

## Sabbath School Lessons, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, 2011 'The greatest of these'

### General Introduction

We have an abundance of sermonising. What is most needed is love for perishing souls, that love which comes in rich currents from the throne of God. True Christianity diffuses love through the whole being. It touches every vital part, the brain, the heart, the helping hands, the feet, enabling men to stand firmly where God requires them to stand, so that they will not make crooked paths for their feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way. The burning, consuming love of Christ for perishing souls is the life of the whole system of Christianity.

What is the Bible interpretation of God? "God is love." By giving Christ to our world, God manifested His love for mankind. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Yes, "everlasting life." This is the love which is the fulfilling of the law. Only he whose heart is filled with compassion for fallen man, who loves to a purpose, showing his love by the performance of Christlike deeds, will be able to endure the seeing of Him who is invisible. He only who loves his fellowmen to a purpose can know God. He who loves not those for whom the Father has done so much know not God. This is the reason there is so little genuine vitality in our churches. Theology is valueless unless it is saturated with the love of Christ.

God is supreme. His love in the human heart will lead to the doing of work that will bear fruit after the similitude of the character of God.

"Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." O blessed leaves of the tree of life! "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name," because our Guidebook is so very plain and definite. Others may not follow the plain "It is written," which Christ used on every occasion to meet the fallen foe, but let us follow the Saviour's example. The less we give expression to our own human opinions, the purer and more marked with grace will be our conversation. The Lord calls for sanctified speech, because it is a savour of life unto life.

*Lift Him Up*, page 134.

### Lesson 1: March 27-April 2 'As sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.' 1 Corinthians 13:1.

STUDY HELP: *Lift Him Up*, page 313.

LESSON AIM: To study the purpose of spiritual gifts, especially the gift of 'tongues' and why, without love, it is worthless.

#### Introduction

'Let each ask himself: Do I possess the grace of love? Have I learned to suffer long and to be kind? Talents, learning, and eloquence, without this heavenly attribute, will be as meaningless as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Alas that this precious treasure is so lightly valued and so little sought by many who profess the faith!' *Lift Him Up*, page 313.

'The second spiritual endowment we look for in the churches of today is the gift of tongues. At first sight this seems very much in evidence. In almost every place we find certain religious bodies who have a great deal to say about spiritual gifts, and especially the gift of tongues. They make the latter a sign to show whether or not a person is baptised with the Holy Spirit. But their so-called "tongues" have a very spotted history. One of the first strong manifestations in America of that gift was among the Mormons back in the first half of the nineteenth century. Shortly after this, about 1855 and onward, the spiritualists began to make claims to the gift of tongues. But those tongues were a meaningless gibberish of strange sounds like the so-called "tongues" of people now generally called Pentecostals. I feel free to affirm that according to the Word of God this gift of tongues which has been so generally spoken of by Mormons, spiritualists, and others is in no sense the gift of tongues mentioned in the Bible. It is closely related to certain fanatical manifestations, the so-called charism so common here and there in church history. The word tongues as found in the books of Acts or First Corinthians means language; that is, spoken words that stand for definite ideas. The Bible term tongues never refers to mere guttural sounds which have no sense or meaning, and the people who give way to this gibberish in their exciting religious services certainly do not possess the gift of tongues spoken of in the Scriptures. Sometimes the sounds called "tongues" come after hours of secret practice.' L. H. Christian, *The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts*, page 19.

Compiler's note: The Greek word 'glossa', translated 'tongues' in the King James Bible, simply means languages, as can be seen by comparing Acts 2:4 with Acts 2:6. It does not refer to inarticulate sounds produced by those in a state of ecstasy, or glossolalia, as this is technically called. This was, and remains, a common practice in various non-Christian religions, but only

found its way into Christianity recently. A Bible translation in good modern English should not use the archaic term 'tongues' but the modern term 'languages' to avoid confusion.

### **'All the members, being many, are one body'**

#### **1. What are some of the gifts that Christ placed within His church through the ministry of the Holy Spirit? 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28, Ephesians 4:11.**

NOTE: 'To every person is committed some peculiar gift or talent which is to be used to advance the Redeemer's kingdom. All God's responsible agents, from the lowliest and most obscure to those in high positions in the church, are entrusted with the Lord's goods. It is not the minister alone who can work for the salvation of souls. Those who have the smallest gifts are not excused from using the very best gifts they have, and in so doing their talents will be increased. It is not safe to trifle with moral responsibilities nor to despise the day of small things. God's providence proportions His trusts according to the varied capabilities of the people. None should mourn because they cannot glorify God with talents which they never possessed and for which they are not responsible.' *Testimonies, volume 4*, page 618.

#### **2. How did Paul show that no spiritual gift is to be valued above the others? 1 Corinthians 12:12. Read verses 13-27.**

NOTE: 'There must be no measuring of talent by comparison. If a man exercises faith, and walks humbly with his God, he may have little education, he may be accounted a weak man, yet he can fill his appointed place as well as the man who has the finest education. He who yields himself most unreservedly to the influence of the Holy Spirit is best qualified to do acceptable service for the Master. God will inspire men who do not occupy responsible positions to work for Him. If ministers and men in positions of authority will get out of the way, and let the Holy Spirit move upon the minds of the lay brethren, God will direct them what to do for the honour of His name. Let men have freedom to carry out that which the Holy Spirit indicates. Do not put the shackles upon humble men whom God would use. If those who now occupy positions of responsibility had been kept at one class of work year after year, their talents would not have developed, and they would not have been qualified for the positions they hold; and yet they make no special effort to test and develop the talents of those newly come into the faith.' *Review & Herald*, July 9, 1895.

### **'May grow up into Him'**

#### **3. What was the reason why the Holy Spirit has placed spiritual gifts within the Church? Ephesians 4:12. See also verse 16.**

NOTE: 'All these gifts are to be in exercise. Every faithful worker will minister for the perfecting of the saints. There is something for everyone to do. Every soul that believes the truth is to stand in his lot and place, saying: "Here am I; send me." Give each one something to do for others. Help all to see that as receivers of the grace of Christ they are under obligation to work for Him. And let all be taught how to work. Especially should those who are newly come to the faith be educated to become labourers together with God. If set to work, the despondent will soon forget their despondency; the weak will become strong, the ignorant intelligent, and all will be prepared to present the truth as it is in Jesus. They will find an unfailing helper in Him who has promised to save all that come unto Him. The influence of the Holy Spirit is needed that the work may be properly balanced and that it may move forward solidly in every line. The truth for this time embraces the whole gospel. Rightly presented, it will work in man the very changes that will make evident the power of God's grace upon the heart. It will do a complete work and develop a complete man. He [God] tells us to be perfect as He is, in the same manner. We are to be centres of light and blessing to our little circle, even as He is to the universe. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines upon us, and we are to reflect its brightness.' *My Life Today*, page 38.

#### **4. What is Christ's ultimate aim in endowing His Church with spiritual gifts? Ephesians 4:13, 15.**

NOTE: 'It is our privilege to grow "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). We are not to be thoughtless or careless in speech, hurting one another by unkind words. Every human agency connected with the Lord's work needs to appreciate the work in which he is acting a part. The work . . . is to be carried on without friction, without hasty speech, without dictatorial words. The workers are to be pure, clean, and holy in thought, in word, in act. They are to be Christ's witnesses, testifying that they are born again. There is to be no sharp speaking, no fretful scolding, for angels of God are walking up and down in every room. Christ loves to commend every faithful worker, and He will do it. Every good act is registered in the book. Little mistakes may be made, but words of censure arouse feelings of retaliation, and God is dishonoured. Any word spoken thoughtlessly or unadvisedly should be retracted on the spot. We are to remember that as Christians professing to work in unity we must not act like sinners, whose sinful words and works, unless repented of, will condemn them. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die" (Revelation 3:2). This is our work. There are many ready to die spiritually, and the Lord calls upon us to strengthen them. God's people are to be firm to duty. They are to be bound together by the bonds of Christian fellowship and are to be strengthened in the faith by speaking often to one another about the precious truths entrusted to them. Never are they to quarrel and condemn.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 182.

### **'Began to speak with other tongues'**

#### **5. How did the Holy Spirit utilise the gift of tongues? Acts 2:4-11.**

NOTE: 'During the dispersion the Jews had been scattered to almost every part of the inhabited world, and in their exile they had learned to speak various languages. Many of these Jews were on this occasion in Jerusalem, attending the religious festi-

vals then in progress. Every known tongue was represented by those assembled. This diversity of languages would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel; God therefore in a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles. The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime. They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were labouring.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 39.

#### **6. What was the outcome of this manifestation of the gift of tongues? Acts 2:41.**

NOTE: "The Lord fulfilled His promise by a wonderful outpouring of His Spirit. "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." "And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Acts 2:2-4, 41. "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Mark 16:20. Notwithstanding the fierce opposition that the disciples met, in a short time the gospel of the kingdom had been sounded to all the inhabited parts of the earth. The commission given to the disciples is given also to us. Today, as then, a crucified and risen Saviour is to be uplifted before those who are without God and without hope in the world. . . From door to door His servants are to proclaim the message of salvation. To every nation, kindred, tongue, and people the tidings of pardon through Christ are to be carried. Not with tame, lifeless utterance is the message to be given, but with clear, decided, stirring utterances. Hundreds are waiting for the warning to escape for their lives. The world needs to see in Christians an evidence of the power of Christianity. Not merely in a few places, but throughout the world, messengers of mercy are needed. From every country is heard the cry: "Come over, . . . and help us." Rich and poor, high and low, are calling for light. Men and women are hungering for the truth as it is in Jesus. When they hear the gospel preached with power from on high, they will know that the banquet is spread for them, and they will respond to the call: "Come; for all things are now ready." Luke 14:17. The words "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15) are spoken to each one of Christ's followers. All who are ordained unto the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. The same longing of soul that He felt for the saving of the lost is to be manifest in them. Not all can fill the same place, but for all there is a place and a work. All upon whom God's blessings have been bestowed are to respond by actual service; every gift is to be employed for the advancement of His kingdom.' *Testimonies*, volume 8, pages 15-16.

### **'With the spirit and with the understanding also'**

#### **7. When faced with an abuse of the gift of tongues, what important principle did Paul explain? 1 Corinthians 14:2, 10-11.**

NOTE: "Some of these persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver. Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the church. Some have been deceived here. Fanaticism and noise have been considered special evidences of faith. Some are not satisfied with a meeting unless they have a powerful and happy time. They work for this and get up an excitement of feeling. But the influence of such meetings is not beneficial. When the happy flight of feeling is gone, they sink lower than before the meeting because their happiness did not come from the right source. The most profitable meetings for spiritual advancement are those which are characterised with solemnity and deep searching of heart; each seeking to know himself, and earnestly, and in deep humility, seeking to learn of Christ. *A New Life*, pages 49-50.

#### **8. How did Paul explain his own use of the gift of tongues? 1 Corinthians 14:18-19.**

NOTE: "The apostle Paul writes: "Even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." 1 Corinthians 14:7-12. In all our religious services we should seek to conduct ourselves in a way that will edify others, working as much as lies in our power for the perfection of the church. "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also. . . . Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: ye in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." Verses 13-19.' *Counsels to Parents, Teachers & Students*, pages 243-244.

### **'A sign to them that believe not'**

#### **9. What purpose does exercising the gift of tongues have? 1 Corinthians 14:22.**

NOTE: Paul makes clear that the gift of being able to speak foreign languages is not for the benefit of believers but a sign to unbelievers. Thus it is inappropriate to use meetings of the church as an opportunity to show off one's proficiency in lan-

gages. Rather one should employ this gift as a means to reach unbelievers with the message of the Gospel; such unbelievers will recognise supernatural power in the fact that the one witnessing has been enabled to communicate in a language not his own.

'We are to preach to people who do not believe the Testimonies. And the Scriptures have told us that prophesyings are not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. Tongues are a sign to them that believe not; prophesyings are a sign to them that believe. 1 Corinthians 14:22. Now when we go and preach this message to people who do not know anything about the Testimonies, we have to teach them that the Bible says it, and we have to teach from that alone. If we were preaching to our own people, to use the Testimonies and all these other helps would be all well enough, but even then, if their minds were turned to these, and not brought by these to the Bible itself, then that use of the Testimonies is not what is intended by the Lord as the right use of the Testimonies.' A. T. Jones, *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, February 23, 1893.

**10. What example of this are we shown in Scripture? Acts 2:7-8. See verse 41.**

NOTE: 'This miraculous gift was a strong evidence to the world that their commission bore the signet of Heaven.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 39.

**'As sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal'**

**11. How were the church members in Corinth misusing their gift of tongues? 1 Corinthians 14:16-17.**

NOTE: It is clear that in the church in Corinth were a number who had been granted the gift of tongues. Corinth was a cosmopolitan sea port, visited by merchants, seamen and travellers from many lands. The gift of tongues was needed in such a place to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to such people. Indeed to do this work was vital in sending the message to the different lands. Unhappily, many of those endowed with this gift had become proud of their endowment and were using the church meetings to compete in displaying their gift, even though the majority of members were unable to understand a word of what these brethren were saying. Worse, they lacked the courtesy to defer to one another, and so were all shouting at once in the service.

**12. What effect was this misuse of the gift of tongues having on unbelieving visitors to the church meetings? 1 Corinthians 14:23.**

NOTE: Paul was concerned for the good name of Christ's Church. If unbelievers should choose to attend the church meeting and discover a scene of pandemonium where members were vying with one another to demonstrate their proficiency in speaking foreign languages, all speaking at once, surely the visitors would conclude that Christians are all mad! At the very least, Paul insisted that in speaking in church, it should be one at a time (verse 27) and then only if a translator is provided so that the members at least know what is being said. If there is no one to translate, there should be no speaking in foreign languages (verse 28).

**13. How does Paul describe the result of speaking in tongues when it is not motivated by love for those to whom one speaks? 1 Corinthians 13:1.**

NOTE: The word 'sounding brass' means a clanging gong.

