sojourn. Abraham did not shut himself away from the people around him. He maintained friendly relations with the kings of the surrounding nations, by some of whom he was treated with great respect; and his integrity and unselfishness, his valour and benevolence, were representing the character of God. In Mesopotamia, in Canaan, in Egypt, and even to the inhabitants of Sodom, the God of heaven was revealed through His representative.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 368.

4. How may we today have God with us in all that we do? Haggai 1:12-13.

NOTE: 'The Lord God omnipotent, who reigneth in the heavens, declares, "I am with you." He assures His people that those who are obedient are in a position where He can bless them, to the glory of His name. He will be a present help to all who serve Him in preference to serving self.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 62.

‘God can protect His people that are obedient. If you are disobedient, it is important that you consider your situation. There is some importance attached to obeying God’s commandments. “Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God” (with two-thirds of thy heart? or with half of thy heart? or with a quarter?), “with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”’ *Sermons & Talks, volume 2, page 104.*

‘They shall keep the way of the LORD’

5. How did Abraham convey the principle of obedience to his household? Genesis 18:19.

NOTE: ‘Abraham was called the father of the faithful. Among the things that made him a remarkable example of godliness was the strict regard that in his home he paid to the commands of God. He cultivated home religion. He who sees the education given in every home, and who measures the influence of this education, said, “I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.”’ *Child Guidance, page 18.*

6. How did the Lord, after Abraham’s death, impress on Isaac the importance of his father’s obedience? Genesis 26:2-5.

NOTE: God reminded Isaac that the covenant made with Abraham and his descendants, together with the blessings that attended the covenant, was made only ‘because Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.’ Isaac was thus to understand that the covenant would only remain unbroken so long as he and his descendants practised the faithful obedience of Abraham.

‘Christ gave His life to make it possible for man to be restored to the image of God. It is the power of His grace that draws men together in obedience to the truth. God desires us to reach the standard of perfection made possible for us by the gift of Christ. He calls upon us to make our choice on the right side, to connect with heavenly agencies, to adopt principles that will restore in us the divine image. In His written Word and in the great book of nature He has revealed the principles of life. It is our work to obtain a knowledge of these principles, and by obedience to co-operate with Him in restoring health to the body as well as to the soul. Men need to learn that the blessings of obedience, in their fullness, can be theirs only as they receive the grace of Christ. It is His grace that gives men power to obey the laws of God. It is this that enables him to break the bondage of evil habit. This is the only power that can make him and keep him steadfast in the right path.’ *God’s Amazing Grace, page 103.*

‘Thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest’

7. What incredible command did God give to Abraham in his later years? Genesis 22:2.

NOTE: ‘Abraham had greatly desired to see the promised Saviour. He offered up the most earnest prayer that before his death he might behold the Messiah. And he saw Christ. A supernatural light was given him, and he acknowledged Christ’s divine character. He saw His day, and was glad. He was given a view of the divine sacrifice for sin. Of this sacrifice he had an illustration in his own experience. The command came to him, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him . . . for a burnt offering.” Genesis 22:2 . . . This terrible ordeal was imposed upon Abraham that he might see the day of Christ, and realise the great love of God for the world, so great that to raise it from its degradation, He gave His only-begotten Son to a most shameful death.’ *Desire of Ages, page 468.*

8. What was Abraham’s response to God’s command? Hebrews 11:17.

NOTE: ‘Abraham obeyed God. He did not consult his feelings, but with a noble faith and confidence in God he prepared for his journey. With a heart rent with anguish he beheld the proud, loving mother gazing with fond affection upon the son of promise. But he led that loved son away. Abraham suffered; yet he did not let his will rise in rebellion against the will of God. Duty, stern duty, controlled him. He dared not consult his feelings, or yield to them for one moment. His only son walked by the side of the stern, loving, suffering father, talking engagingly, uttering over and over the fond name of father, and then inquiring, “Where is the sacrifice?” O, what a test for the faithful father! Angels looked with pleased wonder upon the scene. The faithful servant of God even bound his beloved son and laid him upon the wood. The knife was raised.’ *Gospel Workers, 1892, ed., page 214.*

‘Because thou hast obeyed My voice’

9. What divine intervention prevented the sacrifice of Isaac? Genesis 22:11-13.

NOTE: ‘Isaac was a figure of the Son of God, who was offered a sacrifice for the sins of the world. God would impress upon Abraham the gospel of salvation to man. In order to do this, and make the truth a reality to him as well as to test his faith, He required him to slay his darling Isaac. All the sorrow and agony that Abraham endured through that dark and fearful trial were for the purpose of deeply impressing upon his understanding the plan of redemption for fallen man. He was made to understand in his own experience how unutterable was the self-denial of the infinite God in giving His own Son to die to rescue man from utter ruin. To Abraham no mental torture could be equal to that which he endured in obeying the divine command to sacrifice his son. God gave His Son to a life of humiliation, self-denial, poverty, toil, reproach, and to the agonising death of crucifixion. But there was no angel to bear the joyful message: “It is enough; You need not die, My well-beloved Son.” Legions of angels were sorrowfully waiting, hoping that, as in the case of Isaac, God would at the last moment prevent His shameful death. But angels were not permitted to bear any such message to God’s dear Son. The humiliation in the judgment hall and on

the way to Calvary went on. He was mocked, derided, and spat upon. He endured the jeers, taunts, and revilings of those who hated Him, until upon the cross He bowed His head and died.' *Testimonies, volume 3, page 369.*

10. What divine commendation was given to Abraham and why? Genesis 22:15-18. Note the closing words of verse 18.

NOTE: 'Abraham's great act of faith stands like a pillar of light, illuminating the pathway of God's servants in all succeeding ages. Abraham did not seek to excuse himself from doing the will of God. During that three days' journey he had sufficient time to reason, and to doubt God, if he was disposed to doubt. He might have reasoned that the slaying of his son would cause him to be looked upon as a murderer, a second Cain; that it would cause his teaching to be rejected and despised; and thus destroy his power to do good to his fellow men. He might have pleaded that age should excuse him from obedience. But the patriarch did not take refuge in any of these excuses. Abraham was human; his passions and attachments were like ours; but he did not stop to question how the promise could be fulfilled if Isaac should be slain. He did not stay to reason with his aching heart. He knew that God is just and righteous in all His requirements, and he obeyed the command to the very letter. "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God." James 2:23. And Paul says, "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Galatians 3:7. But Abraham's faith was made manifest by his works.' *Patriarchs & Prophets, page 153.*

'The friend of God'

11. What special relationship was Abraham's because of his obedience? Genesis 18:17-19.

NOTE: 'The Lord communicated His will to Abraham, and gave him a distinct knowledge of the requirements of the moral law, and of the salvation that would be accomplished through Himself. It was a high honour to which Abraham was called, that of being the father of the people who for centuries were the guardians and preservers of the truth of God for the world, of that people through whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed in the advent of the promised Messiah. But He who called the patriarch judged him worthy. This is the testimony of God concerning His chosen servant, as it stands registered on the sacred page: "Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." And again: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." It is God that speaks. He who understands the thoughts afar off, and places the right estimate upon men, says, "I know him." There will be on the part of Abraham no betraying of the truth for selfish purposes. He will keep the law, and deal justly and righteously; for he knows that he must answer to God for his conduct. And he will not only fear the Lord himself, but he will cultivate religion in his home. He will instruct his family in righteousness; the law of his God will be the rule in his household. Would that this testimony could be borne of all who in this day have the knowledge of the way of the Lord, and profess to walk in it. God conferred upon His faithful servant special honour and blessings. Through vision, and through the angels that walked and talked with him as friend with friend, he was made acquainted with the purposes as well as with the will of God. When judgments were about to be visited upon Sodom, the fact was not hidden from Abraham. "The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do.' *Signs of the Times, April 22, 1886.*

12. What special title was given to Abraham because of his faithful obedience? James 2:23.

NOTE: 'Perfect obedience to the law of God is the test by which it is known that our love is perfect toward Christ. The Father reveals His love to Christ by receiving and welcoming the friends of Christ as His friends. The Father is fully satisfied with the atonement that Christ has made. He suffered the penalty of the law in order that man might have an opportunity to exercise repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. In behalf of sinners Christ has borne hardships, insults, calumny, abuse and misrepresentation. He was refused by those He came to save, rejected by His own nation. The Lord of glory was put to a most shameful death, and God Himself was in Christ, suffering with His only-begotten Son, in order to reconcile the world unto Himself. All this was done in order that fallen man might have another chance by which to redeem himself. Christ imputes His righteousness to the repentant, believing soul, and he who receives Christ becomes the friend of God.' *Signs of the Times, June 18, 1896.*

Lesson 5: April 26-May 2

'If ye will obey My voice indeed'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine.' Exodus 19:5.

STUDY HELP: *Prophets & Kings, pages 293-294.*

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 6:1-18.

LESSON AIM: To study the basis of the covenant God made with His people.

Introduction

'The Israelites had been specially charged not to lose sight of the commandments of God, in obedience to which they would find strength and blessing. "Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently," had been the word of the Lord to them through Moses, "lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." Verse 9. The awe-inspiring scenes connected with the giving of the law at Sinai were never to be forgotten.' *Prophets & Kings, page 294.*

‘Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me’

1. What was the basis of the covenant made between God and the people of Israel? Exodus 19:5-6.

NOTE: ‘The same voice that spoke the sermon on the mount spoke to Moses from the pillar of cloud, enjoining obedience on the children of Israel: “Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them: He will not be slack to him that hateth Him, He will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.”’ *Review & Herald*, June 6, 1899.

2. How did Peter show that these promises of God are available to Gentiles who are willing to come into covenant relationship with God? 1 Peter 2:9-10.

NOTE: ‘The Lord made this special covenant with ancient Israel: “Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” Exodus 19:5, 6. He addresses His commandment-keeping people in these last days, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” 1 Peter 2:9, 11.’ *Testimonies, volume 2*, page 450.

‘That it may be well with you’

3. How did God explain the outcome of obedience? Deuteronomy 4:40, Deuteronomy 5:32-33.

NOTE: ‘The glorious possibilities set before Israel could be realised only through obedience to God’s commandments. The same elevation of character, the same fullness of blessing, blessing on mind and soul and body, blessing on house and field, blessing for this life and for the life to come, is possible for us only through obedience.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 305.