'The reader should know that throughout this chapter the word "love" should be used, as in the Revision, instead of "charity," which is not nearly so expressive. The Greek word is everywhere else rendered "love;" and to render it "charity" in this place causes us to lose the application of this wonderful definition of love to the word as it occurs elsewhere. Here we learn the great importance of love. To be able to speak with tongues is very desirable; the word spoken by angels is steadfast; but the eloquence of Apollos and of all the angels combined in one person destitute of love would have no more weight than the inharmonious clang of two pieces of brass.' E. J. Waggoner, *Medical Missionary*, October 1904.

## **Lesson 2: April 3-9**

### **'I am nothing'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.' 1 Corinthians 13:2.

STUDY HELP: *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pages 37-38.

LESSON AIM: To study the purpose of the gift of prophecy, and of wisdom and faith, and see why, without love, they are worthless.

### **Introduction**

'The greatest of all gifts, all talents, is true, Christlike love. It is not position or profession that makes a man of value in God's sight. It is being good and doing good. Paul declares: "If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, . . . but have not love, I am nothing.'" *Pacific Health Journal*, December 1, 1901.

## ‘A light that shineth in a dark place’

### 1. How does the Bible explain the importance of prophecy? 2 Peter 1:19.

NOTE: ‘Faithful men, who were obedient to the promptings of God’s Spirit and the teachings of His word, were. . . those who had taken heed to the “sure word of prophecy,” the “light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise.” 2 Peter 1:19. They had been seeking the knowledge of God more than all hid treasures, counting it “better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.” Proverbs 3:14. And the Lord revealed to them the great things of the kingdom. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.” Psalm 25:14. It was not the scholarly theologians who had an understanding of this truth, and engaged in its proclamation. Had these been faithful watchmen, diligently and prayerfully searching the Scriptures, they would have known the time of night; the prophecies would have opened to them the events about to take place. But they did not occupy this position, and the message was given by humbler men. Said Jesus: “Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.” John 12:35. Those who turn away from the light which God has given, or who neglect to seek it when it is within their reach, are left in darkness. But the Saviour declares: “He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John 8:12. Whoever is with singleness of purpose seeking to do God’s will, earnestly heeding the light already given, will receive greater light; to that soul some star of heavenly radiance will be sent to guide him into all truth.’ *Great Controversy*, page 312.

### 2. Than what did Peter say that prophecy is more sure? 2 Peter 1:18. Compare Matthew 17:1-6.

NOTE: ‘The apostle was well qualified to speak of the purposes of God concerning the human race; for during the earthly ministry of Christ he had seen and heard much that pertained to the kingdom of God. “We have not followed cunningly devised fables,” he reminded the believers, “when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.” Yet convincing as was this evidence of the certainty of the believers’ hope, there was another still more convincing in the witness of prophecy, through which the faith of all might be confirmed and securely anchored. “We have also,” Peter declared, “a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts.”’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 534.

## ‘Edification and exhortation and comfort’

### 3. What role is prophecy designed to play in the Church? 1 Corinthians 14:3.

NOTE: ‘We should continually talk and practise the gentleness that Paul presents in this figure of a nurse cherishing her children. This is the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ. When we truly receive Jesus, there will be a transformation of character and principles among us as members of Christ’s body. All bitterness and wrath and malice and evil speaking will be put away from us, and the love of Christ will fill and overflow the heart. Our love for others will then be deep, pure, and fervent, and there will be no betrayal of sacred trusts. From hearts softened and subdued by the love of Christ, we shall exhort, admonish, reprove, warn, and comfort the saints of God. We shall all stand in one harmonious body, and our earnest affection one for another will increase more and more. Thus Christ will be represented in the world through human instrumentalities, and the work of God will be rapidly advanced; for workers for Him will be raised up in various parts of the world.’ *Review & Herald*, October 31, 1893.

### 4. What use is the gift of prophecy if love is not also in the heart and life? 1 Corinthians 13:2.

NOTE: ‘We cannot give to others that which we do not ourselves possess. It is in proportion to our own devotion and consecration to Christ that we exert an influence for the blessing and uplifting of mankind. If there is no actual service, no genuine love, no reality of experience, there is no power to help, no connection with heaven, no savour of Christ in the life. Unless the Holy Spirit can use us as agents through whom to communicate to the world the truth as it is in Jesus, we are as salt that has lost its savour and is entirely worthless. By our lack of the grace of Christ we testify to the world that the truth which we claim to believe has no sanctifying power; and thus, so far as our influence goes, we make of no effect the word of God. “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.” 1 Corinthians 13:1-2. ARV.’ *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 37.

## ‘The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven’

### 5. What kinds of mysteries are Christians enabled to understand? Matthew 13:11. Compare Luke 8:10.

NOTE: ‘Jesus’ manner of teaching was beautiful and attractive, and it was ever characterised by simplicity. He unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven through the use of figures and symbols with which His hearers were familiar, and the common people heard Him gladly; for they could comprehend His words. There were no high-sounding words used, to understand which it was necessary to consult a dictionary. He illustrated the glories of the kingdom of God by the use of the experiences and occurrences of earth. In compassionate love and tenderness He cheered and comforted and instructed all who heard Him; for grace was poured upon His lips that He might convey to men in the most attractive way the treasures of truth. This is the manner in which He would have us present His truth to others.’ *Christian Education*, pages 126-127.

### 6. What attitude is the Christian to have towards these mysteries? 1 Corinthians 4:1-2.

NOTE: 'Let every steward understand that as he strives to advance the glory of God in our world, whether he stands before infidels or princes, he is to make God first and last and best in everything. The true Christian will realise that he has a right to His name only as he uplifts Christ with a steady, persevering, and ever-increasing force. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). When we are faithful in making God known, our impulses will be under divine supervision, and we shall make steady growth, spiritually and intellectually. But when men enter into a confederacy to exalt men, and have little to say of God, they are weakness itself. God will leave those who do not recognise Him in every effort made to uplift humanity. It is Christ's power alone that can restore broken-down human machinery. Everywhere and in every place let those around you see that you give God the glory. Let man be put in the shade, let God appear as the only hope of the human race.' *The Upward Look*, page 81.

**7. What use is this understanding if there is no love also in the heart and life? 1 Corinthians 13:2. Consider Colossians 2:2.**

NOTE: 'We may be active, we may do much work; but without love, such love as dwelt in the heart of Christ, we can never be numbered with the family of heaven.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 158.

**'That they might know Thee'**

**8. What is the greatest knowledge that Christians need? John 17:3.**

NOTE: 'The question of how to obtain a knowledge of God is to all a life-and-death question. Read Christ's prayer to His Father, intended not merely as an important lesson in education for the disciples, but to come down through all time for the benefit of those who would read the Inspired Writings.' *Christ Triumphant*, page, 221.

'In His prayer to the Father, Christ gave to the world a lesson which should be graven on mind and soul. "This is life eternal," He said, "that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. This is true education. It imparts power. The experimental knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, transforms man into the image of God. It gives to man the mastery of himself, bringing every impulse and passion of the lower nature under the control of the higher powers of the mind. It makes its possessor a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings him into communion with the mind of the Infinite, and opens to him the rich treasures of the universe. This is the knowledge which is obtained by searching the word of God. And this treasure may be found by every soul who will give all to obtain it.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 114.

**9. Unless this knowledge is translated into Christian love, what good will it be to us? 1 Corinthians 13:2. Consider Ephesians 3:19.**

NOTE: 'The mere knowledge of truth is not enough. We may possess this, but the tenor of our thoughts may not be changed. The heart must be converted and sanctified.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 97.

'God calls for men whose hearts are warmed by the love of Christ. He will choose workers from among those who are willing to hear His voice and obey His words. Their capabilities may be limited, but they are loyal; and loyalty is of far more value in God's sight than mere knowledge.' *Review & Herald*, June 16, 1903.

**'All things are possible to him that believeth'**

**10. What is the faith that can remove mountains? Luke 1:37, Luke 18:27, Mark 9:23.**

NOTE: 'Throughout the history of God's people great mountains of difficulty, apparently insurmountable, have loomed up before those who were trying to carry out the purposes of Heaven. Such obstacles are permitted by the Lord as a test of faith. When we are hedged about on every side, this is the time above all others to trust in God and in the power of His Spirit. The exercise of a living faith means an increase of spiritual strength and the development of an unfaltering trust. It is thus that the soul becomes a conquering power. Before the demand of faith, the obstacles placed by Satan across the pathway of the Christian will disappear; for the powers of heaven will come to his aid. "Nothing shall be impossible unto you." *Conflict & Courage*, page 258.

'How to exercise faith. This is the science of the gospel. The Scripture declares, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired. We suffer much trouble and grief because of our unbelief, and our ignorance of how to exercise faith. We must break through the clouds of unbelief. We can not have a healthy Christian experience, we can not obey the gospel unto salvation, until the science of faith is better understood, and until more faith is exercised. There can be no perfection of Christian character without that faith that works by love, and purifies the soul.' *Review & Herald*, October 18, 1898

**11. What value will faith be to us without love manifested in the life? 1 Corinthians 13:2. Consider 1 Thessalonians 5:8.**

NOTE: 'No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith and have power even to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 318.

'The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbour as ourselves. Without the exercise of this love, the highest profession of faith is mere hypocrisy' *A New Life*, page 32.

**'Faith that works by love'**

## **12. How did Paul explain the partial and transitory nature of prophecy and knowledge? 1 Corinthians 13:8.**

NOTE: 'Our knowledge of God is partial and imperfect. When the conflict is ended and the Man Christ Jesus acknowledges before the Father His faithful workers, who, in a world of sin, have borne true witness for Him, they will understand clearly what now are mysteries to them.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 76.

'Human knowledge of both material and spiritual things is partial and imperfect; therefore many are unable to harmonise their views of science with Scripture statements. Many accept mere theories and speculations as scientific facts, and they think that God's word is to be tested by the teachings of "science falsely so called." 1 Timothy 6:20. The Creator and His works are beyond their comprehension; and because they cannot explain these by natural laws, Bible history is regarded as unreliable. Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments too often go a step further and doubt the existence of God and attribute infinite power to nature. Having let go their anchor, they are left to beat about upon the rocks of infidelity.' *Darkness Before Dawn*, page 8.

'The light that we have upon the third angel's message is the true light. The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be. Not all in regard to this matter is yet understood, and will not be understood until the unrolling of the scroll; but a most solemn work is to be accomplished in our world. The Lord's command to His servants is: Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.' Isaiah 58:1. A message that will arouse the churches is to be proclaimed. Every effort is to be made to give the light, not only to our people, but to the world. I have been instructed that the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation should be printed in small books, with the necessary explanations, and should be sent all over the world. Our own people need to have the light placed before them in clearer lines.' *Testimonies*, volume 8, page 159.

## **13. How is faith intended to work in the life of the Christian? Galatians 5:6.**

NOTE: 'The Lord says, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Revelation 3:17, 18. The gold tried in the fire is faith that works by love. Only this can bring us into harmony with God. We may be active, we may do much work; but without love, such love as dwelt in the heart of Christ, we can never be numbered with the family of heaven.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 158.

## **Lesson 3: April 10-16 'It profiteth me nothing'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' 1 Corinthians 13:3.

STUDY HELP: *Our High Calling*, page 363.

LESSON AIM: To study our responsibility to the poor, our need to learn self-sacrifice and to understand that, without love, even these things are worthless.

### **Introduction**

'Let us ask why there are so few martyrs now? What is the reason that Christians and the world confederate together in confidence? Has the world become converted, or has the church lost her peculiar and holy character, and assimilated with the world? They do not come out and separate from the world, and do not maintain her high and holy character. Many of the professed followers of Christ feel no more burden for souls than do the world. The lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, the love of display, the love of ease, separate the professed Christians from God, and the missionary spirit in reality exists in but few. What can be done to open the eyes of these sinners in Zion, and make hypocrites tremble? The spirit of truth must become a living principle in the soul. "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" is asked by many souls today. The answer comes, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." When you have true faith this will be evidenced, for your works will testify of the fact; you will be one with Christ as He was one with the Father. You will constantly be drawing near to Christ; exercising your minds to hear, devising means to save perishing souls. You will cultivate love, you will deny self, because you love Jesus who died for you; you will love your neighbour as your own self, and you will shine as lights in the world; if you have eternal light you will diffuse light.' *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, February 4, 1893.

### **'Open thine hand wide'**

#### **1. How does the Bible emphasise the importance of our responsibility towards those less blessed than ourselves? Deuteronomy 15:11.**

NOTE: 'Our money has not been given us that we might honour and glorify ourselves. As faithful stewards we are to use it for the honour and glory of God. Some think that only a portion of their means is the Lord's. When they have set apart a portion for religious and charitable purposes, they regard the remainder as their own, to be used as they see fit. But in this they mistake. All we possess is the Lord's, and we are accountable to Him for the use we make of it. In the use of every penny, it will be seen whether we love God supremely and our neighbour as ourselves. Money has great value, because it can do great good. In the hands of God's children it is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, and clothing for the naked. It is a defence for the

oppressed, and a means of help to the sick. But money is of no more value than sand, only as it is put to use in providing for the necessities of life, in blessing others, and advancing the cause of Christ.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 351.

**2. How did Jesus make clear that our responsibility to the poor will last as long as the world lasts? Mark 14:7. Consider Matthew 25:34-40.**

NOTE: 'Christ has said that we shall have the poor always with us, and He unites His interest with that of His suffering people. The heart of our Redeemer sympathises with the poorest and lowliest of His earthly children. He tells us that they are His representatives on earth. He has placed them among us to awaken in our hearts the love that He feels toward the suffering and oppressed. Pity and benevolence shown to them are accepted by Christ as if shown to Himself. An act of cruelty or neglect toward them is regarded as though done to Him.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 535.