4. How did God express to Moses His desire that His people would be obedient to Him? Deuteronomy 5:29.

NOTE: ‘The obedience that Christ rendered, God requires from human beings today. He served His Father in love, with willingness and freedom. “I delight to do Thy will, O My God,” He declared: “yea, Thy law is within My heart” (Psalm 40:8). Christ counted no sacrifice too great, no toil too hard, in order to accomplish the work which He came to do. At the age of twelve He said, “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). He had heard the call, and had taken up the work. “My meat,” He said, “is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work” (John 4:34). Thus we are to serve God. He only serves who acts up to the highest standard of obedience. All who would be sons and daughters of God must prove themselves co-workers with Christ and God and the heavenly angels. This is the test for every soul. God’s great object in the working out of His providences is to try men, to give them opportunity to develop character. Thus He proves whether they are obedient or disobedient to His commands. Good works do not purchase the love of God, but they reveal that we possess that love. If we surrender the will to God, we shall not work in order to earn God’s love. His love as a free gift will be received into the soul, and from love to Him we shall delight to obey His commandments. There are only two classes in the world today, and only two classes will be recognised in the judgment, those who violate God’s law and those who obey it. Christ gives the test by which we prove our loyalty or disloyalty. “If ye love Me,” He says, “keep My commandments. . . . He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.” (John 14: 15-21).’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 128.

‘All these blessings shall come on thee’

5. What blessings did God promise them would follow from their obedience? Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 13-14. (Read verses 1-14.)

NOTE: ‘All His gifts are promised on condition of obedience. God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will co-operate with Him. All who obey Him may with confidence claim the fulfilment of His promises.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 145.

6. What did God warn them would be the consequences of disobedience? Deuteronomy 28:15-20. (Read verses 15-68.)

NOTE: ‘Calamity overtook the Jews because they failed to keep the commandments of God. God had told them if they did not keep His commandments, He could not fulfil His covenant of promise, for this covenant was to be fulfilled only upon condition of obedience. The history of Israel should be to us a most solemn warning of the calamities that will overtake us if we are disobedient to God’s commandments. “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him.”’ *Signs of the Times*, January 24, 1895.

‘All that the LORD hath spoken we will do’

7. What was the initial response of the people of Israel to God's call for their obedience? Exodus 19:8.

NOTE: 'In Exodus 19 we read: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Wonderful condescension is this! God offers to make the Israelites His peculiar treasure, if they obey His law and glorify His name. Observe the response they made to these words: "Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him." All this instruction was placed by the elders before the vast multitude assembled. "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." *Lift Him Up*, page 139.

8. How did they reiterate this pledge to be obedient? Exodus 24:3, 7.

NOTE: 'God's favour toward Israel had always been conditional on their obedience. At the foot of Sinai they had entered into covenant relationship with Him as His "peculiar treasure. . . above all people." Solemnly they had promised to follow in the path of obedience. "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," they had said. Exodus 19:5, 8. And when, a few days afterward, God's law was spoken from Sinai, and additional instruction in the form of statutes and judgments was communicated through Moses, the Israelites with one voice had again promised, "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do." At the ratification of the covenant, the people had once more united in declaring, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient," Exodus 24:3, 7. God had chosen Israel as His people, and they had chosen Him as their King.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 293.

'They have turned aside quickly out of the way'

9. What event showed that the people were incapable of keeping their pledge to obey? Nehemiah 9:16-18.

NOTE: 'The people did not realise the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Exodus 24:7. They had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favour of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant, and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 78.

10. What better covenant has God offered? Jeremiah 31:31-33.

NOTE: 'As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants. The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Genesis 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it, and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God's law. The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect." The testimony of God concerning His faithful servant was, "Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." Genesis 17:1; 26:5. The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the "second," or "new," covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today. Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the author and the finisher of our faith.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 77.

'Better promises'

11. How does Paul explain why this 'new' covenant is better than the one made at Sinai? Hebrews 8:6.

NOTE: 'The terms of the "old covenant" were, Obey and live: "If a man do, he shall even live in them;" but "cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." Ezekiel 20:11; Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 27:26. The "new covenant" was established upon "better promises", the promise of forgiveness of sins, and of the grace of God to renew the heart, and bring it into harmony with the principles of God's law.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 78.

Note that the old covenant was confirmed by man's promise to God to be obedient, a promise sinful man is unable to keep. The 'new' covenant is based on God's promises to men to forgive their sins and to create in them clean hearts and a right spirit, imprinted with the righteous principles of God's law.

12. How are we shown that the 'new' covenant, like the old, is based on obedience to God's law? Hebrews 8:10.

NOTE: 'The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth "the fruits of the Spirit." Through

the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 372.

Lesson 6: May 3-9 'Blessing and cursing'

MEMORY VERSE: 'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.' Deuteronomy 30:19.

STUDY HELP: *Patriarchs & Prophets*, pages 500-504.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 28.

LESSON AIM: To study the outcome of obedience and disobedience.

Introduction

'Christ counted it essential to remind His people that obedience to the commandments of God is for their present and future good. Obedience brings a blessing, disobedience a curse. Besides, when the Lord in a special manner favours His people, He exhorts them publicly to acknowledge His goodness. In this way His name will be glorified; for such an acknowledgment is a testimony that His words are faithful and true. "Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee" (Deuteronomy 26:11).' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 149.

'If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD'

1. How did God bring home to Israel the consequences of both obedience and disobedience? Deuteronomy 27:12-13. Compare Joshua 8:33-34.

NOTE: 'Six of the tribes, all descended from Leah and Rachel, were stationed upon Mount Gerizim; while those that descended from the handmaids, together with Reuben and Zebulun, took their position on Ebal, the priests with the ark occupying the valley between them. Silence was proclaimed by the sound of the signal trumpet; and then in the deep stillness, and in the presence of this vast assembly, Joshua, standing beside the sacred ark, read the blessings that were to follow obedience to God's law. All the tribes on Gerizim responded by an Amen. He then read the curses, and the tribes on Ebal in like manner gave their assent, thousands upon thousands of voices uniting as the voice of one man in the solemn response.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 500.

2. What did God say would be the result of obedience? Deuteronomy 28:1-2.

NOTE: 'God surrounded Israel with every facility, gave them every privilege, that would make them an honour to His name and a blessing to surrounding nations. If they would walk in the ways of obedience, He promised to make them "high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour." "All people of the earth," He said, "shall hear that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee." The nations which shall hear all these statutes shall say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." Deuteronomy 26:19; 28:10; 4:6.' *Education*, page 40.

'All these blessings shall come on thee'

3. How extensive did God promise would be the blessings of obedience? Deuteronomy 28:3-8

NOTE: 'Obedience was the only condition upon which ancient Israel was to receive the fulfilment of the promises which made them the highly favoured people of God; and obedience to that law will bring as great blessings to individuals and nations now as it would have brought to the Hebrews. Obedience to the law is essential, not only to our salvation, but to our own happiness and the happiness of all with whom we are connected. "Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165), says the Inspired Word.' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 218.

4. What further blessings were promised to them on condition of obedience? Deuteronomy 28:11-12.

NOTE: 'The Lord gave His word to ancient Israel, that if they would cleave strictly to Him and do all His requirements, He would keep them from all the diseases such as He had brought upon the Egyptians; but this promise was given on the condition of obedience. Had the Israelites obeyed the instruction they received, and profited by their advantages, they would have been the world's object lesson of health and prosperity. The Israelites failed of fulfilling God's purpose, and thus failed of receiving the blessings that might have been theirs.' *Testimonies, volume 9*, page 165.

'An holy people unto Himself'

5. What sort of people would such obedience produce? Deuteronomy 28:9, 13.

NOTE: 'Through His people Israel, God designed to give to the world a knowledge of His will. His promises and threatenings, His instructions and reproofs, the wonderful manifestations of His power among them, in blessings for obedience, and judgment for transgression and apostasy, all were designed for the education and development of religious principle among the

people of God until the close of time. Therefore it is important that we acquaint ourselves with the history of the Hebrew host, and ponder with care the dealings of God with them.' *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 2*, page 994.

6. What sort of reputation would an obedient people have in the world? Deuteronomy 28:10, Deuteronomy 4:5-6.

NOTE: 'God called Israel, and blessed and exalted them, not that by obedience to His law they alone might receive His favour and become the exclusive recipients of His blessings, but in order to reveal Himself through them to all the inhabitants of the earth.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 369.

'If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD'

7. What would be the consequences of disobedience? Deuteronomy 28:20. Read verses 15-68.

NOTE: 'The doctrine that men are released from obedience to God's requirements has weakened the force of moral obligation and opened the floodgates of iniquity upon the world. Lawlessness, dissipation, and corruption are sweeping in upon us like an overwhelming tide. In the family, Satan is at work. His banner waves, even in professedly Christian households. There is envy, evil surmising, hypocrisy, estrangement, emulation, strife, betrayal of sacred trusts, indulgence of lust. The whole system of religious principles and doctrines, which should form the foundation and framework of social life, seems to be a tottering mass, ready to fall to ruin. The vilest of criminals, when thrown into prison for their offences, are often made the recipients of gifts and attentions as if they had attained an enviable distinction. Great publicity is given to their character and crimes. The press publishes the revolting details of vice, thus initiating others into the practice of fraud, robbery, and murder; and Satan exults in the success of his hellish schemes. The infatuation of vice, the wanton taking of life, the terrible increase of intemperance and iniquity of every order and degree, should arouse all who fear God, to inquire what can be done to stay the tide of evil.' *Great Controversy*, page 585.

8. How extensive would be the consequences of disobedience? Deuteronomy 28:15-19.

NOTE: 'The principles of justice required a faithful narration of facts for the benefit of all who should ever read the Sacred Record. Here we discern the evidences of divine wisdom. We are required to obey the law of God, and are not only instructed as to the penalty of disobedience, but we have narrated for our benefit and warning the history of Adam and Eve in Paradise, and the sad results of their disobedience of God's commands. The account is full and explicit. The law given to man in Eden is recorded, together with the penalty accruing in case of its disobedience. Then follows the story of the temptation and fall, and the punishment inflicted upon our erring parents. Their example is given us as a warning against disobedience, that we may be sure that the wages of sin is death, that God's retributive justice never fails, and that He exacts from His creatures a strict regard for His commandments. When the law was proclaimed at Sinai, how definite was the penalty annexed, how sure was punishment to follow the transgression of that law, and how plain are the cases recorded in evidence of that fact!' *Testimonies, volume 4*, page 11.

'What will He do unto those husbandmen?'