### 'Treasure in heaven'

**3. What counsel did Jesus give to a rich young man who wanted to gain eternal life? Luke 18:22.**

NOTE: 'The ruler's possessions were entrusted to him that he might prove himself a faithful steward; he was to dispense these goods for the blessing of those in need. So God now entrusts men with means, with talents and opportunities, that they may be His agents in helping the poor and the suffering. He who uses his entrusted gifts as God designs becomes a co-worker with the Saviour.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 300.

'Half-way converts make half-hearted Christians. . . The plain words of truth spoken by our Saviour sifted His followers down to a few faithful ones who laid the foundation of the Christian church. Many of the wealthy, honourable, and noble ones of the world were charmed with the teachings of Christ, and had a desire to follow Him. But when the truth in its practical bearings was brought home to their hearts and lives, they drew back, and walked no more with Jesus. The young ruler was desirous of following Christ. "Sell all that thou hast," said the Master, "and come, follow Me, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven."' *Review & Herald*, December 2, 1875.

**4. What did the young man's response reveal about his character? Luke 18:23. Read verses 24-25. Compare Luke 19:8.**

NOTE: 'He could not comply with the terms. His poor, selfish heart loved his possessions better than the kingdom of God, and he turned from following his Saviour. He turned from his heavenly treasure, went back to his idolatrous love of his earthly treasures, and lost eternal riches.' *Review & Herald*, December 2, 1875.

'I saw that it was God's plan that these riches should be used properly, and distributed to bless the needy, and to advance the work of God. I saw that if men love their riches better than their fellow men, better than God, or the truth of His word, and their hearts are on their riches, they cannot have eternal life. They would rather yield the truth, than sell and give to the poor. Here they are proved to see how much God is loved, how much the truth is loved, and like the young man in the Bible, many go away sorrowful, because they cannot have their riches and a treasure in heaven too. They cannot have both. They venture to risk their chance of eternal life for a worldly possession.' *Spiritual Gifts, volume 2*, page 242.

### 'Pure religion'

**5. How did James emphasise the witness given by acts of charity? James 1:27. Compare James 2:2-6, 15-17.**

NOTE: 'Wake up, brethren and sisters. Do not be afraid of good works. "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Do not wait to be told your duty. Open your eyes and see who are around you; make yourselves acquainted with the helpless, afflicted, and needy. Hide not yourselves from them, and seek not to shut out their needs. Who gives the proofs mentioned in James, of possessing pure religion, untainted with selfishness or corruption?' *The Adventist Home*, page 451.

**6. What will a person gain whose charitable actions are not motivated by love? 1 Corinthians 13:3. Compare Matthew 6:1-4.**

NOTE: 'He might display great liberality; but should he, from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favour of God.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 318.

'[Jesus] cautioned them against giving merely for the honour and praise they might thus receive. The motive was wrong. If they had no higher motive than this, they would have no higher reward. He showed that those who bestow their gifts that they may receive the praise of men will have no reward in heaven. They have their reward in worldly honour and applause. They give that they may obtain this, and this is all they receive.' *Youth's Instructor*, November 3, 1898.

'Wherever a soul is united to Christ, there is love. Whatever else the character may possess, it is valueless without love, not love that is soft, weak, sentimental, but such love as dwells in the heart of Christ. Without love, everything else profiteth nothing; for it cannot possibly represent Christ, who is love.' *Signs of the Times*, December 28, 1891.

### 'They loved not their lives unto the death'

**7. How does the Lord regard those who are willing to lay down their lives for His sake? Mark 8:35, 2 Timothy 2:11-12. Consider 1 John 3:16.**

NOTE: 'Self-sacrifice is the keynote of Christ's teachings. Often this is enjoined upon believers in language that seems authoritative, because there is no other way to save men than to cut them away from their life of selfishness. Christ gave, in His life on earth, a true representation of the power of the gospel. To every soul who will suffer with Him in resistance of sin, in

labour for His cause, in self-denial for the good of others, He promises a part in the eternal reward of the righteous. Through the exercise of the spirit that characterised His lifework, we are to become partakers of His nature. Partaking in this life of sacrifice for the sake of others, we shall share with Him in the life to come the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” *Review & Herald*, September 28, 1911.

**8. What does laying down your life for Christ show? Revelation 12:11.**

NOTE: ‘We are commanded to love one another as Christ has loved us. He has manifested His love by laying down His life to redeem us. The beloved disciple says that we should be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. For “every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him” (1 John 5:1). If we love Christ, we shall love those who resemble Him in life and character. And not only so, but we shall love those who have “no hope,” and are “without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). It was to save sinners that Christ left His home in heaven and came to earth to suffer and to die. For this He toiled and agonised and prayed, until, heartbroken and deserted by those He came to save, He poured out His life on Calvary.’ *The Sanctified Life*, page 82.

**‘Ready to be offered’**

**9. How did Paul express his willingness to lay down his life for his Lord? 2 Timothy 4:6.**

NOTE: ‘The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who on earth has drunk most deeply of the spirit of His self-sacrificing love, love that “vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, . . . seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil” (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5), love that moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and labour and sacrifice, even unto death, for the saving of humanity. This spirit was made manifest in the life of Paul. He said, “For to me to live is Christ;” for his life revealed Christ to men; “and to die is gain,” gain to Christ; death itself would make manifest the power of His grace, and gather souls to Him. “Christ shall be magnified in my body,” he said, “whether it be by life or by death.” Philipians 1:21, 20.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 549.

**10. What change had taken place in Peter’s thinking about suffering for Christ? Compare Matthew 26:35 with 1 Peter 2:20.**

NOTE: ‘Heretofore Peter had known Christ after the flesh, as many know Him now; but he was no more to be thus limited. He knew Him no more as he had known Him in his association with Him in humanity. He had loved Him as a man, as a heaven-sent teacher; he now loved Him as God. He had been learning the lesson that to him Christ was all in all. Now he was prepared to share in his Lord’s mission of sacrifice.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 815.

**‘It profiteth me nothing’**

**11. What is the value of martyrdom if it is not motivated by love? 1 Corinthians 13:3.**

NOTE: ‘In his zeal he might even meet a martyr’s death, yet if not actuated by love, he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 318.

**12. How did Jesus manifest His love in laying down His life? Luke 23:34.**

NOTE: ‘While the nails were being driven through His hands, and the sweat drops of agony were forced from His pores, from the pale, quivering lips of the innocent Sufferer a prayer of pardoning love was breathed for His murderers: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”’ *Testimonies, volume 2*, page 208.

**Lesson 4: April 17-23**  
**‘Love is patient and kind’**

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.’ 1 Corinthians 13:4.

STUDY HELP: *In Heavenly Places*, page 230.

LESSON AIM: To study how love manifests itself in the life of the true follower of Christ

**Introduction**

“The plant of love must be carefully nourished, else it will die. Every good principle must be cherished if we would have it thrive in the soul. That which Satan plants in the heart, envy, jealousy, evil surmising, evil speaking, impatience, prejudice, selfishness, covetousness, and vanity, must be uprooted. If these evil things are allowed to remain in the soul, they will bear fruit by which many shall be defiled. Oh, how many cultivate the poisonous plants that kill out the precious fruits of love and defile the soul!” *The Adventist Home*, page 195.

**‘Love worketh’**

**1. How does the Bible show that love is demonstrated by our actions? 1 John 3:18.**

NOTE: 'He who is constrained by the love of Christ, goes forth among his fellow men to help the helpless and encourage the desponding, to point sinners to God's ideal for His children, and to lead them to Him who alone can enable them to reach this ideal. Divested of selfishness and filled with divine benevolence and tender affection, Christians are drawn out to work for Christ by helping those for whom He gave His life. They hold communion with the Saviour, and His love is revealed in all they do and say. Angry words die unspoken. Unchristlike actions are checked. God accepts such ones as His instruments, and through them works for the fulfilling of His purpose.' *Review & Herald*, July 21, 1910.

'When a man is filled with the Spirit, the more severely he is tested and tried, the more clearly he proves that he is a representative of Christ. The peace that dwells in the soul is seen on the countenance. The words and actions express the love of the Saviour. There is no striving for the highest place. Self is renounced. The name of Jesus is written on all that is said and done.' *My Life Today*, page 58.

**2. How did Jesus demonstrate His love for those around Him? Acts 10:38.**

NOTE: 'In the life of Christ this love found perfect expression. He loved us in our sin and degradation. He reached to the very depths of woe to uplift the erring sons and daughters of earth. There was no wearying of His patience, no lessening of His zeal. The waves of mercy, beaten back by proud, impenitent, unthankful hearts, ever returned in a stronger tide of love.' *Review & Herald*, July 21, 1910.

**'The Lord . . . is longsuffering to us-ward'**

**3. What is one of the evidences of love in the life of the follower of Christ? 1 Corinthians 13:4, first three words. Consider 1 Timothy 1:16.**

NOTE: 'All should cultivate patience by practising patience. By being kind and forbearing, true love may be kept warm in the heart, and qualities will be developed that Heaven will approve.' *The Adventist Home*, page 106.

**4. How are we shown that longsuffering is a core characteristic of God? Exodus 34:6, Numbers 14:18, Psalm 86:15.**

NOTE: 'If we have a sense of the long-suffering of God toward us, we shall not be found judging or accusing others. When Christ was living on the earth, how surprised His associates would have been, if, after becoming acquainted with Him, they had heard Him speak one word of accusation, of fault-finding, or of impatience. Let us never forget that those who love Him are to represent Him in character.' *Help in Daily Living*, page 31.

**'I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD'**

**5. How are we admonished to be kind to our fellow men? Ephesians 4:32.**

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.

**6. What are we told about the kindness of God towards us? Jeremiah 31:3, Psalm 117:1-2.**

NOTE: 'God desires His children to show the world what it means to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, "that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 3:7). This kindness He expects us to bring into our dealings with one another. The Lord desires His children to esteem one another as the purchase of the blood of Christ. When they do this they will know what it means to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. Our lips need to be sanctified with a live coal from the altar of God. Then we shall speak words that are elevating, refining, ennobling, words that are filled with the fragrance of Christ's righteousness, words that are a savour of life unto life. Christ wants His followers to be like Him, because He desires to be correctly represented in the family circle, in the church, and in the world. He wants us to attend to ourselves. When we do this we shall find that we have enough to keep us busy. We are to accept Christ as our efficiency, our strength, that we may reveal His character to the world. This is the work resting upon us as Christians. We are to witness to the power of heavenly grace.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 321.

**'Charity envieth not'**

**7. What are we told about the evil consequences of envy? Proverbs 14:30, Proverbs 27:4.**

NOTE: 'Satan will unite most zealously with the criticiser in fostering unbelief, envy, jealousy, and disrespect. Satan is always at work to imbue men with his spirit, to quench the love which should be sacredly cherished between brethren, to discourage confidence, to excite envy, evil surmisings, and the strife of tongues. Let us not be found acting as his co-workers. One heart open to his suggestions may sow many seeds of disaffection. Thus may be wrought a work whose results in the ruin of souls will never be fully manifest until the great day of final judgment.' *Testimonies*, volume 7, page 183.

**8. What examples are we given to show what envy can lead to? Consider Acts 7:9, Acts 13:45, Matthew 27:18.**

NOTE: 'Can we cherish envy in our hearts and yet be found in the kingdom of God? No; envy cannot be transplanted into the

kingdom of God. Satan originated this terrible evil, and its result was that Satan desired and sought to take the place of the only-begotten Son of God. It was because he could not have the place of Christ that Satan revolted in heaven. Heart burnings, unhappiness, result where unlawful yearnings are cherished for the place and position of another. He who is full of envy looks upon the one he envies with dislike and seeks to show himself superior to his rival; unless he sees and repents of his sin, he will grudge against the one he envies, and all love of Christ will die out of his heart. Can one who cherishes envy be permitted to enter into the kingdom of heaven? No; for envy brings evil surmisings, deception, pride, accusations, and enmity, and all these have been expelled from heaven. Unless we are divested of all that is evil, we shall not enter into the kingdom of God, but will find ourselves shut out of its gates.' *Signs of the Times*, February 5, 1894.

### **'Where is boasting then? It is excluded'**

#### **9. In what company does the Bible include those who boast? Romans 1:29-31.**

NOTE: 'Those who search for worldly distinction and glory make a sad mistake. It is the one who denies self, giving to others the preference, who will sit nearest to Christ on His throne. He who reads the heart sees the true merit possessed by His lowly, self-sacrificing disciples, and because they are worthy He places them in positions of distinction, though they do not realise their worthiness and do not seek for honour. God places no value on outward display or boasting. Many who in this life are looked upon as superior to others will one day see that God values men according to their compassion and self-denial. Those who follow the example of Him who went about doing good, who help and bless their fellow men, trying always to lift them up, are in God's sight infinitely higher than the selfish ones who exalt themselves. God does not accept men because of their capabilities, but because they seek His face, desiring His help. God sees not as man sees. He judges not from appearances. He searches the heart, and judges righteously.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 67.

#### **10. What is the only legitimate form of boasting? Psalm 34:2.**

NOTE: 'All boasting of merit in ourselves is out of place. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 9:23, 24.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 401.

### **'Great swelling words'**

#### **11. What does Peter have to say about those who are 'puffed up'? 2 Peter 2:18. Compare Romans 12:3.**

NOTE: 'Those taken in Satan's snare have not yet come to a healthy mental attitude. They are dazed, self-important, self-sufficient. Oh, with what sorrow the Lord looks upon them and hears their great swelling words of vanity. They are puffed up with pride. The enemy is looking on with surprise at their being taken captive so easily.' *Mind, Character & Personality, volume 1*, page 39.

'Self-exaltation is a dangerous element. It tarnishes everything it touches. It is the offspring of pride, and it works so ingeniously that, unless guarded against, it will take possession of the thoughts and control the actions. The Laodicean message must be proclaimed with power; for now it is especially applicable. Now, more than ever before, are seen pride, worldly ambition, self-exaltation, double-dealing, hypocrisy, and deception. Many are speaking great swelling words of vanity, saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Yet they are miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' *Review & Herald*, September 25, 1900.