9. What parable did Christ tell to show the consequences of Israel's disobedience? Matthew 21:33-39.

NOTE: 'The Jewish rulers did not love God; therefore they cut themselves away from Him, and rejected all His overtures for a just settlement. Christ, the Beloved of God, came to assert the claims of the Owner of the vineyard; but the husbandmen treated Him with marked contempt, saying, We will not have this man to rule over us. They envied Christ's beauty of character. His manner of teaching was far superior to theirs, and they dreaded His success. He remonstrated with them, unveiling their hypocrisy, and showing them the sure results of their course of action. This stirred them to madness. They smarted under the rebukes they could not silence. They hated the high standard of righteousness which Christ continually presented. They saw that His teaching was placing them where their selfishness would be uncloaked, and they determined to kill Him. They hated His example of truthfulness and piety and the elevated spirituality revealed in all He did. His whole life was a reproof to their selfishness, and when the final test came, the test which meant obedience unto eternal life or disobedience unto eternal death, they rejected the Holy One of Israel.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 293.

10. When asked how the wicked husbandmen should be dealt with, how did the Jewish leaders reply? Matthew 21:40-41.

NOTE: 'Unwittingly they had pronounced their own doom. Jesus looked upon them, and under His searching gaze they knew that He read the secrets of their hearts. His divinity flashed out before them with unmistakable power. They saw in the husbandmen a picture of themselves.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 295.

'To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey,'

11. How did Christ pronounce the rejection of the Jewish nation? Matthew 21:43.

NOTE: 'Solemnly and regretfully Christ asked, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Christ would have averted the doom of the Jewish nation if the people had received Him. But envy and jealousy made them implacable. They determined that they would not receive Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. They rejected the Light of the world, and thenceforth their lives were surrounded with darkness as the darkness of midnight. The doom foretold came upon the Jewish nation. Their own fierce pas-

sions, uncontrolled, wrought their ruin. In their blind rage they destroyed one another. Their rebellious, stubborn pride brought upon them the wrath of their Roman conquerors. Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple laid in ruins, and its site ploughed like a field. The children of Judah perished by the most horrible forms of death. Millions were sold, to serve as bondmen in heathen lands. As a people the Jews had failed of fulfilling God's purpose, and the vineyard was taken from them. The privileges they had abused, the work they had slighted, was entrusted to others.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 295-296.

12. What sort of people is God seeking to comprise His Israel today? 1 Peter 1:2.

NOTE: 'The parable of the vineyard applies not alone to the Jewish nation. It has a lesson for us. The church in this generation has been endowed by God with great privileges and blessings, and He expects corresponding returns. . . Christ hungers to receive from His vineyard the fruit of holiness and unselfishness. He looks for the principles of love and goodness. Not all the beauty of art can bear comparison with the beauty of temper and character to be revealed in those who are Christ's representatives. It is the atmosphere of grace which surrounds the soul of the believer, the Holy Spirit working upon mind and heart, that makes him a savour of life unto life, and enables God to bless his work. A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without the attraction of any outward show; but if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, they will have His joy in their souls.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 296, 298.

Lesson 7: May 10-16 **'To obey is better than sacrifice'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.' 1 Samuel 15:22, last part.

STUDY HELP: *Patriarchs & Prophets*, pages 627-636.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 15.

LESSON AIM: To study how Saul faced the issue of obedience.

Introduction

'In his expedition against Amalek, Saul thought he had done all that was essential of that which the Lord had commanded him; but the Lord was not pleased with partial obedience, nor willing to pass over what had been neglected through so plausible a motive. God has given men no liberty to depart from His requirements. The Lord had declared to Israel, "Ye shall not do . . . every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes;" but ye shall "observe and hear all these words which I command thee." Deuteronomy 12:8, 28. In deciding upon any course of action we are not to ask whether we can see that harm will result from it, but whether it is in keeping with the will of God. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 634.

'The LORD hath sworn'

1. What command was given to Saul and why was the command given? 1 Samuel 15:2-3. See Exodus 17:8-13.

NOTE: 'The Amalekites had been the first to make war upon Israel in the wilderness; and for this sin, together with their defiance of God and their debasing idolatry, the Lord, through Moses, had pronounced sentence upon them. By divine direction the history of their cruelty toward Israel had been recorded, with the command, "Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it." Deuteronomy 25:19. For four hundred years the execution of this sentence had been deferred; but the Amalekites had not turned from their sins. The Lord knew that this wicked people would, if it were possible, blot out His people and His worship from the earth. Now the time had come for the sentence, so long delayed, to be executed.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 627.

2. What pronouncement had the LORD made concerning the Amalekites? Exodus 17:14, Deuteronomy 25:19.

NOTE: 'The forbearance that God has exercised toward the wicked, emboldens men in transgression; but their punishment will be none the less certain and terrible for being long delayed. "The Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act." Isaiah 28:21. To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezekiel 33:11. The Lord is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, . . . forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Yet He will "by no means clear the guilty." Exodus 34:6, 7. While He does not delight in vengeance, He will execute judgment upon the transgressors of His law. He is forced to do this, to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from utter depravity and ruin. In order to save some He must cut off those who have become hardened in sin. "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked." Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. And the very fact of His reluctance to execute justice testifies to the enormity of the sins that call forth His judgments and to the severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 628.

'It grieved Samuel'

3. How did Saul respond to God's command? 1 Samuel 15:8-9.

NOTE: 'This victory over the Amalekites was the most brilliant victory that Saul had ever gained, and it served to rekindle the pride of heart that was his greatest peril. The divine edict devoting the enemies of God to utter destruction was but partially fulfilled. Ambitious to heighten the honour of his triumphal return by the presence of a royal captive, Saul ventured to imitate the customs of the nations around him and spared Agag, the fierce and warlike king of the Amalekites. The people reserved for themselves the finest of the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden, excusing their sin on the ground that the cattle were reserved to be offered as sacrifices to the Lord. It was their purpose, however, to use these merely as a substitute, to save their own cattle.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 629.

4. What was Samuel's response to the news of Saul's disobedience? 1 Samuel 15:10-11.

NOTE: 'While Saul and his army were marching home in the flush of victory, there was deep anguish in the home of Samuel the prophet. He had received a message from the Lord denouncing the course of the king: "It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments." The prophet was deeply grieved over the course of the rebellious king, and he wept and prayed all night for a reversing of the terrible sentence.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 629.

'I have performed the commandment of the LORD'

5. With what words did Saul greet Samuel? 1 Samuel 15:13.

NOTE: 'With an aching heart the prophet set forth the next morning to meet the erring king. Samuel cherished a hope that, upon reflection, Saul might become conscious of his sin, and by repentance and humiliation be again restored to the divine favour. But when the first step is taken in the path of transgression the way becomes easy. Saul, debased by his disobedience, came to meet Samuel with a lie upon his lips. He exclaimed, "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.'" *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 630.

6. What question did Samuel ask and what was Saul's response? 1 Samuel 15:14-15.

NOTE: 'The sounds that fell on the prophet's ears disproved the statement of the disobedient king. To the pointed question, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul made answer, "They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." The people had obeyed Saul's directions; but in order to shield himself, he was willing to charge upon them the sin of his disobedience.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 630.

'Wherefore didst thou not obey?'

7. What challenge did Samuel make to Saul? 1 Samuel 15:19.

NOTE: 'This is why many are not efficient agents for the Master. They are constantly making provision to please and glorify themselves, or they cherish lust in the heart. True, they assent to the law of Ten Commandments, and many teach the law in theory, but they do not cherish its principles. They do not obey the command of God to be pure, to love God supremely, and their neighbour as themselves. While constantly living a lie, can such have strength, can they have confidence, will such become efficient workers for God?' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 159.

8. How did Saul respond? 1 Samuel 15:20.

NOTE: 'It is a perilous step to slight the reproofs and warnings of God's word or of His Spirit. Many, like Saul, yield to temptation until they become blind to the true character of sin. They flatter themselves that they have had some good object in view, and have done no wrong in departing from the Lord's requirements. Thus they do despite to the Spirit of grace, until its voice is no longer heard, and they are left to the delusions which they have chosen.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 635.

'Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft'

9. What excuse did Saul make for his disobedience? 1 Samuel 15:21.

NOTE: 'We are to come to God, not in a spirit of self-justification, but with humility, repenting of our sins. He is able to help us, willing to do for us more than we ask or think. He has the abundance of heaven wherewith to supply our necessities. God is holy, and we must pray, "lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1 Timothy 2:8).' *In Heavenly Places*, page 71.

10. What response did Samuel make to Saul's excuses? 1 Samuel 15:22-23.

NOTE: "'To obey is better than sacrifice.'" The sacrificial offerings were in themselves of no value in the sight of God. They were designed to express on the part of the offerer penitence for sin and faith in Christ and to pledge future obedience to the law of God. But without penitence, faith, and an obedient heart, the offerings were worthless. When, in direct violation of God's command, Saul proposed to present a sacrifice of that which God had devoted to destruction, open contempt was shown for the divine authority. The service would have been an insult to Heaven. Yet with the sin of Saul and its result before us, how many are pursuing a similar course. While they refuse to believe and obey some requirement of the Lord, they persevere in offering up to God their formal services of religion. There is no response of the Spirit of God to such service. No matter how zealous men may be in their observance of religious ceremonies, the Lord cannot accept them if they persist in wilful violation of one of His commands.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 634.

"'Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.'" . . . No stronger evidence can be given of Satan's delusive power than that many who are thus led by him deceive themselves with the belief that they are in the service

of God. When Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebelled against the authority of Moses, they thought they were opposing only a human leader, a man like themselves; and they came to believe that they were verily doing God service. But in rejecting God's chosen instrument they rejected Christ; they insulted the Spirit of God. So, in the days of Christ, the Jewish scribes and elders, who professed great zeal for the honour of God, crucified His Son. The same spirit still exists in the hearts of those who set themselves to follow their own will in opposition to the will of God.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 635.

'I feared the people and obeyed their voice'

11. What sort of repentance did Saul make for his disobedience? 1 Samuel 15:24.

NOTE: 'It was not sorrow for sin, but fear of its penalty, that actuated the king of Israel as he entreated Samuel, "I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord." If Saul had had true repentance, he would have made public confession of his sin; but it was his chief anxiety to maintain his authority and retain the allegiance of the people. He desired the honour of Samuel's presence in order to strengthen his own influence with the nation.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 631.