#### **12. How is the life of the true Christian contrasted? Matthew 5:5, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5.**

NOTE: 'Talk of the love and humility of Jesus, but do not encourage the brethren and sisters to engage in picking flaws in the dress or appearance of one another. Some take delight in this work; and when their minds are turned in this direction, they begin to feel that they must become church tinkers [i.e. those who in a clumsy and inefficient way try to put things right]. They climb upon the judgment seat, and as soon as they see one of their brethren and sisters, they look to find something to criticise. This is one of the most effectual means of becoming narrow-minded and of dwarfing spiritual growth. God would have them step down from the judgment seat, for He has never placed them there.' *Child Guidance*, page 429.

'The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterised by grace, humility, truth, and love. Every member of His church militant must manifest the same qualities, if he would join the church triumphant.' *Christian Education*, page 76.

## **Lesson 5: April 24-30**

### **'Love does not act unbecomingly'**

MEMORY VERSE: Love 'doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.' 1 Corinthians 13:5.

STUDY HELP: *In Heavenly Places*, page 230.

LESSON AIM: To study those types of behaviour which are not found in the life of the loving and loveable Christian.

### **Introduction**

'The most difficult business for individuals is the giving up that which one thinks is his right. Love seeketh not her own. Heaven-born love strikes deeper than the surface. Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Fortified with the grace of Christ love doth not behave itself unseemly. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God. God is love. We all need love, gentleness, tenderness, compassion, and forbearance. Expel from the soul every vestige of selfishness or human dignity.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 282.

### **'Doth not behave itself unseemly'**

#### **1. What kind of behaviour is not found in a loving and loveable Christian? 1 Corinthians 13: 5, first part.**

NOTE: 'Oh, how can any who have the light of truth, the great light given them of God, defy the wrath and judgments of God by sinning against Him and doing the very things God has told them in His word not to do? How can they be so blinded by Satan as to dishonour God to His face, and defile their souls by sinning knowingly? Says the apostle, "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." Will these sinners (shall I call them hypocrites?) in Zion inquire, In what manner am I a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men? Answer for yourselves, By my abuse of the light and privileges and mercies God has given me, by unseemly actions which corrupt and defile the soul. Professing to know God, do I put Him out of my thoughts, and substitute an idol?' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 447.

'Into the city of God there will enter nothing that defiles. All who are to be dwellers there will here have become pure in heart. In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste for careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner.' *Maranatha*, page 88.

#### **2. What responsibility do we have as Christians towards others? 1 Corinthians 4:9, last part, 2 Corinthians 3:2.**

NOTE: 'Do I lead other minds to regard sin lightly by my example? Am I a spectacle to the world of moral looseness? Am I a spectacle to angels in indecent actions and moral defilement of the body? The apostle exhorts us: "I beseech you, . . . brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 447.

'It is essential that every soul that names the name of Christ should make straight paths for his feet. Why? Lest the lame be turned out of the way. It is a terrible, terrible thing to give a soul a wrong example, and to lead him in a crooked course by the way in which you may walk. Whatever you may see others doing that your judgment convicts you as being unseemly for a Christian, see to it that you never do the same things yourself. Just as long as you will follow in the footsteps of Jesus, you will walk securely.' *Our High Calling*, page 185.

### **'Be courteous'**

#### **3. Instead of unseemly behaviour, how are we to behave? 1 Peter 3:8.**

NOTE: 'The very expression of the countenance has an influence for good or evil. His spirit, his words, his actions, his attitude toward others, are unmistakable. If he is living in selfishness, he surrounds his soul with a malarious atmosphere; while if he is filled with the love of Christ, he will manifest courtesy, kindness, tender regard for the feelings of others and will communicate to his associates, by his acts of love, a tender, grateful, happy feeling. It will be made manifest that he is living for Jesus and daily learning lessons at His feet, receiving His light and His peace. He will be able to say to the Lord, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." *The Adventist Home*, page 33.

'Of courtesy, it is much less than courage of heart, or holiness; yet in my walks it seems to me that the grace of God is in courtesy.' Hilaire Belloc: *Of Courtesy*.

#### **4. How does Paul explain the essence of true Christian courtesy? Romans 12:10.**

NOTE: 'The softening, subduing influence of the Spirit of God upon human hearts and minds will make the true children of God sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. There will be a soft, subdued spirit in all those who are looking unto Jesus. The love of Jesus always leads to Christian courtesy, refinement of language, and purity of expression that testify to the company we are with, that like Enoch we are walking with God. There is no storming, no harshness, but a sweet fragrance in speech and in spirit.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 45.

### **'Seeketh not her own'**

#### **5. How did Jesus set the example of not being self-seeking? John 5:30. Compare John 8:50 & think about John 7:18.**

NOTE: 'The most difficult business for individuals is the giving up that which one thinks is his right. Love seeketh not her own. Heaven-born love strikes deeper than the surface. Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Fortified with the grace of Christ love doth not behave itself unseemly. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God. God is love. We all need love, gentleness, tenderness, compassion, and forbearance. Expel from the soul every vestige of selfishness or human dignity.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 282.

#### **6. What method did God use to remind the children of Israel against the sin of self-seeking? Numbers 15:39-30.**

NOTE: 'Here God expressly commanded a very simple arrangement of dress for the children of Israel for the purpose of distinguishing them from the idolatrous nations around them. As they looked upon their peculiarity of dress, they were to remem-

ber that they were God's commandment-keeping people, and that He had wrought in a miraculous manner to bring them from Egyptian bondage to serve Him, to be a holy people unto Him. They were not to serve their own desires, or to imitate the idolatrous nations around them, but to remain a distinct, separate people, that all who looked upon them might say: These are they whom God brought out of the land of Egypt, who keep the law of Ten Commandments. An Israelite was known to be such as soon as seen, for God through simple means distinguished him as His.' *Testimonies, volume 1*, page 524.

### **'Men shall be lovers of their own selves'**

#### **7. How was Ezekiel shown the truth about those who expressed much love when they came to listen to His message? Ezekiel 33:31.**

NOTE: 'The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man's heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form. "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." Ezekiel 33:31. The apostle Paul points out that this will be the special characteristic of those who live just before Christ's second coming. He says, "In the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves; . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:1-5.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 411.

#### **8. How did Christ warn those who put self-seeking above the things of eternal value? Luke 9:25.**

NOTE: 'Christ is our example. He gave His life as a sacrifice for us, and He asks us to give our lives as a sacrifice for others. Thus we may cast out the selfishness which Satan is constantly striving to implant in our hearts. This selfishness is death to all piety, and can be overcome only by manifesting love to God and to our fellow men. Christ will not permit one selfish person to enter the courts of heaven. No covetous person can pass through the pearly gates; for all covetousness is idolatry.' *Review & Herald*, July 11, 1899.

### **'Is not easily provoked'**

#### **9. What counsel did Jesus give on how to cope with provocation? Matthew 5:39-41.**

NOTE: 'The spirit that is kept gentle under provocation will speak more effectively in favour of the truth than will any argument, however forcible.' *Desire of Ages*, page 353.

'The most becoming dignity you can possess is the Christian self-control that will endure provocation.' *Daughters of God*, page 169.

'Where the Spirit of Christ is in the heart, the character of Christ will be revealed, and there will be manifested gentleness under provocation, and patience under trial.' *Reflecting Christ*, page 59.

#### **10. What example did Christ give when He was provoked? Luke 11:53-54. 1 Peter 2:23. See Isaiah 53:7.**

NOTE: 'All who profess godliness are under the most sacred obligation to guard the spirit, and to exercise self-control under the greatest provocation. The burdens placed upon Moses were very great; few men will ever be so severely tried as he was; yet this was not allowed to excuse his sin. God has made ample provision for His people; and if they rely upon His strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. The strongest temptation cannot excuse sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 110.

### **'Thinketh no evil'**

#### **11. What attitude will be found in the loving and loveable Christian? 1 Corinthians 13:5, last part.**

NOTE: 'Love is unsuspecting, ever placing the most favourable construction upon the motives and acts of others. Love will never needlessly expose the faults of others. It does not listen eagerly to unfavourable reports, but rather seeks to bring to mind some good qualities of the one defamed.' *Testimonies, volume 5*, page 168.

#### **12. How are we warned against the danger of spreading rumours? Leviticus 19:16, See also Proverbs 18:8. Consider Proverbs 20:19, Proverbs 26:20.**

NOTE: 'Floating rumours are often the destroyers of unity among brethren. There are some who watch with open mind and ears to catch flying scandal. They gather up little incidents which may be trifling in themselves, but which are repeated and exaggerated until a man is made an offender for a word. Their motto seems to be, "Report, and we will report it." These tale-bearers are doing Satan's work with surprising fidelity, little knowing how offensive their course is to God. If they would spend half the energy and zeal that is given to this unholy work in examining their own hearts, they would find so much to do

to cleanse their souls from impurity that they would have no time or disposition to criticise their brethren, and they would not fall under the power of this temptation. The door of the mind should be closed against "They say" or "I have heard." Why should we not, instead of allowing jealousy or evil surmising to come into our hearts, go to our brethren, and after frankly but kindly setting before them the things we have heard detrimental to their character and influence, pray with and for them? While we cannot fellowship those who are the bitter enemies of Christ, we should cultivate that spirit of meekness and love that characterized our Master, a love that thinketh no evil.' *Gospel Workers, 1892, ed., page 444.*

## **Lesson 6: May 1-7**

### **'Love does not gloat over the wickedness of other people'**

MEMORY VERSE: Love 'rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.' 1 Corinthians 13:6.

STUDY HELP: *Lift Him Up*, page 313.

LESSON AIM: To study what is the loving response to the sins of others.

#### **Introduction**

'When fault is found in a brother, or misfortune befalls him, the one in whom true love dwells will not seek to make it public, saying: I told you how it would be; I told you he was not to be depended upon. I worked to disconnect him from that position of influence; for I knew he was not to be trusted. By thus dwelling upon his weakness, you cultivate a spirit of suspicion; you give to your brother no spiritual help, no tenderness, no love. That cold, self-tainted atmosphere is as a spiritual malaria; and the erring brother feels in his heart the sentiments that are cherished toward him. He in turn becomes discouraged, loses faith in his brethren, and grows careless and indifferent. But this is not the way we are to treat those who are weak in the faith, those who have not much strength of character. Our course of action is clearly marked out for us: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.'" *Review & Herald, November 17, 1896.*

#### **'Rejoiceth not in iniquity'**

- 1. What is a further characteristic of the loving and loveable Christian? 1 Corinthians 13:6, first part. Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:12. (The word translated 'unrighteousness' in 2 Thessalonians 2:12 is the same word translated 'iniquity' in 1 Corinthians 13:6.)**

NOTE: 'Since we cannot read the heart of another, let us beware of ascribing wrong motives to any man, lest we find ourselves involved in guilt similar to that of Miriam, condemning those whom the Lord is teaching and guiding, and thus bring upon ourselves the rebuke of God. And yet how many there are who place the worst possible construction on the words and acts of others. By these would-be judges every little thing is scrutinised in the light of their own perverted understanding; and instead of considering that they themselves may be in error, as were Aaron and Miriam, they repeat their suspicions to others, who take up the reproach; and thus the very work is wrought that Satan desires to accomplish. This work is what is called "rejoicing in iniquity." Love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; love never faileth." This is the Christ side of the question. The opposite spirit has already been described. It leads one to dwell on all the faults of others, and overlook their good qualities. When an error is committed, it looks back to gather up all the similar deeds, and treasures up all these, to confirm the darkest suppositions and attribute the worst motives.' *Signs of the Times, March 14, 1892.*

- 2. What does Paul say elsewhere about those who take pleasure in the iniquity of others? Romans 1:32. Read verses 28-32.)**

NOTE: 'When those who controvert the truth of God send for men to oppose truth with falsehood and error, this is the time to watch the influence their words have upon the congregation. Those who do not want a knowledge of the truth will greedily partake of the dish of pleasing fables presented to them. They will listen diligently to the falsehoods and ravening of the wolves in sheep's clothing. They are of those who rejoice in iniquity. They infuse into the hearts of those who do not want God's way the same wicked opposition that is in their own hearts. And they will act out the same spirit toward God's commandment-keeping people in this time as the Jews did when they refused to believe the truths which Christ unfolded before them. Christ presented before this people the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures, showing them that by their rejection of Him they were fulfilling those prophecies. But they continued in their evil course, and followed to the end the works which stand registered against them in the books of heaven, and which have brought eternal infamy upon them as a nation.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 16, page 90.*

#### **'Restore such an one'**

- 3. What is iniquity? James 3:6, Romans 1:29. (The word translated 'unrighteousness' in Romans 1:29 is the same word translated as 'iniquity' in 1 Corinthians 13:6.) Consider 1 John 3:7.**

NOTE: The word translated iniquity is the Greek word 'adikia' The King James Bible translates it as unrighteousness (16 times), iniquity (6 times), unjust (twice), wrong (once). It is used to refer to 1) injustice, of a judge, 2) unrighteousness of heart

and life, 3) a deed violating law and justice, act of unrighteousness. It is worth noting that the Bible consistently thinks of sin in terms of sinful actions, whether by word, deed or thought, rather than as the state or condition into which we are born. Sin is an act of the will.

“Rejoiceth not in iniquity;” mark it: the apostle meant that where there is a cultivation of genuine love for precious souls it will be exhibited for those most in need of that patience which “suffereth long and is kind,” and which will not be ready to magnify a small indiscretion or direct wrong into large, unpardonable offences, will not make capital out of others’ misdoings. The love for souls for whose salvation Christ died will not do that which will expose the errors and weaknesses of the erring before others.’ *Gospel Herald*, May 1, 1898.

#### **4. How are we to respond when we see someone else fall into sin? Galatians 6:1.**

NOTE: ‘When you see a man fighting the battle with almost everything against him, then will you show the Satan side of your character and add your influence to the popular cry, Crucify him, crucify him? Why not practise the law of kindness? Why not dwell upon the good traits of character? Why keep before you and in your lips words that savour of distrust, that show the very worst imagining of the heart? Why will you not practise the law of love? Why not cultivate a tender, pitiful, kind spirit? Why be so cold, unfeeling, heartless, satanic? Why rejoice in iniquity rather than in the truth?’ *Special Testimony to the Battle Creek Church*, page 21.

‘Rejoiceth not in iniquity’ . . . These words are the injunctions of heaven, and they are to be brought into the daily practice. If one is at fault, instead of telling someone else of this, go to the one you think to be in error, and tenderly and respectfully, as you would wish to be treated, were you in his place, tell him of his mistake. If he is not told of his fault, but instead there are surmisings among others, and no effort is made to save the erring one by telling him of his danger, how will God look upon those who do this cruel work?’ *Manuscript Releases, volume 18*, page 334.

### **‘Forbearing one another and forgiving one another’**

#### **5. How was Ezekiel shown those upon whom the Lord will place His mark? Ezekiel 9:4.**

NOTE: ‘Love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.” He whose heart is imbued with love is filled with sorrow at the errors and weaknesses of others; but when truth triumphs, when the cloud that darkened the fair fame of another is removed, or when sins are confessed and wrongs corrected, he rejoices.’ *Signs of the Times*, February 1, 1883.

#### **6. Rather than rejoicing over the sins of others, what should be the attitude of the loving and loveable Christian to them? Colossians 3:12-14.**

NOTE: ‘When a brother is in error, how many turn away and leave him to himself to pursue his wrong course, to depart from Christ and the truth! And not only do they treat him with neglect, but their unwise words and indifferent behaviour hasten him on in the downward way. Is this the compassionate Spirit of Christ? When one is falling away, shall we push him into greater darkness? Did not Jesus, the Son of God, come to seek and to save that which was lost? “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” Was not our Saviour tender and pitiful toward all? Did He not weep over the rejecters of His mercy, and stretch out his hands all day long to a rebellious people? We ought to be compassionate to our fellow-men; for they are the purchase of the blood of Christ. We are not as sympathetic as we should be. This self-esteem must be rooted out, this spirit of pharisaical importance must be subdued. We are not placed here to please or glorify self, but to glorify God by living for the good of men. Every Christian should exercise the same pity toward the erring that he would have manifested toward himself; but in many cases, the very ones who are themselves the most sensitive under reproof are most unfeeling toward those whom they condemn. If a brother errs, how easy it is to tell others of his fault before a word is said to him. Such a course is not in accordance with the Bible rule. God does not want us to expose the defects of others before the unbelieving world, or even before the brethren in the church, except as it may be necessary in carrying out the Bible direction.’ *Signs of the Times*, May 18, 1888.

### **‘Rejoiceth in the truth’**

#### **7. Rather than gloating over the sins of others, in what does the loving and loveable Christian find his pleasure? 1 Corinthians 13:6, last part. Consider Psalm 1:2,**

NOTE: ‘The love of the truth, and a genuine desire for improvement in the understanding of the Word, will make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the service of God. As you learn, you should seek for opportunities to explain the truth to others. The tempter is watching you, in your uncertainty. He will make a determined effort to secure you to serve his purposes. How few understand Satan’s great power to deceive. Close every door where he might enter. Surrender yourself, body, soul, and spirit to God. Place yourself under those who teach and obey the truth and learn all you can from them. When you place yourself under the influence of the Holy Spirit, then you can see light in God’s light, and you will rejoice in His truth. Keep yourself in the circle of His light, where His light is cherished, and then “let your light so shine before men that they, by seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.”’ *Loma Linda Messages*, page 184.

#### **8. How did Christ picture those who do not love the truth? Matthew 25:1-3. Note also verses 8-12.**

NOTE: ‘The five foolish virgins had lamps (this means a knowledge of Scripture truth), but they had not the grace of Christ. Day by day they went through a round of ceremonies and external duties, but their service was lifeless, devoid of the righteousness of Christ. The Sun of Righteousness did not shine in their hearts and minds, and they had not the love of the truth which conforms to the life and character, the image and superscription, of Christ. The oil of grace was not mingled with their endeavours. Their religion was a dry husk without the true kernel. They held fast to forms of doctrines, but they were deceived

in their Christian life, full of self-righteousness, and failing to learn lessons in the school of Christ, which, if practised, would have made them wise unto salvation.' *Christian Service*, page 263.

### **'The love of the truth'**

#### **9. What is said of those who fail to receive a love of the truth? 2 Thessalonians 2:10. Consider John 14:6, John 1:14.**

NOTE: 'Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only? Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day. He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a heavy, wearisome burden, that their hearts may be overcharged with the cares of this life and the day of trial may come upon them as a thief.' *Darkness Before Dawn*, page 42.

#### **10. What will result from not receiving a love of the truth? 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12.**

NOTE: 'There are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe, but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith, and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth. Certain it is that there has been among us a departure from the living God, and a turning to men, putting human wisdom in place of divine. God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat. The Lord calls upon all who believe His word to awake out of sleep. Precious light has come, appropriate for this time. It is Bible truth, showing the perils that are right upon us. This light should lead us to a diligent study of the Scriptures, and a most critical examination of the positions which we hold.' *Counsels to Writers & Editors*, pages 39-40.

'Those who are unwilling to accept the plain, cutting truths of the Bible are continually seeking for pleasing fables that will quiet the conscience. The less spiritual, self-denying, and humiliating the doctrines presented, the greater the favour with which they are received. These persons degrade the intellectual powers to serve their carnal desires. Too wise in their own conceit to search the Scriptures with contrition of soul and earnest prayer for divine guidance, they have no shield from delusion. Satan is ready to supply the heart's desire, and he palms off his deceptions in the place of truth. It was thus that the papacy gained its power over the minds of men; and by rejection of the truth because it involves a cross, Protestants are following the same path. All who neglect the word of God to study convenience and policy, that they may not be at variance with the world, will be left to receive damnable heresy for religious truth. Every conceivable form of error will be accepted by those who wilfully reject the truth. He who looks with horror upon one deception will readily receive another. The apostle Paul, speaking of a class who "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," declares: "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. With such a warning before us it behoves us to be on our guard as to what doctrines we receive.' *Darkness Before Dawn*, page 9.

### **'By this I know that thou art a man of God'**

#### **11. How are we shown that truthfulness is a characteristic of the true Christian? 1 Kings 17:24.**

NOTE: 'As the heart is opened to the entrance of the Word, light from the throne of God will shine into the soul. That Word, cherished in the heart, will yield to the student a treasure of knowledge that is priceless. Its ennobling principles will stamp the character with honesty and truthfulness, temperance and integrity.' *Our High Calling*, page 31.

#### **12. How is the evidence that one is a loving and loveable Christian displayed? 1 John 3:18.**

NOTE: "'My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.'" A spirit of careless indifference toward our brethren has been coming into our churches, and the religion of many has become cold, selfish, loveless Pharisaism. The True Counsellor has spoken words of the utmost importance to all our souls, "Thou hast left thy first love.'" *Review & Herald*, February 10, 1891.

'Here the beloved disciple faithfully portrays our religious obligations to one another. The test of genuine religious experience and sanctification through the truth is clearly defined. The teaching of the Word is clear and explicit in regard to the love we should have for one another.' *Signs of the Times*, October 20, 1898.

'It is impossible for one to have the love of God, and fail to have compassion for his fellow men. The love of Jesus in the heart will always be revealed in tender compassion for the souls of those for whom Christ paid so dear a price. "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. . . . And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." There is no such thing as a loveless Christian. He who is in unity with Christ, in word, in life, and in action, bears the living testimony that he has the mind and spirit of Christ.' *Home Missionary*, August 1, 1896.

## **Lesson 7: May 8-14**

### **'Love will outlast anything'**

MEMORY VERSE: Love 'beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.' 1 Corinthians 13:7.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 550-551.

LESSON AIM: To study what the love of our heavenly Father teaches us about how to love one another.

## Introduction

"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 the Lord that hath mercy on thee." When we receive Christ into the soul as an abiding guest, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds. There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ, received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife, and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred can not exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven, and will diffuse its blessed influence all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife.' *Signs of the Times*, December 27, 1905.

### 'Surely He hath borne our griefs'

#### 1. What was Christ's love willing to bear for us? 1 Peter 2:24.

NOTE: 'God in Christ gave Himself for our sins. He suffered the cruel death of the cross, bore for us the burden of guilt, "the just for the unjust," that He might reveal to us His love and draw us to Himself. And He says, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32, R.V. Let Christ, the divine Life, dwell in you and through you reveal the heaven-born love that will inspire hope in the hopeless and bring heaven's peace to the sin-stricken heart. As we come to God, this is the condition which meets us at the threshold, that, receiving mercy from Him, we yield ourselves to reveal His grace to others.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 114.

'There was One who was willing to die in my stead, that a soul so unworthy might live. And the path to the cross He was willing to tread, all the sins of my life to forgive. They are nailed to the cross; they are nailed to the cross. O how much He was willing to bear! With what anguish and loss, Jesus went to the cross, but He carried my sins with Him there.' Mrs Frank A. Breck.

#### 2. What else did Christ in His love for us bear? Isaiah 53:4, first part.

NOTE: 'No language can express this love; we can describe but a faint degree of love that passeth knowledge. . . Jesus bore the humiliation and shame and reproach that justly belonged to the sinner. He was the Majesty of heaven, He was the King of glory, He was equal with the Father; and yet He clothed His divinity with humanity, that humanity might touch humanity, that divinity might lay hold of divinity. Had He come as an angel, He could not have been a partaker with us of our sufferings, could not have been tempted in all points like as we are, He could not have sympathised with our sorrows; but He came in the garb of our humanity, that as our substitute and surety, He might overcome the prince of darkness in our behalf, and make us victors through His merits. Standing under the shadow of the cross of Calvary, the inspiration of His love fills our hearts. When I look upon Him whom my sins have pierced, the inspiration from on high comes upon me; and this inspiration may come upon each one of you through the Holy Spirit. Unless you receive the Holy Spirit, you cannot have the love of God in the soul; but through a living connection with Christ, we are inspired with love and zeal and earnestness. We are not as a block of marble, which may reflect the light of the sun, but cannot be imbued with life. We are capable of responding to the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness; for as Christ illuminates our souls, He gives light and life. We drink in the love of Christ as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted into Christ, if fibre by fibre we have been united with the living Vine, we shall give evidence of this fact by bearing rich clusters of fruit. If we are connected with light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. Those who are truly Christians, grasp the golden chain which links earth to heaven, which binds finite man to the infinite God. The light that shineth in the face of Jesus, shines in the hearts of His followers, to the glory of God.' *Review & Herald*, September 27, 1892.

### 'Beareth all things'

#### 3. What are we asked to bear? Galatians 6:2.

NOTE: 'God's love will be bestowed on His people if they will do as Jesus did, if they will deny self and lift the cross. Christ took our infirmities, and we are to bear one another's burdens. We read of Christ, "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them." These words are the key to His life-work. We are to reveal in our lives the compassion that He revealed.' *Review & Herald*, August 4, 1903.

#### 4. Why are we to bear the burdens of others? What is the law of Christ? John 15:12.

NOTE: 'Christ requires us to love one another. How much, the cross of Calvary will answer. He loved us even unto death, and He bids us to "love one another as I have loved you." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And when this mutual forbearance and tenderness is a reality among us we shall appreciate the significance of the figure employed by the apostle to represent the church of Christ. "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." You will then bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' *Signs of the Times*, May 18, 1888.

## ‘Believeth all things’

### 5. What attitude are we to take towards others? 1 Corinthians 13:7, second part. Compare 2 Corinthians 7:16.

NOTE: ‘Jealousy caused the first death in our world. All selfishness comes from Satan. Human beings belong to one great family, the family of God. They are to respect and love one another. They are not to speak words which wound and bruise. No one is to be unfair in his dealings, causing his fellow-beings to lose confidence in him. Selfishness and injustice bring unhappiness. Under their baleful influence men lose the sense of what it means to love one another as Christ loves us.’ *Lift Him Up*, page 292.

‘Should you in any way become suspicious of one who does not harmonise with you, you would make trouble. When your will and way is crossed, bitter feelings arise in your heart. You cherish a feeling of hatred toward the one whom you think has made a mistake. You forget that when a brother has made a mistake, you should “seek to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.” We are out of place in cherishing bitter feelings toward any of the Lord’s purchased possession.’ *Christian Leadership*, page 63.

### 6. How did Paul express his confidence in the believers in Thessalonica? 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4. Compare 2 Corinthians 2:3-4.

NOTE: ‘Love for Christ means a broad, extended love for one another, that love which is now so sadly wanting. The lack of love leads to the lack of respect for one another and the neglect of true courtesy. There is criticising, fault-finding, reporting words spoken in confidence, and using these to second the accusations of Satan, who is very busy in sowing distrust, jealousy, and bitterness. Why do the members of the church run so readily into this evil work, overlooking the precious things? Why do they not speak words of approval and encouragement to one another, and thus water the precious plant of love, that it may not die out of the heart?’ *Bible Echo*, March 1, 1892.

## ‘Hopeth all things’

### 7. What attitude to life should characterise the loving and loveable Christian? 1 Corinthians 13:7, third part.

NOTE: ‘When someone asks you how you are feeling, do not complain and murmur and try to think of something mournful to tell them to gain their sympathy; but grasp them by the hand, saying, “Praise God! God is the Lord, and greatly to be praised! I love Him, because He first loved me.” Let your conversation be cheerful and hopeful. Do not talk discouragingly, telling your lack of faith and your sorrows and sufferings, for the devil delights to hear such words. When talking on gloomy subjects, you are glorifying the enemy. Talk faith and hope and courage, thus glorifying God. Instead of gossiping, thus creating mischief, let us tell of the matchless power of Christ, and speak of His glory, thus magnifying and lifting up the Lord God of hosts and training ourselves to sing the song of victory in the kingdom of glory. By beginning to sing songs of triumph and thanksgiving now, we may prepare ourselves to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb when we meet on the sea of glass.’ *The Upward Look*, page 306.