12. How did Samuel respond to Saul's self-justifying 'repentance'? 1 Samuel 15:26.

NOTE: 'God's repentance is not like man's repentance. "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent." Man's repentance implies a change of mind. God's repentance implies a change of circumstances and relations. Man may change his relation to God by complying with the conditions upon which he may be brought into the divine favour, or he may, by his own action, place himself outside the favouring condition; but the Lord is the same "yesterday, and today, and forever." Hebrews 13:8. Saul's disobedience changed his relation to God; but the conditions of acceptance with God were unaltered; God's requirements were still the same, for with Him there "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 630.

Lesson 8: May 17-23 'This is the love of God'

MEMORY VERSE: 'But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.' Joshua 22:5.

STUDY HELP: *Steps to Christ*, pages 58-63.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 John 5:2-3, 1 John 4:16-21.

LESSON AIM: To study the relationship between obedience and love.

Introduction

'In the precepts of His holy law, God has given a perfect rule of life; and He has declared that until the close of time this law, unchanged in a single jot or tittle, is to maintain its claim upon human beings. Christ came to magnify the law and make it honourable. He showed that it is based upon the broad foundation of love to God and love to man, and that obedience to its precepts comprises the whole duty of man. In His own life He gave an example of obedience to the law of God. In the Sermon on the Mount He showed how its requirements extend beyond the outward acts and take cognisance of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 505.

'Them that love Me and keep My commandments'

1. How did God show that obedience to His commandments is the expression of our love to Him? Exodus 20:6.

NOTE: 'Obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The Law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the Law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new covenant promise is fulfilled, "I will put My laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. And if the Law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience, the service and allegiance of love, is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says: "This is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments." "He that sayeth, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him." 1 John 5:3; 1 John 2:4.' *Steps to Christ* page 60.

2. How did Moses teach that love and obedience are the basis of the covenant relationship with God? Deuteronomy 7:9. Compare Deuteronomy 11:1, 13, 22, Deuteronomy 30:16.

NOTE: 'If all would only learn the simple lesson that they must take and wear the yoke of Christ and learn of the Great Teacher His meekness and lowliness of heart, they would better fulfil their covenant to love God supremely and their neighbour as themselves. They must begin at the very beginning. Christ says, Take My yoke of restraint and obedience upon

you, and learn of Me. The heart will then be made right with God, through the creative power of Christ. Partakers of the divine nature, they are transformed.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 162.

'To love the LORD your God and to walk in all His ways'

3. How did Joshua remind Israel of the relationship between love and obedience? Joshua 22:5.

NOTE: 'The great stone set up by Joshua [Joshua 24:26-27] was to stand as a constant reminder to Israel of the covenant which they had made with God, and a silent witness of their faithfulness or apostasy. So also the song of Moses was to testify against them, should they depart from God. Many of the Israelites were unacquainted with the books of Moses. But it was the purpose of God that this inspired song should awaken in thoughtful minds a desire to learn more of God's wonderful dealings with His people, and lead to the study of His revealed word. Thus would they be led to realise the goodness of God toward them, and their duty to love, and obey, and worship Him.' *Signs of the Times*, May 26, 1881.

4. How did Nehemiah show his awareness of this truth? Nehemiah 1:5.

NOTE: 'By the Babylonish captivity the Israelites were effectually cured of the worship of graven images. During the centuries that followed, they suffered from the oppression of heathen foes, until the conviction became fixed that their prosperity depended upon their obedience to the law of God. But with too many of the people obedience was not prompted by love. The motive was selfish. They rendered outward service to God as the means of attaining to national greatness. They did not become the light of the world.' *Desire of Ages*, page 28.

'On these two commandments hang all the law'

5. How did Daniel reveal his knowledge of the truth that obedience is the expression of love to God? Daniel 9:4.

NOTE: 'Will we hear the voice of God and obey, or will we make half-way work of the matter, and try to serve God and mammon? Christ has placed before us the conditions of eternal life. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," He says, "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." "This do, and thou shalt live." Those who hear from the lips of Christ the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," will be heroic ministers of righteousness. They may never preach a discourse from the pulpit, but, loyal to a sense of God's claims upon them, and jealous for His honour, they will minister to the souls who are the purchase of Christ's blood. They will see the necessity of carrying into their work a willing mind, an earnest spirit, and a hearty, unselfish zeal. They will not study how best they can preserve their own dignity, but by care and thoughtfulness will seek to win the hearts of those whom they serve. On every hand the agents of Satan will seek to induce them to sin, but those who will to love and fear God will stand as firm as a rock to their heaven-inspired purpose. Like Daniel, they will refuse to be moved from their convictions of duty.' *Review & Herald*, November 28, 1899.

6. What two great principles of obedience were revealed to Israel? Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18.

NOTE: 'The first four of the Ten Commandments are summed up in the one great precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The last six are included in the other, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Both these commandments are an expression of the principle of love. The first cannot be kept and the second broken, nor can the second be kept while the first is broken. When God has His rightful place on the throne of the heart, the right place will be given to our neighbour. We shall love him as ourselves. And only as we love God supremely is it possible to love our neighbour impartially.' *Desire of Ages*, page 607.

'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?'

7. What reply was made to Christ over the question of what is necessary to gain eternal life? Luke 10:25-27.

NOTE: 'As Christ was teaching the people, "a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" With breathless attention the large congregation awaited the answer. The priests and rabbis had thought to entangle Christ by having the lawyer ask this question. But the Saviour entered into no controversy. He required the answer from the questioner himself. "What is written in the law?" He said; "how readest thou?" The Jews still accused Jesus of lightly regarding the law given from Sinai; but He turned the question of salvation upon the keeping of God's commandments. The lawyer said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Jesus said, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." The lawyer was not satisfied with the position and works of the Pharisees. He had been studying the Scriptures with a desire to learn their real meaning. He had a vital interest in the matter, and had asked in sincerity, "What shall I do?" In his answer as to the requirements of the law, he passed by all the mass of ceremonial and ritualistic precepts. For these he claimed no value, but presented the two great principles on which hang all the law and the prophets. This answer, being commended by Christ, placed the Saviour on vantage ground with the rabbis. They could not condemn Him for sanctioning that which had been advanced by an expositor of the law. "This do, and thou shalt live," Jesus said. He presented the law as a divine unity, and in this lesson taught that it is not possible to keep one precept, and break another; for the same principle runs through them all. Man's destiny will be determined by his obedience to the whole law. Supreme love to God and impartial love to man are the principles to be wrought out in the life.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 497-498.

8. How did Christ explain the relationship of obedience to love? John 14:21. Compare John 14:15, John 15:10.

NOTE: 'Love for Him will give vital force to everything that is undertaken. Thus through the right use of our talents, we may link ourselves by a golden chain to the higher world. This is true sanctification; for sanctification consists in the cheerful performance of daily duties in perfect obedience to the will of God.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 360.

"If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience.' *Desire of Ages*, page 668.

'In him verily is the love of God perfected'

9. How did John explain the relationship between love and obedience? 1 John 5:2-3.

NOTE: 'John declares: "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." 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.

10. Is it possible for a person to know God without obeying the commandments? 1 John 2:3-4.

NOTE: 'There are those who profess holiness, who declare that they are wholly the Lord's, who claim a right to the promises of God, while refusing to render obedience to His commandments. These transgressors of the law claim everything that is promised to the children of God; but this is presumption on their part, for John tells us that true love for God will be revealed in obedience to all His commandments. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth, to make a profession of faith in Christ, to believe that Jesus is no impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments," John wrote, "is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him." "He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him." 1 John 2:4, 5; 3:24.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 562.

'Love is the fulfilling of the law'

11. What is the only way to fulfil God's law? Romans 13:8, 10.

NOTE: 'The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely, because he is required to do so, will never enter into **the joy of obedience. He does not obey.** When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right, because right doing is pleasing to God.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 97. [Emphasis added.]

12. How did Paul sum up obedience to God's law? Galatians 5:14.

NOTE: 'The worshiper of God will find that he cannot cherish one fibre of the root of selfishness. He cannot do his duty to his God and practice oppression toward his fellow men. The second principle of the law is like unto the first, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "This do and thou shalt live." These are the words of Jesus Christ from which there can be no departure on the part of any man, woman, or youth who would be a true Christian. It is obedience to the principles of the commandments of God that moulds the character after the divine similitude.' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 52.

13. What light does John shed on Paul's words? 1 John 4:20.

NOTE: 'When the children of God manifest mercy, kindness, and love toward all men, they also are witnessing to the character of the statutes of heaven. They are bearing testimony to the fact that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Psalm 19:7. And whoever fails to manifest this love is breaking the law which he professes to revere. For the spirit we manifest toward our brethren declares what is our spirit toward God. The love of God in the heart is the only spring of love toward our neighbour. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Beloved, "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." 1 John 4:20, 12.' *Desire of Ages*, page 505.

Lesson 9: May 24-30

'The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.' Romans 3:31.

STUDY HELP: *Faith & Works*, pages 51-54.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Romans 1:16-18.

LESSON AIM: To study the relationship between obedience and faith.

Introduction

'The faith in Christ that saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. "Believe, believe," is their cry; "only believe in Christ, and you will be saved. It is all you have to do." While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God. Faith is manifested by works. And the apostle John declares, "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4).' *Faith & Works*, page 52.

Compiler's note: It is of vital importance in studying this topic to grasp the fact that when Paul talks of 'works', he is speaking of something entirely different from James when he wrote of 'works'. When Paul speaks of 'the works of the law', he is referring primarily to religious observances of the kind Jesus spoke of in His parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9-14). Paul was addressing the Pharisees' teaching that strict observance of such religious observances justifies a man in God's sight. Only through faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ can a man be justified. When James spoke of 'works', he was talking of obedience to the revealed will of God. He cites as examples the obedience of Abraham in offering Isaac and the obedience of Rahab in obeying the instruction given her to ensure her safety in the fall of Jericho. More widely, James defines the works required of the Christian in James 1:27.

'God forbid'

1. How did Paul explain that nothing we can do can earn us justification in the sight of God? Romans 3:20.

NOTE: 'The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 107.

2. Does this mean Paul taught that obedience has no part in the Christian's life? Romans 3:31, Romans 6:15-16.

NOTE: 'The apostle Paul, in relating his experience, presents an important truth concerning the work to be wrought in conversion. He says, "I was alive without the law once," he felt no condemnation; "but when the commandment came," when the law of God was urged upon his conscience, "sin revived, and I died." [Romans 7:9.] Then he saw himself a sinner, condemned by the divine law. Mark, it was Paul, and not the law, that died. He says, further, "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." [Romans 7:7.] "The commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." [Romans 7:10.] The law which promised life to the obedient, pronounced death upon the transgressor. "Wherefore," he says, "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." [Romans 7:12.] How wide the contrast between these words of Paul and those that come from many of the pulpits of today. The people are taught that obedience to God's law is not necessary to salvation; that they have only to believe in Jesus, and they are safe. Without the law, men have no conviction of sin, and feel no need of repentance. Not seeing their lost condition as violators of God's law, they do not feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ as their only hope of salvation.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 4*, page 297.

'The obedience of faith'

3. How are we shown that Paul saw the connection between faith and obedience? Romans 16:25-26.

NOTE: 'To those who believe, Christ is the sure foundation. These are they who fall upon the Rock and are broken. Submission to Christ and faith in Him are here represented. To fall upon the Rock and be broken is to give up our self-righteousness and to go to Christ with the humility of a child, repenting of our transgressions, and believing in His forgiving love. And so also it is by faith and obedience that we build on Christ as our foundation.' *Desire of Ages*, page 599.

4. How did Paul reply to those who teach that one can be saved without obedience? Romans 6:1-4.

NOTE: 'Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. If a man could save himself by his own works, he might have something in himself in which to rejoice. The effort that man makes in his own strength to obtain salvation is represented by the offering of Cain. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation.' *Faith & Works*, page 94.

'Faith without works is dead'

5. How did James explain that a man's faith in God is made evident by his obedience to God's commands? James 2:21-22.

NOTE: 'While God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practising known sins or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul.' *Faith & Works*, page 100.

6. What scathing comment does James make to those who claim to have faith while demonstrating no corresponding works of righteousness? James 2:18, 20.

NOTE: 'The forgiveness of sin is promised to him who repents and believes; the crown of life will be the reward of him who is faithful to the end. We may grow in grace by improving through the grace we already have. We are to keep ourselves unspot-

ted from the world if we would be found blameless in the day of God. Faith and works go hand in hand; they act harmoniously in the work of overcoming. Works without faith are dead, and faith without works is dead. Works will never save us; it is the merit of Christ that will avail in our behalf. Through faith in Him, Christ will make all our imperfect efforts acceptable to God. The faith we are required to have is not a do-nothing faith; saving faith is that which works by love and purifies the soul. He who will lift up holy hands to God without wrath and doubting will walk intelligently in the way of God's commandments.' *Faith & Works*, page 48.

'By faith Abraham obeyed'

7. What Bible example is given us to show the part that faith plays in obedience? Hebrews 11:8.

NOTE: 'The message of God came to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." In order that God might qualify him for his great work as the keeper of the sacred oracles, Abraham must be separated from the associations of his early life. Abraham's unquestioning obedience is one of the most striking evidences of faith to be found in all the Bible. It was no light test that was thus brought upon Abraham, no small sacrifice that was required of him. There were strong ties to bind him to his country, his kindred, and his home. But he did not hesitate to obey the call. He had no question to ask concerning the land of promise, whether the soil was fertile and the climate healthful; whether the country afforded agreeable surroundings and would afford opportunities for amassing wealth. God had spoken, and His servant must obey; the happiest place on earth for him was the place where God would have him to be.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 44.

8. How did Christ show Paul that faith in Him will lead to sanctification of the life? Acts 26:18.

NOTE: '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. Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, "Ye shall receive.'" *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 563-564.

'Faith that works'

9. What is it that avails in our walk with Christ? Galatians 5:6.

NOTE: 'The Holy Spirit's guidance leads us into all truth. The Holy Spirit takes the things of God and shows them unto us, conveying them as a living power into the obedient heart. We then have the faith that works by love and purifies the soul, which takes the perfect impress of its Author.' *Evangelism*, page 166.

10. What did Paul commend in the Thessalonian church? 1 Thessalonians 1:3.

NOTE: 'The labour of love springs from the work of faith. Bible religion means constant work. We are to be zealous of good works; be careful to maintain good works. And the true Witness says, "I know thy works." While it is true that our busy activities will not in themselves ensure salvation, it is also true that faith which unites us to Christ will stir the soul to activity.' *Our High Calling*, page 121.

'The faith of Jesus'

11. What principle for living will enable God's people to render obedience to Him? Romans 1:17. Compare Habakkuk 2:4.

NOTE: 'To the consecrated worker there is wonderful consolation in the knowledge that even Christ during His life on earth sought His Father daily for fresh supplies of needed grace; and from this communion with God He went forth to strengthen and bless others. Behold the Son of God bowed in prayer to His Father! Though He is the Son of God, He strengthens His faith by prayer, and by communion with heaven gathers to Himself power to resist evil and to minister to the needs of men. As the Elder Brother of our race He knows the necessities of those who, compassed with infirmity and living in a world of sin and temptation, still desire to serve Him. He knows that the messengers whom He sees fit to send are weak, erring men; but to all who give themselves wholly to His service He promises divine aid. His own example is an assurance that earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith, faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work, will avail to bring to men the Holy Spirit's aid in the battle against sin.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 56.

12. How does the Lord identify those whom He regards as His saints? Revelation 14:12.

NOTE: 'The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are testing us. If we are faithful and obedient, God will delight in us, and bless us as His own chosen, peculiar people. When perfect faith and perfect love and obedience abound, working in the hearts of those who are Christ's followers, they will have a powerful influence. Light will emanate from them, dispelling the darkness around them, refining and elevating all who come within a sphere of their influence, and bringing to a knowledge of

the truth all who are willing to be enlightened, and to follow in the humble path of obedience.' *Review & Herald*, July 13, 1897.

Lesson 10: May 31-June 6 **'I have kept My Father's commandments'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.' John 15:10.

STUDY HELP: *Lift Him Up*, page 169.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: John 14:15-24.

LESSON AIM: To study what Christ taught about obedience.

Introduction

'Christ was the Majesty of heaven, the Prince of life; yet He humbled Himself as a man and became obedient to every law of God. He passed over the ground that every man must tread who takes His name, and came forth from His trial pure and untainted by sin. He was our example in all things.' *Testimonies, volume 9*, page 69.

'If ye keep My commandments'

1. What did Jesus say was necessary in order to abide in His love? John 15:10, first part. Compare John 14:15.

NOTE: 'There are only two classes in the world today, and only two classes will be recognised in the judgement, those who violate God's law and those who obey it. Christ gives the test by which to prove our loyalty or disloyalty. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments. . . . He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. . . . He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings; and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me." "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 14:15-24; 15:10.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 283.

2. What did Jesus say is to be our expression of our friendship to Him? John 15:14.

NOTE: 'Christians will show that they are the friends of God by their obedience. "Ye are my friends," says Christ, "if ye do whatsoever I command you. . . . If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'" *Our High Calling*, page 149.

'In vain do they worship Me'

3. What kind of worship did Christ describe as worthless? Matthew 15:9.

NOTE: 'The substitution of the precepts of men for the commandments of God has not ceased. Even among Christians are found institutions and usages that have no better foundation than the traditions of the fathers. Such institutions, resting upon mere human authority, have supplanted those of divine appointment. Men cling to their traditions, and revere their customs, and cherish hatred against those who seek to show them their error. In this day, when we are bidden to call attention to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, we see the same enmity as was manifested in the days of Christ. Of the remnant people of God it is written, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17. But "every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." In place of the authority of the so-called fathers of the church, God bids us accept the word of the eternal Father, the Lord of heaven and earth. Here alone is truth unmixed with error. David said, "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts." Psalm 119:99, 100. Let all who accept human authority, the customs of the church, or the traditions of the fathers, take heed to the warning conveyed in the words of Christ, "In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'" *Desire of Ages*, page 398.

4. What in particular did Jesus say undermines obedience to God? Matthew 15:3.

NOTE: 'A "Thus saith the Lord" is not to be set aside for a "Thus saith the church".' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 68.

'By traditions received from the Roman Catholic Church, the fourth commandment of the Decalogue is made of none effect. By their acceptance of a spurious sabbath, men have dishonoured God, and have honoured the usurper, who thought to changed times and laws. Many dangerous errors have been brought in to get rid of the true Sabbath. Men have taken the side of the great rebel, and rather than accept the word of God just as it reads, have placed themselves in a net of heresy. Satan is bringing the churches and the world into corrupt harmony upon this point. Night, dark and portentous, is enclosing the Christian world. Apostasy from God's commandments is evidence of this night, deep, dark, and apparently impenetrable. Systems that make the truth of God of none effect are cherished. Men are teaching for doctrine the commandments of men; and their assertions are taken as truth. The people have received man-made theories. So the gospel is perverted, and the Scripture misapplied. As in the days of Christ, the light of truth is pushed into the back-ground. Men's theories and suppositions are honoured before the word of the Lord God of hosts. The truth is counteracted by error. The word of God is wrested, divided, and dis-

torted by higher criticism. Jesus is acknowledged, only to be betrayed by a kiss. Apostasy exists, and will enclose the world till the last. Its hideous character and darkening influence will be seen in the maddening draughts dealt out from Babylon.' *Bible Echo*, February 1, 1897.

'If thou wilt enter into life'

5. When asked what is necessary to enter eternal life, how did Jesus reply? Matthew 19:17.

NOTE: 'To every soul who is inquiring, "What shall I do that I may have eternal life?" the answer comes from the divine Son of God, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Does Christ tell us to do that which it is not possible for us to do? No, never. The path of obedience is possible, and it leads to the tree of life. This is the path that leads to the paradise of God. The requirement of God to obey and live was given to Adam. The only way to life is found through obedience to the commandments.' *Review & Herald*, March 28, 1893.

6. How did Jesus make clear that He was speaking of the Ten Commandments? Matthew 19:18-19.

NOTE: "'If thou wilt enter into life," Christ continued, "keep the commandments. He saith unto Him, Which?" In response Jesus quoted several of the commandments: "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The ruler's answer to this was positive: "All these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?" "One thing thou lackest," Jesus said. "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven;" "and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." Christ read the ruler's heart. He laid his hand upon his idol, his earthly possessions, which he must renounce before he could be found wanting in nothing. The possessions that he called his own were the Lord's, entrusted to him to be used for the very purpose that Christ has pointed out, for the help of the poor and needy, for the relief of suffering humanity, to clothe the naked and feed the hungry. Had the ruler been willing to obey Christ, great would have been the good that he might have done in following the Saviour's example. But he was not willing. The cost of eternal life seemed too great, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. The Saviour was not so much to him as his own name among men, or his possessions. To give up his earthly treasure, which was seen, for the heavenly treasure, which was unseen, was too great a risk. He refused the offer of eternal life, and ever after the world was to receive his worship.' *Review & Herald*, January 12, 1905.