### 8. How did Jesus express this same thought, especially for those living in the last days? Luke 21:28.

NOTE: ‘The Lord your Saviour commissions me to give you this message: Cherish love, for love is of God. Harshness and accusation are of the devil. Cultivate love, and express it with kindly, tender, sympathetic words, spoken in simplicity and Christlikeness. Talk cheerfully and hopefully, whether you feel hopeful or not. Talk faith and love and “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” We cannot better glorify God than by being witnesses of the fact that through the power of His rich grace there is peace and joy in the Saviour. Cheerful, holy endeavour to keep the unity of the faith presents heavenly credentials to the world that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world as the Saviour of men.’ *Manuscript Releases*, volume 21, page 182.

## ‘Endureth all things’

### 9. What should characterise the love a true Christians has to others? 1 Corinthians 13:7, last part. Consider 1 Peter 4:8.

NOTE: ‘Love will not be a mere exchange of soft and flattering words. The loom of heaven weaves with warp and woof finer, yet more firm, than can be woven by the looms of earth. The result is not a tissue fabric, but a texture that will bear wear and test and trial. Heart will be bound to heart in the golden bonds of a love that is enduring.’ *The Adventist Home*, page 112.

‘True, heaven-born love is not selfish and changeable. It is not dependent on human praise. The heart of him who receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and for those for whom Christ died. Self is not struggling for recognition. He does not love others because they love and please him, because they appreciate his merits, but because they are Christ’s purchased possession. If his motives, words, or actions are misunderstood or misrepresented, he takes no offence, but pursues the even tenor of his way. He is kind and thoughtful, humble in his opinion of himself, yet full of hope, always trusting in the mercy and love of God.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 101.

### 10. How did Jesus teach the enduring nature of love? Luke 15:20-24.

NOTE: ‘The father of the prodigal son is the type that Christ chooses as a representation of God. This father longs to see and receive once more the son who has left him. He waits and watches for him, yearning to see him, hoping that he will come. When he sees a stranger approaching, poor and clothed with rags, he goes out to meet him, if perchance it may be his son. And he feeds and clothes him as if he were indeed his son. By and by he has his reward, for his son comes home, on his lips the beseeching confession, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.”

And the father says to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry" (Luke 15:21-23). There is no taunting, no casting up to the prodigal of his evil course. The son feels that the past is forgiven and forgotten, blotted out forever. And so God says to the sinner, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins" (Isaiah 44:22). "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). Heaven is waiting and yearning for the return of the prodigals who have wandered far from the fold. Many of those who have strayed away may be brought back by the loving service of God's children. Think of the Father subjecting Himself to sorrow, sparing not His own Son, but freely delivering Him up for us all. O that we had a better understanding of His love!' *In Heavenly Places*, page 10.

### **'An everlasting love'**

#### **11. What are we shown of the enduring nature of God's love to us? Isaiah 54:10. Compare Jeremiah 31:3.**

NOTE: 'Some seem to feel that they must be on probation, and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed, before they can claim His blessing. But they may claim the blessing of God even now. . . We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity. . . God does not deal with us as finite men deal with one another. His thoughts are thoughts of mercy, love, and tenderest compassion. . . Even this parable [The Prodigal Son], tender and touching as it is, comes short of expressing the infinite compassion of the heavenly Father. The Lord declares by His prophet, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3. While the sinner is yet far from the Father's house, wasting his substance in a strange country, the Father's heart is yearning over him; and every longing awakened in the soul to return to God is but the tender pleading of His Spirit, wooing, entreating, drawing the wanderer to his Father's heart of love.' *Steps to Christ*, pages 52-54.

#### **12. How has that love been expressed to us? Hebrews 13:5, last part.**

NOTE: 'With a sense that Jesus is by your side, you will have cheerfulness, hope, courage, and joy. Never, never separate from Jesus. He never separates from us. By the cross of Calvary He has given evidence of His deep love for us. He does not leave us to fight the battle in our own finite strength. He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5. Jesus does not cast us off, even when we grieve Him; He clings to us still. Let your heart be animated by the love of Jesus.' *Our High Calling*, page 147.

## **Lesson 8: May 15-21 'Love will never end'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.' 1 Corinthians 13:8.

STUDY HELP: *Lift Him Up*, page 313.

LESSON AIM: To study the permanence of genuine Christian love, unlike the gifts of the Spirit.

### **Introduction**

'All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavour to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 43.

### **'Love never faileth'**

#### **1. What are we told about genuine Christian love? 1 Corinthians 13:8, first part.**

NOTE: 'From age to age the Lord has been striving to awaken in the minds of men a sense of brotherhood. Thus He seeks to establish order and harmony in the world. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," This is the message His children are to proclaim by lives of unselfish endeavour. It is upon Christlike love that brotherhood depends. Without this love nothing can be done toward fulfilling God's purpose for humanity. Without it all effort is without avail. . . In the life of Christ this love found perfect expression. He loved us in our sin and degradation. He reached to the very depths of woe to uplift the erring sons and daughters of earth. There was no wearying of His patience, no lessening of His zeal. The waves of mercy, beaten back by proud, impenitent, unthankful hearts, ever returned in a stronger tide of love. He who is constrained by the love of Christ, goes forth among his fellow men to help the helpless and encourage the desponding, to point sinners to God's ideal for His children, and to lead them to Him who alone can enable them to reach this ideal. Divested of selfishness and filled with divine benevolence and tender affection, Christians are drawn out to work for Christ by helping

those for whom He gave His life. They hold communion with the Saviour, and His love is revealed in all they do and say. Angry words die unspoken. Unchristlike actions are checked. God accepts such ones as His instruments, and through them works for the fulfilling of His purpose.' *Review & Herald*, July 21, 1910.

**2. What does this love reveal about those who practise it? 1 John 4:7.**

NOTE: 'All who have been born into the heavenly family are in a special sense the brethren of our Lord. The love of Christ binds together the members of His family, and wherever that love is made manifest there the divine relationship is revealed. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7). . . . But not to any class is Christ's love restricted. He identifies Himself with every child of humanity. That we might become members of the heavenly family, He became a member of the earthly family. He is the Son of man, and thus a brother to every son and daughter of Adam. His followers are not to feel themselves detached from the perishing world around them. They are a part of the great web of humanity; and Heaven looks upon them as brothers to sinners as well as to saints. The fallen, the erring, and the sinful, Christ's love embraces; and every deed of kindness done to uplift a fallen soul, every act of mercy, is accepted as done to Him.' *Lift Him Up*, page 82.

**'Prophecies shall fail'**

**3. What does Paul remind us about prophecies? 1 Corinthians 13:8, second part.**

NOTE: Only false prophecies fail to be fulfilled. Paul is not talking about the notion that prophecies will fail in that sense. The Corinthians valued highly the spiritual gift of prophecy, and Paul himself was to commend this gift above the others (see 1 Corinthians 14:1). Yet the time will come, in the eternal kingdom of God, when the work of the prophet will no longer be needed. In that blessed time, the work most commonly associated with the prophet, that of foretelling the future, will no longer be required. Nor will the more fundamental work of the prophet be needed, the work of 'edification and exhortation and comfort' (see 1 Corinthians 14:3). Yet love will continue throughout eternity because it is the very nature of God's kingdom. 'Love "never faileth." It can never lose its value; it is a heavenly attribute. As a precious treasure, it will be carried by its possessor through the portals of the city of God.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 319.

**4. How does Paul show that although prophecy was a desirable gift for Christians, love remains the supreme quality for Christians to possess? 1 Corinthians 14:1. Compare 1 Corinthians 13:1.**

NOTE: 'Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another, these are the two great arms upon which hang all the law and the prophets. A good tree produces good fruit. The evidence of love for Christ is the manifestation of love for one another. Unselfish love for those around us is placed among the brightest evidences of true religion. By it a daily witness in Christ's favour is borne to the world.' *This Day With God*, page 287.

**'Tongues shall cease'**

**5. What other gift, prized by the Corinthians, would one day no longer be needed? 1 Corinthians 13:8, third part.**

NOTE: The miraculous power of speaking languages without learning them will at last no longer be needed. There will be but one language in heaven. There will be no confusion (Babel) of tongues in that place of perfect peace. The curse of Babel will be removed when God finally brings the reign of Babylon to an end. The gift, so beneficial to the spread of the Gospel in the days of the early church, will then no longer be required.

'All the redeemed saints will see and appreciate as never before the love of the Father and the Son, and songs of praise will burst forth from immortal tongues. He loved us, He gave His life for us. With glorified bodies, with enlarged capacities, with hearts made pure, with lips undefiled, we shall sing the riches of redeeming love. There will be no suffering ones in heaven, no sceptics whom we must labour to convince of the reality of eternal things, no prejudices to uproot, but all will be susceptible to that love which passeth knowledge.' *Maranatha*, page 318.

**6. How did Paul explain the uselessness of this gift without love? 1 Corinthians 13:1. Consider 1 Corinthians 14:23.**

NOTE: 'We may be active, we may do much work; but without love, such love as dwelt in the heart of Christ, we can never be numbered with the family of heaven.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 158.

'If we have the mind of Christ, we shall have that love that "suffereth long, and is kind;" that "envieth not;" that "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil: rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Without love one for another we do not keep the commandments of God, and all our profession is mere pretension, and "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Whatever is contrary to love, humility, and faith, denies Christ.' *Youth's Instructor*, December 2, 1897.

**'Knowledge shall vanish away'**

**7. What will also be superseded when we enter the heavenly kingdom? 1 Corinthians 13:8, last part.**

NOTE: The word 'knowledge' may be understood in a general sense as the knowledge needed for us to live in this world, but it may also be the knowledge which is a gift of the Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 12:8). Yet even this knowledge is only partial, as Paul goes on to explain in verse 9, and our partial knowledge will at last be superseded by perfect knowledge (see verse 10).

**8. What danger is there in knowledge without love? 1 Corinthians 8:1.**

NOTE: 'The message to the Laodicean church is applicable to our condition. How plainly is pictured the position of those who

think they have all the truth, who take pride in their knowledge of the Word of God, while its sanctifying power has not been felt in their lives. The fervour of the love of God is wanting in their hearts, but it is this very fervour of love that makes God's people the light of the world.' *Faith & Works*, page 82.

'It is not knowledge that we chiefly need, though knowledge sanctified by Thee is dear; it is the will and power to love indeed; it is the constant thought that God is near.' Henry Twells.

### **'Who shall separate us from the love of God?'**

#### **9. How does John express the extent of God's love? 1 John 4:9-10.**

NOTE: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." . . . God loved the world to such an extent that He gave full and complete evidence of the fact. He did not leave any chance for the tempter to say that He did not love us, for He gave a gift whose value could not be estimated. Had He done less, Satan and his agencies would have sought to have inspired jealousy against God by intimating that He could have done more than He did. God so loved the world that He determined to give a gift beyond all computation, and make manifest how immeasurable was His love. The gift of God would be a wonder to all worlds, to all created intelligences, ever enlarging their ideas of what God's love was in its infinity and greatness. Contemplation of this love would uproot from the heart all selfishness, and so transform the soul that men would cherish generosity, practice self-denial, and imitate the example of God. God so loved the world that He gave heaven's best gift, in order that the most guilty transgressor should not be deferred from coming to Christ, however great his sin, and be enabled to ask for pardon at a throne of mercy.' *Signs of the Times*, February 5, 1894.

#### **10. How does Paul express the extent of the love of God? Romans 8:38-39.**

NOTE: 'In the courts above, Christ is pleading for His church, pleading for those for whom He has paid the redemption price of His blood. Centuries, ages, can never lessen the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice. Neither life nor death, height nor depth, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; not because we hold Him so firmly, but because He holds us so fast. If our salvation depended on our own efforts, we could not be saved; but it depends on the One who is behind all the promises. Our grasp on Him may seem feeble, but His love is that of an elder brother; so long as we maintain our union with Him, no one can pluck us out of His hand.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 153.

### **'We ought also to love one another'**

#### **11. In view of God's amazing love for us, what should be our attitude to our fellow men? 1 John 4:11.**

NOTE: "A new commandment I give unto you," Christ said, "That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34. What a wonderful statement; but, oh, how poorly practised! In the church of God today brotherly love is sadly lacking. Many who profess to love the Saviour do not love one another. Unbelievers are watching to see if the faith of professed Christians is exerting a sanctifying influence upon their lives; and they are quick to discern the defects in character, the inconsistencies in action. Let Christians not make it possible for the enemy to point to them and say, Behold how these people, standing under the banner of Christ, hate one another. Christians are all members of one family, all children of the same heavenly Father, with the same blessed hope of immortality. Very close and tender should be the tie that binds them together.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 550.

#### **12. What should be the extent of our love to one another? 1 John 5:1-2.**

NOTE: 'Dare you withhold from your brethren the forgiveness and affection of which you do not think them worthy? Would you have God deal thus with you? Deal with your brethren as you wish God to deal with you. If we expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard, we must offer them in a forgiving spirit. We must forgive others in the same manner, and to the same extent, that we ourselves hope to be forgiven. The hard-heartedness that professed Christians manifest toward one another is not Christlike, but savours of the satanic. We must every one of us open our hearts wide to the love of Jesus, and encourage pity and affection for our brethren.' *Bible Training School*, August 1, 1912.

'This love "never faileth." It can never lose its value; it is a heavenly attribute. As a precious treasure, it will be carried by its possessor through the portals of the city of God.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 319.

## **Lesson 9: May 22-28**

### **'Our knowledge is incomplete'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.' 1 Corinthians 13:9.

STUDY HELP: *Education*, page 303.