'Least in the kingdom of heaven'

7. What did Jesus say in reply to the charge that He came to do away with the Ten Commandments and the teachings of the Old Testament? Matthew 5:17-18. (To understand 'fulfil' compare Acts 13:22, Galatians 6:2, James 2:8.)

NOTE: 'Every soul is under obligation to follow in the footsteps of Christ, the great example for the human family. He said, "I have kept My Father's commandments." The Pharisees thought that He was seeking to lessen the claims of the law of God, but His voice rang out upon their ears saying, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Christ came to magnify the law and to make it honourable; He came to extol the old commandment which ye had from the beginning. Then we need the law and the prophets. We need the Old Testament to bring us down along the line to the New Testament, which does not take the place of the Old Testament, but more distinctly reveals to us the plan of salvation, giving significance to the whole system of sacrifices and offerings, and to the word which we had from the beginning. Perfect obedience is enjoined upon every soul, and obedience to the expressed will of God will make you one with Christ. Of Him it is written, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.'" *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 48.

8. What warning did Jesus give concerning those who not only break God's commandments but teach others to do the same? Matthew 5:19.

NOTE: "'Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven." Thus did the Saviour declare the validity of the moral law. Those who disobey the commandments of God, and teach others to do the same by their example and doctrine, are condemned by Christ. They are the children of the wicked one, who was the first rebel against the law of God.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2*, page 218. 'What reason have men for thinking that God is not particular whether they obey Him implicitly or take their own course? Adam and Eve lost Eden for one transgression of His command; and how dare we trifle with the law of the Most High, and frame deceitful apologies to our souls? We do this at a terrible peril. We must keep all the law, every jot and tittle; for he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all. Every ray of light must be received and cherished, or we shall become bodies of darkness. The Lord Jesus declares: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." We should magnify the precepts of heaven by our words and actions.' *Reflecting Christ*, page 54.

'Love one another'

9. What is the evidence of true obedience? John 15:12, 17.

NOTE: 'Our Saviour speaks so plainly that no one need fail to understand that true love will always produce obedience. The religion of Jesus Christ is love. Obedience is the sign of true love. Christ and the Father are one, and those who in truth receive Christ, will love God as the great centre of their adoration, and will also love one another.' *Bible Echo*, June 17, 1901.

10. What light on these words of Jesus did John reveal? 1 John 4:20. Compare 1 Peter 1:22.

NOTE: 'When the children of God manifest mercy, kindness, and love toward all men, they also are witnessing to the character of the statutes of heaven. They are bearing testimony to the fact that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Psalm 19:7. And whoever fails to manifest this love is breaking the law which he professes to revere. For the spirit we manifest toward our brethren declares what is our spirit toward God. The love of God in the heart is the only spring of love toward our neighbour. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Beloved, "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." 1 John 4:20, 12.' *Desire of Ages*, page 505.

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren," Peter continued, "see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." The word of God, the truth, is the channel through which the Lord manifests His Spirit and power. Obedience to the word produces fruit of the required quality, "unfeigned love of the brethren." This love is heaven-born and leads to high motives and unselfish actions.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 519.

'Even as I have kept My Father's commandments'

11. What example of obedience did Christ show? John 15:10.

NOTE: 'Christ, by the example He has set before us, encourages the members of the human family to be men, obeying the Word of God within the sphere of their humanity. He Himself became a man, not a bondsman to Satan to work out his attributes, but a man in moral power, obedient to the law of God, which is a transcript of His character. Those who would rebel against subjection to a wise and good law emanating from God are slaves to an apostate power. Jesus became a man that He might mediate between man and God, that He might restore to man the original mind which he lost in Eden through Satan's alluring temptation. Disobedience is not in accordance with the nature which God gave to man in Eden.' *That I May Know Him*, page 291.

12. How did Jesus show that candidates for baptism should be instructed in obedience to God's commandments? Matthew 28:20.

NOTE: 'There is need of a more thorough preparation on the part of candidates for baptism. They are in need of more faithful instruction than has usually been given them. The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have newly come to the truth. 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 department, 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.' *Testimonies. Volume 6*, page 91.

Lesson 11: June 7-13
'Thy will be done'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.' Hebrews 5:8.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 481-483.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:5-8.

LESSON AIM: To study Christ's example of obedience.

Introduction

"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:1-9). 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, volume 1*, pages 261-262.

'The will of Him that sent Me'

1. What was the purpose of Christ's coming to earth? John 6:38.

NOTE: 'Christ's obedience to His Father's commandments is to be the measure of our obedience. Those who follow Christ, if they would become complete in Him, must keep their will surrendered to the will of God. Abundant provision has been made

that those who will seek God with the whole heart may find Him a present help in every time of trouble. Help has been laid on One that is mighty. Christ has promised, I will be your helper.' *Our High Calling*, page 107.

2. How did Christ describe the motivation of His life? John 4:34.

NOTE: 'God stands toward His people in the relation of a father, and He has a father's claim to our faithful service. Consider the life of Christ. Standing at the head of humanity, serving His Father, He is an example of what every son should and may be. The obedience that Christ rendered God requires from human beings today. He served His Father with love, in willingness and freedom. "I delight to do Thy will, O My God," He declared; "yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. Christ counted no sacrifice too great, no toil too hard, in order to accomplish the work which He came to do. At the age of twelve He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Luke 2:49. He had heard the call, and had taken up the work. "My meat," He said, "is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:34.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 282.

'Made Himself of no reputation'

3. What is Christ's rightful position? Philippians 2:6.

NOTE: 'Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God. In speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 46.

4. What was He willing to do in coming to earth? Philippians 2:7.

NOTE: 'But He humbled Himself, and took mortality upon Him. As a member of the human family, He was mortal; but as a God, He was the fountain of life to the world. He could, in His divine person, ever have withstood the advances of death, and refused to come under its dominion; but He voluntarily laid down His life, that in so doing He might give life and bring immortality to light. He bore the sins of the world, and endured the penalty, which rolled like a mountain upon His divine soul. He yielded up His life a sacrifice, that man should not eternally die. He died, not through being compelled to die, but by His own free will. And this wonderful mystery, the incarnation of Christ and the atonement that He made, must be declared to every son and daughter of Adam.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 46.

'I can of Mine own self do nothing'

5. How did Christ explain the limitations that this placed on Him? John 5:30.

NOTE: 'Christ came to the world to counteract Satan's falsehood that God had made a law which men could not keep. Taking humanity upon Himself, He came to this earth, and by a life of obedience showed that God has not made a law that man cannot keep. He showed that it is possible for man perfectly to obey the law. Those who accept Christ as their Saviour, becoming partakers of His divine nature, are enabled to follow His example, living in obedience to every precept of the law. Through the merits of Christ, man is to show by his obedience that he could be trusted in heaven, that he would not rebel. In all His Godlike deeds, the world's Redeemer declares, "I can of Mine own self do nothing." "This commandment have I received of My Father." John 5:30; 10:18. All I do is in fulfilment of the counsel and will of My heavenly Father. The history of the daily earthly life of Jesus is the exact record of the fulfilment of the purposes of God toward man. His life and character were the unfolding or representation of the perfection of the character that man may attain by becoming a partaker of the divine nature, and overcoming the world through daily conflicts.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 114.

6. What was the extent of these limitations? John 14:10.

NOTE: 'The world's Redeemer worked in dependence upon the Father. "I came down from heaven," He said, "not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.'" *Review & Herald*, October 16, 1900.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you," Christ continued, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also." The Saviour was deeply anxious for His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united to humanity. He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was.' *Desire of Ages*, page 664.

'I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do'

7. What was Jesus' feeling as He faced the prospect of the cross? John 12:27.

NOTE: “Now is my soul troubled,” said Christ, stirred to its very depths; “and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour.” This is the cry of the humanity of Christ, as He contemplated the future. He was about to enter upon the hour of His humiliation. To His human nature, the death on the cross could not but be clothed with horror. But glory was to come from humiliation. Life and immortality were to be brought to light by His death.’ *Signs of the Times*, July 8, 1897.

8. How did Jesus regard the purpose of His sinless life? John 17:3-4. Compare John 12:28.

NOTE: ‘Jesus emptied Himself, and in all that He did self did not appear. He subordinated all things to the will of His Father. When His mission on earth was about to close, He could say, “I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.” And He bids us, “Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself”; let self be dethroned, and no longer hold the supremacy of the soul.’ *Messages to Young People*, page 162.

‘In all the gracious deeds that Jesus did, He sought to impress upon men the parental, benevolent attributes of God. In all His lessons He was seeking to teach men the wonderful truth that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Jesus would have us understand the love of the Father, and He seeks to draw us to Him by presenting His parental grace. He would have the whole field of our vision filled with the perfection of God’s character. In His prayer for His disciples He says, “I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world.” Jesus came into the world to illustrate the character of God in His own life, and He swept back the misrepresentations that Satan had originated, and revealed the glory of God. It was only by living among men that He could reveal the mercy, compassion, and love of His heavenly Father; for it was only by actions of benevolence that He could set forth the grace of God. The unbelief of men was deep seated, and yet they could not resist the testimony of His God-like example, and His deeds of love and truth.’ *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 139.