LESSON AIM: To help us to realise that our knowledge can only ever be partial and consequently to learn to be humble.

### **Introduction**

'Many feel that a responsibility rests upon them to explain every seeming difficulty in the Bible in order to meet the cavils of sceptics and infidels. But in trying to explain that which they but imperfectly understand, they are in danger of confusing the

minds of others in reference to points that are clear and easy to be understood. This is not our work. Nor should we lament that these difficulties exist, but accept them as permitted by the wisdom of God. It is our duty to receive His word, which is plain on every point essential to the salvation of the soul, and practise its principles in our life, teaching them to others both by precept and example. Thus it will be evident to the world that we have a connection with God and implicit confidence in His word. A life of godliness, a daily example of integrity, meekness, and unselfish love, will be a living exemplification of the teaching of God's word, and it will be an argument in favour of the Bible which few will be able to resist. This will prove the most effectual check to the prevailing tendency to scepticism and infidelity.' *Testimonies, volume 5*, page 705.

### **'We know in part'**

#### **1. What does Paul remind us about our knowledge in this life? 1 Corinthians 13:9.**

NOTE: 'Many, especially those who are young in the Christian life, are at times troubled with the suggestions of scepticism. There are in the Bible many things which they cannot explain, or even understand, and Satan employs these to shake their faith in the Scriptures as a revelation from God. They ask, "How shall I know the right way? If the Bible is indeed the word of God, how can I be freed from these doubts and perplexities?"' *Steps to Christ*, page 105.

'Some things in the Bible may appear to us mysterious, because they are beyond our finite comprehension. But as our Saviour leads us by the living waters, He will make clear to our minds that which was not before clearly understood.' *My Life Today*, page 342.

#### **2. What is the evidence that a person truly possesses knowledge and wisdom? James 3:13.**

NOTE: 'Let not anyone place himself forward as having great wisdom and ability; for if he has these talents, he will not be the one to make them the most prominent. It is those who have the most distrust of self, whom God will use as His willing instruments. These will show by their conversation that they have been communing with God, and receiving the lessons taught by Christ. They have exalted views of Jesus, and words of wisdom flow forth from their souls in words that will stir other hearts. Their works are made manifest, not by pompous words of self-praise, but in meekness of wisdom. They have no words to the demerit of others and only a very humble opinion of themselves, because they have had a clear view of Jesus, His holy character, His self-denial, His self-sacrifice, and His holy mission. It is when men lose sight of Jesus, His purity, His spotless perfection, that they lift up themselves, and are self-sufficient, self-important, puffed up, self-inflated; then if others do not give them all that deference and respect that they think they should have, they are uneasy, dissatisfied, and think themselves ill used. They reveal their true character in an unmistakable manner, showing their defects in fault-finding and complaining, ready to combat anything that does not meet their mind, even when assembled to worship God. If they had wisdom, they could see the result of their own unchristlike course; but blinded with self-importance, they do not discern their weakness, and manifest to all that they cannot be trusted.' *The Missionary Worker*, May 7, 1902.

### **'Words without knowledge'**

#### **3. How did God rebuke Job for daring to speak of things of which he knew nothing? Job 38:2**

NOTE: 'History, as commonly studied, is concerned with man's achievements, his victories in battle, his success in attaining power and greatness. God's agency in the affairs of men is lost sight of. Few study the working out of His purpose in the rise and fall of nations. And to a large degree theology, as studied and taught, is but a record of human speculation, serving only to darken "counsel by words without knowledge." Job 38:2. Too often the motive in accumulating these many books is not so much a desire to obtain food for mind and soul, as it is an ambition to become acquainted with philosophers and theologians, a desire to present Christianity to the people in learned terms and propositions. Not all the books written can serve the purpose of a holy life. "Learn of Me," said the Great Teacher, "take My yoke upon you, learn My meekness and lowliness." Your intellectual pride will not aid you in communicating with souls that are perishing for want of the bread of life. In your study of these books you are allowing them to take the place of the practical lessons you should be learning from Christ. With the results of this study the people are not fed. Very little of the research which is so wearying to the mind furnishes that which will help one to be a successful labourer for souls.' *Counsels to Parents, Teachers & Students*, page 380.

#### **4. What searching question did God put to Job, to point out the limitations of his knowledge? Job 38:4.**

NOTE: 'When consideration is given to man's opportunities for research; how brief his life; how limited his sphere of action; how restricted his vision; how frequent and how great the errors in his conclusions, especially as concerns the events thought to antedate Bible history; how often the supposed deductions of science are revised or cast aside; with what readiness the assumed period of the earth's development is from time to time increased or diminished by millions of years; and how the theories advanced by different scientists conflict with one another, considering all this, shall we, for the privilege of tracing our descent from germs and molluscs and apes, consent to cast away that statement of Holy Writ, so grand in its simplicity, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him"? Genesis 1:27. Shall we reject that genealogical record, prouder than any treasured in the courts of kings, "which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God"? Luke 3:38.' *Education*, page 130.

'Science is ever discovering new wonders; but she brings from her research nothing that, rightly understood, conflicts with divine revelation. The book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. They make us acquainted with God by teaching us something of the laws through which He works. Inferences erroneously drawn from facts observed in nature have, however, led to supposed conflict between science and revelation; and in the effort to restore harmony, interpretations of Scripture have been adopted that undermine and destroy the force of the word of God. Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation. Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the

earth from chaos; and in order to accommodate the Bible to this supposed revelation of science, the days of creation are assumed to have been vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years. Such a conclusion is wholly uncalled for. The Bible record is in harmony with itself and with the teaching of nature.' *Education*, pages 128-129.

### **'Open Thou mine eyes'**

#### **5. What prayer will come from those who recognise the limitations of their knowledge? Psalm 119:18.**

NOTE: 'The proclamation of the gospel is the only means in which God can employ human beings as His instrumentalities for the salvation of souls. As men, women, and children proclaim the gospel, the Lord will open the eyes of the blind to see His statutes, and will write upon the hearts of the truly penitent His law. The animating Spirit of God, working through human agencies, leads the believers to be of one mind, one soul, unitedly loving God and keeping His commandments, preparing here below for translation.' *Review & Herald*, October 13, 1904.

'You must learn to see with your brain as well as your eyes. You must educate your judgment so that it shall not be feeble and inefficient. You must pray for guidance, and commit your way unto the Lord. You must close your heart against all foolishness and sin, and open it to every heavenly influence. You must make the most of your time and opportunities, in order to develop a symmetrical character.' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 283.

#### **6. What example are we given of such a prayer being answered? 2 Kings 6:17. Read from verse 8 to see the context.**

NOTE: 'Today, as in the past, all heaven is watching to see the church develop in the true science of salvation. The Lord Jesus is among men. His angels walk among us unrecognised and unacknowledged. We are saved from many snares and unseen dangers that through the machinations and hostility of our foe are placed in our path to destroy us. O that our eyes might be open to discern the watchful solicitude and tender care of the messengers of light! If those who politely acknowledge the favours which they receive from earthly friends would realise how much they owe to God, their hearts would respond in grateful thanks for precious favours that are now unnoticed.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 101.

### **'We prophesy in part'**

#### **7. What does Paul explain about what prophecy reveals? 1 Corinthians 13:9, last part.**

NOTE: Even though, as Peter explains (2 Peter 1:19), prophecy is the light God has given to illuminate the darkness of this world, it can only reveal a partial picture of God's purpose. For this reason, we should be cautious in our interpretation of those prophecies which are, as yet, unfulfilled. The lesson of history is that, all too often, those who were too confident as to how prophecy would be fulfilled were proved wrong by events. The greatest, and most tragic, instance of this is to be seen in the scribes and Pharisees of Christ's day who failed to recognise prophecies being fulfilled in their sight because of their preconceptions about how those prophecies would be fulfilled. Thus we need to recognise and acknowledge that our knowledge and understanding of prophecy is only partial.

#### **8. How does Paul describe the picture given by prophecies as yet unfulfilled? 1 Corinthians 13:12, first part.**

NOTE: A glass is the word used in the time of the King James Bible for a mirror, i.e. a looking-glass. One recent paraphrase of the Scriptures renders this verse as: 'We are like men looking at puzzling reflections in a mirror.' Especially when we recall the limitations of mirrors in Paul's day, we will understand the force of this expression.

'From the beginning of my labour with pen and voice, my greatest fear has been that I should make altogether too feeble efforts in seeking to set forth Christ crucified among you. I have never feared that I should place the subject before you in too strong a light. Every line my pen has traced has been unsatisfactory because of the feebleness of my language to unfold the wonderful theme of redemption. My expressions have fallen far below the magnitude of the subject. The pen of man, the tongue of an angel, can never adequately describe the love of God as manifested in Christ. We see through a glass darkly; we have but dim and imperfect glimpses of Him who is the expression of His Father's glory.' *Signs of the Times*, August 18, 1890. 'Such are some of the things for which we look. The precise mode, order, or succession of their occurrence, I do not undertake to define. We still see but as in a glass, darkly, the majestic outlines of these gigantic facts which constitute the hope of the church of God. But we look for these things, and, as we contemplate their coming, and their glory, we are ready to cry out, "Oh long-expected day, begin; dawn on this world of woe and sin! With joy we tread the sacred road that leads to rest, to rest with God."' Uriah Smith, *Review & Herald*, July 18, 1865.

### **'When it is come to pass, ye may believe'**

#### **9. What did Peter explain about prophecy? 2 Peter 1:19.**

NOTE: 'The apostle was well qualified to speak of the purposes of God concerning the human race; for during the earthly ministry of Christ he had seen and heard much that pertained to the kingdom of God. "We have not followed cunningly devised fables," he reminded the believers, "when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount." Yet convincing as was this evidence of the certainty of the believers' hope, there was another still more convincing in the witness of prophecy, through which the faith of all must be confirmed and securely anchored. "We have also," Peter declared, "a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." *Reflecting Christ*, page 221.

#### **10. How did Jesus explain the purpose of prophecy? John 13:19.**

NOTE: 'Christ warned His disciples in regard to what they would meet in their work as evangelists. He knew what their sufferings would be, what trials and hardships they would be called upon to bear. He would not hide from them the knowledge of what they would have to encounter, lest trouble, coming unexpectedly, should shake their faith. "I have told you before it come to pass," He said, "that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." John 14:29. Their faith was to be strengthened, rather than weakened, by the coming of trial. They would say to one another: "He told us that this would come, and what we must do to meet it.'" *Testimonies, volume 9, page 235.*

Some regard prophecy as tomorrow's newspaper given us today, but we should guard against this approach, which had led some to employ the news media as the tool for interpreting Bible prophecy. Rather than forming too definite opinions about how prophecy will be fulfilled, we should carefully and prayerfully study the Scriptures, seeking Divine enlightenment, that we may not repeat the errors of those who in past ages failed to see the fulfilment of prophecy because they had been blinded by their over-confidence in their own opinions.

### **'We walk by faith, not by sight'**

#### **11. What important principle about the Christian life did Paul emphasise? 2 Corinthians 5:7.**

NOTE: 'We need to trust in Jesus daily, hourly. He has promised that as our day is, our strength shall be. By His grace we may bear all the burdens of the present and perform its duties. But many are weighed down by the anticipation of future troubles. They are constantly seeking to bring tomorrow's burdens into today. Thus a large share of all their trials are imaginary. For these, Jesus has made no provision. He promises grace only for the day. He bids us not to burden ourselves with the cares and troubles of tomorrow; for "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The habit of brooding over anticipated evils is unwise and unchristian. In thus doing we fail to enjoy the blessings and to improve the opportunities of the present. The Lord requires us to perform the duties of today and to endure its trials. We are today to watch that we offend not in word or deed. We must today praise and honour God. By the exercise of living faith today we are to conquer the enemy. We must today seek God and be determined that we will not rest satisfied without His presence. We should watch and work and pray as though this were the last day that would be granted us. How intensely earnest, then, would be our life. How closely would we follow Jesus in all our words and deeds.' *Testimonies, volume 5, page 200.*

#### **12. Especially as we think of what prophecy reveals about the closing events of this earth's history, what words of Christ should be foremost in our minds? Matthew 6:33-34.**

NOTE: 'We shall see Him as He is, and we shall be made like Him. Rest, rest in the kingdom of God. Go on a little longer; suffer a few days longer, and there is an eternity of happiness and bliss; that is what you want. The crown of righteousness is for the overcomer. Every one of you, think of this. In the morning think of it, now today I must look at that crown. I must run for it. I must run the race for it. And that crown is mine if I overcome. But if I do not overcome, and am overcome of Satan, I lose that crown; another gets it. Shall we not try to win the crown of everlasting life? If we lose heaven, we lose everything. If we gain heaven, we gain everything. I see matchless charms in Jesus. I do not want any greater reward than He presents to us. I do not want any larger reward than that. I want to live for God, not for the world. I want the eye single to His glory. Let us every one, in the morning, and at noon, and at night, lay ourselves before God as His property, not our own, and fight the good fight of faith. Today you are not to have the faith of tomorrow. You have only faith for today; tomorrow you will find faith when that comes; so don't worry about tomorrow. It is today, Am I the Lord's? Today have I the witness of His Spirit? Today does my name come upon the lips of the great Advocate of heaven? Today am I walking in harmony with Jesus Christ and heavenly angels?' *Sermons & Talks, volume 1, page 190.*

## **Lesson 10: May 29-June 4**

### **'When that which is perfect is come'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.' 1 Corinthians 13:10.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 674-678.

LESSON AIM: To contemplate what is meant by 'when that which is perfect is come.'

### **Introduction**

'By faith we may look to the hereafter and grasp the pledge of God for a growth of intellect, the human faculties uniting with the divine, and every power of the soul being brought into direct contact with the Source of light. We may rejoice that all which has perplexed us in the providences of God will then be made plain, things hard to be understood will then find an explanation; and where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken purposes, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Corinthians 13:12.' *Steps to Christ*, page 112.