‘Thy will be done’

9. What conflict of obedience did Christ undergo? Matthew 26:39. Compare Luke 22:44.

NOTE: ‘As Christ felt His unity with the Father broken up, He feared that in His human nature He would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the powers of darkness. In the wilderness of temptation the destiny of the human race had been at stake. Christ was then conqueror. Now the tempter had come for the last fearful struggle. For this he had been preparing during the three years of Christ’s ministry. Everything was at stake with him. If he failed here, his hope of mastery was lost; the kingdoms of the world would finally become Christ’s; he himself would be overthrown and cast out. But if Christ could be overcome, the earth would become Satan’s kingdom, and the human race would be forever in his power. With the issues of the conflict before Him, Christ’s soul was filled with dread of separation from God. Satan told Him that if He became the surety for a sinful world, the separation would be eternal. He would be identified with Satan’s kingdom, and would nevermore be one with God. And what was to be gained by this sacrifice? How hopeless appeared the guilt and ingratitude of men! In its hardest features Satan pressed the situation upon the Redeemer: The people who claim to be above all others in temporal and spiritual advantages have rejected You. They are seeking to destroy You, the foundation, the centre and seal of the promises made to them as a peculiar people. One of Your own disciples, who has listened to Your instruction, and has been among the foremost in church activities, will betray You. One of Your most zealous followers will deny You. All will forsake You. Christ’s whole being abhorred the thought. That those whom He had undertaken to save, those whom He loved so much, should unite in the plots of Satan, this pierced His soul. The conflict was terrible. Its measure was the guilt of His nation, of His accusers and betrayer, the guilt of a world lying in wickedness. The sins of men weighed heavily upon Christ, and the sense of God’s wrath against sin was crushing out His life. Behold Him contemplating the price to be paid for the human soul. In His agony He clings to the cold ground, as if to prevent Himself from being drawn farther from God. The chilling dew of night falls upon His prostrate form, but He heeds it not. From His pale lips comes the bitter cry, “O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.”’ *Desire of Ages*, pages 686-687.

10. What decision did Christ make when faced with this conflict? Matthew 26:42.

NOTE: ‘Our own way must be overcome. Pride, self-sufficiency, must be crucified and the vacuum supplied with the Spirit and power of God. Did Jesus Christ, the Majesty of heaven, have His way? Behold Him in travail of soul in Gethsemane, praying to His Father. What forces these blood-drops of agony from His holy brow? Oh, the sins of the whole world are upon Him! It was separation from the Father’s love that forced from His pale and quivering lips the cry, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me” (Matthew 26: 39). Three times was the prayer offered, but followed by “Nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). This must be our attitude. Not my will, but Thine, O God, be done. This is true conversion.’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 147.

‘Obedient unto death’

11. What did Paul regard as Christ’s ultimate act of obedience? Philippians 2:8.

NOTE: ‘Christ gave His all to the work that He came to do, and His word to us is, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” “So shall ye be My disciples.” Willingly and cheerfully Christ gave Himself to the carrying out of the will of God. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Shall we feel it a hardship to deny ourselves? Shall we draw back from being partakers of His sufferings? His death ought to stir every fibre of the being, making us willing to consecrate to His work all that we have and are. As we think of what He has done for us, our hearts should be filled with love.’ *Messages to Young People*, page 314.

12. What did Paul describe as Christ's reason for being obedient unto death? Hebrews 12:2.

NOTE: 'You are to be obedient to all the requirements of God. When you bring your own work into God's time, when you violate the Sabbath, your moral sense becomes clouded, and you cannot discern that your course is an offence to God. If your eyes could be opened, you would see the Saviour by your side with blood-stained hands. He was wounded for your transgressions; will you refuse to accept the great sacrifice that was made in your behalf? For your sake, Christ became poor, that you through His poverty might be made rich in heavenly riches. Today we present the cross of Calvary. It speaks in plain language to every soul that is not deluded by the temptation of Satan in consequence of disobedience to God's law. Christ came to our world and died a shameful death because the precepts of the law could not be changed. He endured the cross, despised the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He suffered all this for the joy that was set before Him, the joy of bringing many sons and daughters to God. He died to bring us into harmony with the law of Heaven.' *Signs of the Times*, June 2, 1890.

Lesson 12: June 14-20 'Work out your own salvation'

MEMORY VERSE: 'What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' Romans 6:1-2.

STUDY HELP: *Faith & Works*, page 52.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:1-4.

LESSON AIM: To study whether the Bible teaches that obedience to God's commandments is legalism.

Compiler's note: 'Legalism' is a theological term, invented in the mid-19th century, to define the doctrine of justification by works, a doctrine held by no Christian denomination. The Bible does not contain the word 'legalism' but the teaching of certain Christian Pharisees that circumcision in particular, and obedience to the law of Moses is essential for salvation was an issue faced by the early church (See Acts 15:1-5.) 'Legalism' is used as a term of abuse by certain Christian groups to attack other groups whose doctrines differ from their own. It appears to have been invented by those who teach that obedience to God's commandments is unnecessary for the Christian.

Introduction

'The law of God is the great moral standard by which character is to be judged. It is the expression of His will, and must be obeyed from the heart. Its holy principles must underlie our course of action in all our business relations. Those who belittle their profession of faith by conformity to the world, show that they despise the riches of the grace of Christ. They cry, "The grace of Christ! We are not saved by works, but by Christ;" but they continue in sin, continue to transgress the law of God. They act as though they considered it their privilege to live in sin that grace may abound. But every indulgence in sin weakens the soul; it welcomes Satan to come in and control the mind, making the individual his effectual servant.' *Signs of the Times*, March 27, 1884.

'Justified by faith'

1. How is a person justified (forgiven) of his sins? Romans 3:24, Romans 5:1, 9.

NOTE: 'Here the truth is laid out in plain lines. This mercy and goodness is wholly undeserved. The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace.' *Reflecting Christ*, page 78.

2. Once a person has been justified, how is he to be saved? Ephesians 2:8-9.

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

'The truth is not in him'

3. Did Paul teach that the law of God is nullified for those justified by faith? Romans 3:31. Compare Romans 7:12.

NOTE: 'Paul had ever exalted the divine law. He had shown that in the law there is no power to save men from the penalty of disobedience. Wrongdoers must repent of their sins and humble themselves before God, whose just wrath they have incurred

by breaking His law, and they must also exercise faith in the blood of Christ as their only means of pardon. The Son of God had died as their sacrifice and had ascended to heaven to stand before the Father as their advocate. By repentance and faith they might be freed from the condemnation of sin and through the grace of Christ be enabled henceforth to render obedience to the law of God.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 393.

4. What did John have to say about those who claim to know God but refuse to obey His commandments? 1 John 2:4.

NOTE: 'There are those who profess holiness, who declare that they are wholly the Lord's, who claim a right to the promises of God, while refusing to render obedience to His commandments. These transgressors of the law claim everything that is promised to the children of God; but this is presumption on their part, for John tells us that true love for God will be revealed in obedience to all His commandments. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth, to make a profession of faith in Christ, to believe that Jesus is no impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments," John wrote, "is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him." "He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him." 1 John 2:4, 5; 3:24. 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.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 563.

'That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us'

5. How did Paul explain the ultimate purpose of Christ's coming to earth? Romans 8:3-4.

NOTE: 'The doctrine which teaches freedom, through grace, to break the law is a fatal delusion. Every transgressor of God's law is a sinner, and none can be sanctified while living in known sin. The condescension and agony of God's dear Son were not endured to purchase for man liberty to transgress the Father's law and yet sit down with Christ in His throne. It was that through His merits and the exercise of repentance and faith the most guilty sinner might receive pardon and obtain strength to live a life of obedience. The sinner is not saved in his sins, but from his sins.' *Faith and Works*, page 31.

6. What did John say is the true evidence that we love God and our neighbour? 1 John 5:2-3.

NOTE: 'As the years went by and the number of believers grew, John laboured with increasing fidelity and earnestness for his brethren. The times were full of peril for the church. Satanic delusions existed everywhere. By misrepresentation and falsehood the emissaries of Satan sought to arouse opposition against the doctrines of Christ, and in consequence dissensions and heresies were imperilling the church. Some who professed Christ claimed that His love released them from obedience to the law of God. On the other hand, many taught that it was necessary to observe the Jewish customs and ceremonies; that a mere observance of the law, without faith in the blood of Christ, was sufficient for salvation. Some held that Christ was a good man, but denied His divinity. Some who pretended to be true to the cause of God were deceivers, and in practice they denied Christ and His gospel. Living themselves in transgression, they were bringing heresies into the church. Thus many were being led into the mazes of scepticism and delusion. John was filled with sadness as he saw these poisonous errors creeping into the church. He saw the dangers to which the church was exposed, and he met the emergency with promptness and decision. The epistles of John breathe the spirit of love. It seems as if he wrote with a pen dipped in love. But when he came in contact with those who were breaking the law of God, yet claiming that they were living without sin, he did not hesitate to warn them of their fearful deception.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 553-554.

'The handwriting of ordinances that was against us'

7. What controversy had threatened to split the early church? Acts 15:1, 5.

NOTE: Signs of this controversy are to be found in the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians and Colossians. It is vital to understand what the controversy was about if one is to read these epistles intelligently, and not interpret them in the light of modern false teachings.

'Certain Jewish believers from Judea "of the sect of the Pharisees" succeeded in introducing a question that soon led to widespread controversy in the church and brought consternation to the believing Gentiles. With great assurance these Judaizing teachers asserted that in order to be saved, one must be circumcised and must keep the entire ceremonial law. Paul and Barnabas met this false doctrine with promptness and opposed the introduction of the subject to the Gentiles. On the other hand, many of the believing Jews of Antioch favoured the position of the brethren recently come from Judea. The Jewish converts generally were not inclined to move as rapidly as the providence of God opened the way. From the result of the apostles' labours among the Gentiles it was evident that the converts among the latter people would far exceed the Jewish converts in number. The Jews feared that if the restrictions and ceremonies of their law were not made obligatory upon the Gentiles as a condition of church fellowship, the national peculiarities of the Jews, which had hitherto kept them distinct from all other people, would finally disappear from among those who received the gospel message. The Jews had always prided themselves upon their divinely appointed services, and many of those who had been converted to the faith of Christ still felt that since God had once clearly outlined the Hebrew manner of worship, it was improbable that He would ever authorise a change in any of its specifications. They insisted that the Jewish laws and ceremonies should be incorporated into the rites of the Christian religion. They were slow to discern that all the sacrificial offerings had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type met antitype, and after which the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation were no longer binding.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 188-189.

8. What did Paul say in answer to those who insisted that circumcision and obedience to the other ordinances of the law of Moses are essential for salvation? Galatians 2:16. Compare Colossians 2:14 with Deuteronomy 31:26.

NOTE: 'The ceremonial law was thus given to Moses, and by him written in a book. But the law of Ten Commandments spoken from Sinai had been written by God Himself on the tables of stone, and was sacredly preserved in the ark. There are many who try to blend these two systems, using the texts that speak of the ceremonial law to prove that the moral law has been abolished; but this is a perversion of the Scriptures. The distinction between the two systems is broad and clear. The ceremonial system was made up of symbols pointing to Christ, to His sacrifice and His priesthood. This ritual law, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be performed by the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings were to cease. It is this law that Christ "took . . . out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Colossians 2:14. But concerning the law of Ten Commandments the psalmist declares, "Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." Psalm 119:89. And Christ Himself says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law. . . . Verily I say unto you" making the assertion as emphatic as possible, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matthew 5:17, 18. Here He teaches, not merely what the claims of God's law had been, and were then, but that these claims should hold as long as the heavens and the earth remain. The law of God is as immutable as His throne. It will maintain its claims upon mankind in all ages.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, pages 364-365.

'Pure religion and undefiled'

9. How did James show that works of Christian kindness and benevolence are in fact the evidence of pure religion? James 1:27.

NOTE: 'The desire for an easy religion that requires no striving, no self-denial, no divorce from the follies of the world, has made the doctrine of faith, and faith only, a popular doctrine; but what saith the word of God? Says the apostle James: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? . . . Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" *Great Controversy*, page 472.

10. What does James say of those who claim that faith alone is required of the Christian? James 2:14-18.

NOTE: 'It is essential to have faith in Jesus, and to believe you are saved through Him; but there is danger in taking the position that many do take in saying, "I am saved." Many have said: "You must do good works, and you will live"; but apart from Christ no one can do good works. Many at the present day say, "Believe, only believe, and live." Faith and works go together, believing and doing are blended. The Lord requires no less of the soul now, than He required of Adam in Paradise before he fell, perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement of God under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement He made in Paradise, harmony with His law, which is holy, and just, and good. The gospel does not weaken the claims of the law; it exalts the law and makes it honourable. Under the New Testament, no less is required than was required under the Old Testament. Let no one take up with the delusion, so pleasant to the natural heart, that God will accept of sincerity, no matter what may be the faith, no matter how imperfect may be the life. God requires of His child perfect obedience.' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 373.

'The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus'

11. How does the Bible identify those entitled to be called 'saints'? Revelation 14:12.

NOTE: 'God has set forth in His word the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life, obedience to His commandments, through faith in Christ. God has elected a character in harmony with His law, and anyone who shall reach the standard of His requirement will have an entrance into the kingdom of glory. Christ Himself said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." John 3:36. "Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 7:21. And in the Revelation He declares, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 207.

12. What did Jesus say of those who claim entrance to His kingdom without being willing to render obedience to His Father's commands? Matthew 7:21-23.

NOTE: 'We must have a solid foundation for our faith; it must be founded on the word of God, and its results will be seen in obedience to God's expressed will. Says the apostle, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Faith and works will keep us evenly balanced, and make us successful in the work of perfecting Christian character. Jesus says, "Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." *Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1890.

Lesson 13: June 21-27
'What doth the Lord require of thee?'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?' Deuteronomy 10:12-13.

STUDY HELP: *Faith and Works*, pages 85-90.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Matthew 7:21-27.

LESSON AIM: To study what obedience really is.

Introduction

'The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely, because he is required to do so, will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right, because right doing is pleasing to God.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 97

'For our good always'

1. What fundamental principle must a Christian understand before he can be truly obedient? Deuteronomy 6:24.

NOTE: 'Upon obedience depends life and happiness, health and joy, of men, women, and children. Obedience is for their well-being in this life and in the life to come. Where can we find a surer guide than the only true God? Where is a safer path than that in which the Eternal leads the way? When we follow Him we are in no cheap, tangled bush path. The path of obedience to God is the path of virtue, of health, and happiness.' *My Life Today*, page 162.

2. How has God expressed His desire for the well-being of His people? Deuteronomy 5:29.

NOTE: 'The commandments of God are not a yoke of bondage, and in obedience to them we have nothing of which to be ashamed. We should not feel that we are severely restricted in being required to keep God's law. The Lord withholds from us nothing which is for our good. We should be ashamed of disobedience to His precepts.' *Signs of the Times*, October 15, 1894.

'This is the love of God'

3. What is the genuine motive for obedience? Deuteronomy 7:9, Deuteronomy 11:22.

NOTE: 'In the precepts of His holy law, God has given a perfect rule of life; and He has declared that until the close of time this law, unchanged in a single jot or tittle, is to maintain its claim upon human beings. Christ came to magnify the law and make it honourable. He showed that it is based upon the broad foundation of love to God and love to man, and that obedience to its precepts comprises the whole duty of man. In His own life He gave an example of obedience to the law of God. In the Sermon on the Mount He showed how its requirements extend beyond the outward acts and take cognisance of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 505.

4. How did John emphasise the same principle? 1 John 5:3.

NOTE: 'The natural heart is not inclined to love its precepts, or obey its requirements. "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." But genuine faith in Christ converts the heart, works a change in its attitude to the law, until it delights in the law of God. The man who manifests enmity to the law has not submitted to the converting power of God. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love. Says John, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous." *Signs of the Times*, March 30, 1888.

'Transformed by the renewing of your mind'

5. What do we need to recognise about ourselves? Romans 8:7.

NOTE: 'The multitudes do not love righteousness, and they are building on the sand. Many who profess Christ do not love the law of God. If they dared, they would speak out their enmity against it in no mild terms. They have a surface religion, and that is all they desire. Some are deceptive and untrustworthy in deal, and will break pledges and contracts. Covetousness, intemperance and impurity abound, and money is squandered for tobacco and other similar indulgences. There are many who attend church, and hear the truth spoken; they see the claims of God; but they have some pet indulgence which they will not give up, something which prevents them from judging candidly and wisely between the things of time and those of eternity. It makes little difference what this is, so long as it separates the soul from God. But God is not to be trifled with. We can make no selfish bargain with Him; we can cling to no sin if we would retain His favour. Those who are building on the Rock Christ Jesus, will follow none of the pernicious practices of the worldly or of world-loving church-members, but will search the Bible for themselves. God has given men reasoning powers for this purpose, that they may weigh evidence, and decide what is truth. No man's assertions can be taken on trust. The question is, What does the Lord say? His, "Thou shalt" and, "Thou shalt not," must be obeyed.' *Special Testimonies on Education*, pages 74-75.

'Obedience to the law is essential, not only to our salvation, but to our own happiness and the happiness of all with whom we are connected. "Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165), says the Inspired Word. Yet finite man will present to the people this holy, just, and good law, this law of liberty, which the Creator Himself has adapted to the wants of man, as a yoke of bondage, a yoke which no man can bear. But it is the sinner who regards the law as a

grievous yoke; it is the transgressor that can see no beauty in its precepts. For the carnal mind “is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7).’ *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 218.

6. What then is necessary to turn us from rebellion to obedience? Romans 12:2.

NOTE: ‘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.

‘And went not’

7. How did Jesus show that obedience to God’s will allows entrance to the kingdom of heaven? Matthew 7:21.

NOTE: ‘Many today claim to obey the commandments of God, but they have not the love of God in their hearts to flow forth to others. Christ calls them to unite with Him in His work for the saving of the world, but they content themselves with saying, “I go, sir.” They do not go. They do not co-operate with those who are doing God’s service. They are idlers. Like the unfaithful son, they make false promises to God. In taking upon themselves the solemn covenant of the church they have pledged themselves to receive and obey the word of God, to give themselves to God’s service, but they do not do this. In profession they claim to be sons of God, but in life and character they deny the relationship. They do not surrender the will to God. They are living a lie.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 279.

8. What examples did Christ give to show that obedience is tested by what we do, rather than what we say? Matthew 21:28-31.

NOTE: ‘In the parable the son who said, “I go, sir,” represented himself as faithful and obedient; but time proved that his profession was not real. He had no true love for his father. So the Pharisees prided themselves on their holiness, but when tested, it was found wanting. When it was for their interest to do so, they made the requirements of the law very exacting; but when obedience was required from themselves, by cunning sophistries they reasoned away the force of God’s precepts. Of them Christ declared, “Do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not.” Matthew 23:3. They had no true love for God or man. God called them to be co-workers with Him in blessing the world; but while in profession they accepted the call, in action they refused obedience. They trusted to self, and prided themselves on their goodness; but they set the commands of God at defiance. They refused to do the work which God had appointed them.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 278.

‘The obedience of faith’

9. Are we required to know the reason for obedience before we obey? Hebrews 11:8. Consider Genesis 22:1-3.

NOTE: ‘All your happiness, peace, joy, and success in this life are dependent upon genuine, trusting faith in God. This faith will prompt true obedience to the commandments of God. Your knowledge and faith in God is the strongest restraint from every evil practice, and the motive to all good.’ *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 45.

10. Should concern for the consequences determine whether we obey or not? Daniel 6:6-11.

NOTE: ‘When your mind is brought into conformity to the will of God, to obey His commandments, think you that the Lord will not have a care for you and your temporal interests? . . . God’s claims are to be your first consideration. Obedience to God is your first duty. You are to leave all the consequences in His hands. . . You will have to obey God and take your position on the truth, feeling or no feeling. Your business now is to work decidedly from principle, to make your decisions irrespective of consequences.’ *Evangelism*, page 243.

‘More to be desired than gold’

11. What should be our attitude to God’s commandments? Psalm 19:7-10.

NOTE: ‘God knows that if we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we would fall into Satan’s lines and become possessors of his attributes. Therefore the law of God confines us to the will of One who is high and noble and elevating. He desires that we shall patiently and wisely take up the duties of service. A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. The service is looked upon by such a one in the light of drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. God presents to the world two classes. For the one, the wicked, He says, “There is no peace” (Isaiah 48:22). Of the other, “Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psalm 119:165).’ *That I May Know Him*, page 120.

12. What should be the prayer of the truly obedient soul? Psalm 119:33-35.

NOTE: ‘To the obedient child of God the commandments are a delight. David declares, “Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform Thy statutes alway, even unto the end. I hate vain thoughts: but Thy law do I love. Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in Thy word. Depart from me, ye evil-doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God. . . . I am Thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know Thy testimonies.” Did the contempt shown to the law of God extinguish David’s loyalty? Hear his words. He calls upon God to interfere and vindicate His honour, to show that there is a God, that there are limits to His forbearance. “It is time for Thee,

Lord, to work," he says, "for they have made void Thy law." David saw the divine precepts thrown aside, and obstinacy and rebellion increasing. But he was not swept away by the prevalence of apostasy. The scorn and contempt cast upon the law did not lead him to refrain from vindicating the law. On the contrary, his reverence for the law of Jehovah increased as he saw the disregard and contempt shown for it by others. "They have made void Thy law," he exclaims. "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." As man studies and contemplates the precious statutes of the Most High, as he meditates upon them, and realises their value, he exclaims: "Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. . . . Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them." *Review & Herald*, May 7, 1901.