### **'Taught of the Lord'**

**1. When will our partial knowledge come to an end? 1 Corinthians 13:10.**

NOTE: 'Men of the greatest intellect cannot understand the mysteries of Jehovah as revealed in nature. Divine inspiration asks many questions which the most profound scholar cannot answer. These questions were not asked that we might answer them, but to call our attention to the deep mysteries of God and to teach us that our wisdom is limited; that in the surroundings of our daily life there are many things beyond the comprehension of finite minds; that the judgment and purposes of God are past finding out. His wisdom is unsearchable. The education begun here will not be completed in this life; it will be going forward throughout eternity, ever progressing, never completed. Day by day the wonderful works of God, the evidences of His miraculous power in creating and sustaining the universe, will open before the mind in new beauty. In the light that shines from the throne, mysteries will disappear, and the soul will be filled with astonishment at the simplicity of the things that were never before comprehended.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 325.

**2. How did David express his realisation that his knowledge was but partial? Psalm 139:6.**

NOTE: 'The pure in heart shall see God. His presence can be revealed; comprehended it cannot be. This knowledge is too wonderful for us. There are feelings that cannot be communicated. Some things one cannot say. Words are tame, and our thoughts come far short of taking all in; for there is an infinity beyond our thoughts.' *Manuscript Releases*, volume 6, page 381.

**'All things new'**

**3. How does Isaiah describe the time when our knowledge will no longer be partial? Isaiah 54:13.**

NOTE: 'There, when the veil that darkens our vision shall be removed, and our eyes shall behold that world of beauty of which we now catch glimpses through the microscope; when we look on the glories of the heavens, now scanned afar through the telescope; when, the blight of sin removed, the whole earth shall appear in "the beauty of the Lord our God" (Psalm 90:17), what a field will be open to our study! There the student of science may read the records of creation and discern no reminders of the law of evil. He may listen to the music of nature's voices, and detect no note of wailing or undertone of sorrow. In all created things he may trace one handwriting, in the vast universe behold "God's name writ large," and not in earth or sea or sky one sign of ill remaining.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 365.

**4. Of what are we assured when the reign of sin is finally ended? Revelation 21:5.**

NOTE: 'In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honoured above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died, here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, "and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift, Immanuel, "God with us." *Desire of Ages*, page 26.

**'Make you a new heart and a new spirit'**

**5. What is required of us if we are to be among those who see the Lord make all things new? 2 Corinthians 5:17.**

NOTE: 'The old nature, born of blood and the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The old ways, the hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up; for grace is not inherited. The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ. When men who claim to be Christians retain all their natural defects of character and disposition, in what does their position differ from that of the worldling? They do not appreciate the truth as a sanctifier, a refiner. They have not been born again. A genuine conversion changes hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong. The religion of God is a firm fabric, composed of innumerable threads, and woven together with tact and skill. Only the wisdom which comes from God can make this fabric complete. There are a great many kinds of cloth which at first have a fine appearance, but they cannot endure the test. They wash out. The colours are not fast. Under the heat of summer they fade away and are lost. The cloth cannot endure rough handling. So it is with the religion of many. When the warp and woof of character will not stand the test of trial, the material of which it is composed is worthless. The efforts made to patch the old with a new piece do not better the condition of things; for the old, flimsy material breaks away from the new, leaving the rent much larger than before. Patching will not do. The only way is to discard the old garment altogether, and procure one entirely new. Christ's plan is the only safe one. He declares, "Behold, I make all things new." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The patchwork religion is not of the least value with God. He requires the whole heart.' *Maranatha*, page 237.

**6. How did Isaiah describe the time when God makes all things new? Isaiah 43:18-21.**

NOTE: 'There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known. The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together "the whole family in heaven and earth" (Ephesians 3:15), these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed.' *Great Controversy*, page 677.

**7. How extensive will be our knowledge at that time? Isaiah 11:9, Habakkuk 2:14.**

NOTE: 'There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realised; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.' *Great Controversy*, page 677.

### **'That which is in part shall be done away'**

#### **8. When that which is perfect is come, what will no longer be required? 1 Corinthians 13:10, last part.**

NOTE: 'Since God is the source of all true knowledge, it is, as we have seen, the first object of education to direct our minds to His own revelation of Himself. Adam and Eve received knowledge through direct communion with God; and they learned of Him through His works. All created things, in their original perfection, were an expression of the thought of God. To Adam and Eve nature was teeming with divine wisdom. But by transgression man was cut off from learning of God through direct communion and, to a great degree, through His works. The earth, marred and defiled by sin, reflects but dimly the Creator's glory. It is true that His object lessons are not obliterated. Upon every page of the great volume of His created works may still be traced His handwriting. Nature still speaks of her Creator. Yet these revelations are partial and imperfect. And in our fallen state, with weakened powers and restricted vision, we are incapable of interpreting aright. We need the fuller revelation of Himself that God has given in His written word.' *Education*, page 16.

#### **9. How did Jesus recognise the inability of His disciples to grasp anything more than partial knowledge? John 16:12.**

NOTE: 'When, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, they understood more fully the truths that Christ had spoken in parables. Much of the teaching that had been a mystery to them was made clear. But not even then did the disciples receive the complete fulfilment of Christ's promise. They received all the knowledge of God that they could bear, but the complete fulfilment of the promise that Christ would show them plainly of the Father was yet to come. Thus it is today. Our knowledge of God is partial and imperfect. When the conflict is ended, and the Man Christ Jesus acknowledges before the Father His faithful workers, who in a world of sin have borne true witness for Him, they will understand clearly what now are mysteries to them.' *Ministry of Healing*, page 420.

### **'The former will not be remembered'**

#### **10. What will no longer be part of our knowledge when that which is perfect is come? Isaiah 65:17.**

NOTE: 'Every trace of the curse is swept away. No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin. One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory: "He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power." Habakkuk 3:4, margin. That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God, there is the Saviour's glory, there "the hiding of His power." "Mighty to save," through the sacrifice of redemption, He was therefore strong to execute justice upon them that despised God's mercy. And the tokens of His humiliation are His highest honour; through the eternal ages the wounds of Calvary will show forth His praise and declare His power.' *Great Controversy*, page 674.

#### **11. How will the removal of these things from our memories affect the people of God? Revelation 21:4, first part, Isaiah 25:8.**

NOTE: 'All that was lost by the first Adam will be restored by the second. The prophet says, "O Tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to thee shall it come, even the first dominion." And Paul points forward to the "redemption of the purchased possession." God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God, and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal home of the redeemed.' *Review & Herald*, October 22, 1908.

### **'No more'**

#### **12. What things will no longer have a place when that which is perfect is come? Revelation 21:4.**

NOTE: 'In the home of the redeemed there will be no tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Isaiah 33:24. One rich tide of happiness will flow and deepen as eternity rolls on. Let us consider most earnestly the blessed hereafter. Let our faith pierce through every cloud of darkness and behold Him who died for the sins of the world. He has opened the gates of Paradise to all who receive and believe on Him. Let the afflictions which pain us so grievously become instructive lessons, teaching us to press forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ. Let us be encouraged by the thought that the Lord is soon to come. Let this hope gladden our hearts.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 362.

#### **13. How was Isaiah shown the time when these things would be no more? Isaiah 35:5-6, 10.**

NOTE: 'I ask you to read the whole of this thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, with the fifty-sixth chapter. When you are disappointed because of the spiritual lack you see in the churches and in individuals, read these promising words of inspiration. They are given for the encouragement of our churches, and are to be claimed in times of emergency. When you meet with those who are not willing to be helped and strengthened, do not allow yourselves to become discouraged; when you find halt-

ing and disaffection among the believers, let your faith in God be strong. I have been shown that evil angels in the form of believers will work in our ranks to bring in a strong spirit of unbelief. Let not even this discourage you; but bring a true heart to the help of the Lord against the powers of satanic agencies.' *Review & Herald*, May 6, 1909.

#### **14. What assurance do we have that these things will indeed be gone forever? Nahum 1:9.**

NOTE: 'The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonour to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honour before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the word of God: "Affliction shall not rise up the second time." Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honoured as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom.' *Great Controversy*, page 504.

## **Lesson 11: June 5-11** **'I put away childish things'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.' 1 Corinthians 13:11.

STUDY HELP: *Education*, page 80.

LESSON AIM: To study spiritual growth and its importance.

### **Introduction**

'Unless men and women have learned of Christ, His meekness and lowliness, they will reveal the impulsive, unreasonable spirit so often revealed by children. The strong, undisciplined will seek to rule. Such ones need to study the words of Paul: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."' *The Adventist Home*, page 118.

### **'As a child'**

#### **1. How did Paul describe his experience as a child? 1 Corinthians 13:11, first part.**

NOTE: 'A little girl once asked me, "Are you going to speak this afternoon?" "No, not this afternoon," I replied. "I am very sorry," she said. "I thought you were going to speak, and I asked several of my companions to come. Will you please ask the minister to speak easy words that we can understand? Will you please tell him that we do not understand large words, like 'justification' and 'sanctification'? We do not know what these words mean." The little girl's complaint contains a lesson worthy of consideration by teachers and ministers. Are there not many who would do well to heed the request, "Speak easy words, that we may know what you mean"? Make your explanations clear, for I know that there are many who do not understand many of the things said to them. Let the Holy Spirit mould and fashion your speech, cleansing it from all dross. Speak as little children, remembering that there are many well advanced in years who are but little children in understanding.' *Counsels to Parents, Teachers & Students*, page 254.

#### **2. What are we shown to warn us not to underestimate the capacity of children to learn? 2 Timothy 3:15.**

NOTE: 'From a child, Timothy knew the Scriptures; and this knowledge was a safeguard to him against evil influences surrounding him, and the temptation to choose pleasure and selfish gratification before duty. Such a safeguard all our children need; and it should be a part of the work of parents and of Christ's ambassadors to see that the children are properly instructed in the word of God.' *Testimonies for the Church, volume 4*, page 398.

### **'Except ye be converted, and become as little children'**

#### **3. What lesson did Jesus teach from little children? Matthew 18:1-2.**

NOTE: 'The great God whose glory shines from the heavens, and whose divine hand upholds millions of worlds, is our Father. We have only to love Him, trust in Him, as little children in faith and confidence, and He will accept us as His sons and daughters, and we shall be heirs to all the inexpressible glory of the eternal world.' *My Life Today*, page 86.

'Parents should themselves be converted and know what it is to be in submission to God's will, as little children, bringing into captivity their thoughts to the will of Jesus Christ, before they can rightly represent the government that God designed should exist in the family.' *The Adventist Home*, page 306.

#### **4. What particular aspect of childhood did Christ particularly draw attention to? Matthew 18:3.**

NOTE: 'The men who humble themselves even as a little child are the men who will be taught by God. The Lord is not dependent on any man's talents; for He is the Source of all perfect gifts. The very humblest man, if he loves and fears God, is the possessor of heavenly gifts. The Lord can use such a man, because he does not strive to work himself according to his own

standard. He works with fear and trembling lest he will spoil the pattern. His life is an expression of the life of Christ. We must constantly cherish meekness and humility, if we would possess the spirit of Christ.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 138.

### **'Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age'**

#### **5. What warning did Paul give about those who fail to grow spiritually? Hebrews 5:12-13.**

NOTE: 'Paul could not speak to the Jewish converts as plainly as he desired regarding the mystery of godliness. Because of their spiritual weakness, their lack of perception, he could not utter the truth, which, could they have heard aright, with intelligent comprehension, would have been to them a savour of life unto life. The fault was not with their instructors, but with themselves. They were dull of understanding. Abundant advantages had been given them. They could have increased in understanding regarding Christ, His work, His power to save to the uttermost all who come to Him. But they had not pressed onward and upward, improving their opportunity to learn more and still more of the Saviour. Because they had not received in faith the truths imparted to them, their memory was weak. They could not retain in their minds the truths essential to success in character-building. The apostle calls their attention to their fault in this respect, which had become their spiritual infirmity. Their misconceptions gave them an indistinct view of Christ's power to make His people a praise in the earth.' *Review & Herald*, June 16, 1903.

#### **6. How does Paul describe this increasing understanding of spiritual things? Hebrews 5:14.**

NOTE: 'As a means of intellectual training, the Bible is more effective than any other book, or all other books combined. The greatness of its themes, the dignified simplicity of its utterances, the beauty of its imagery, quicken and uplift the thoughts as nothing else can. No other study can impart such mental power as does the effort to grasp the stupendous truths of revelation. The mind thus brought in contact with the thoughts of the Infinite cannot but expand and strengthen. And even greater is the power of the Bible in the development of the spiritual nature. Man, created for fellowship with God, can only in such fellowship find his real life and development. Created to find in God his highest joy, he can find in nothing else that which can quiet the cravings of the heart, can satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. He who with sincere and teachable spirit studies God's word, seeking to comprehend its truths, will be brought in touch with its Author; and, except by his own choice, there is no limit to the possibilities of his development. Let the more important passages of Scripture connected with the lesson be committed to memory, not as a task, but as a privilege. Though at first the memory be defective, it will gain strength by exercise, so that after a time you will delight thus to treasure up the words of truth. And the habit will prove a most valuable aid to spiritual growth.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 207.

### **'When I became a man'**

#### **7. What takes place when a person becomes mature? 1 Corinthians 13:11, last part.**

NOTE: 'We are not always to remain children in our knowledge and experience in spiritual things. We are not always to express ourselves in the language of one who has just received Christ; but our prayers and exhortations are to grow in intelligence as we advance in experience in the truth. The language of a child of six in a child of ten years of age would not be pleasing to us, and how painful would it be to hear expressions of childish intelligence in one who had arrived at years of maturity. When a person becomes of age, we expect from him a corresponding intelligence, according to his years and opportunities. But if we expect this manifestation of growing intelligence in the child, as he advances in years, should we not also expect to see the Christian grow in grace and experience?' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 330.

#### **8. What kinds of childish things must be put away from the life of the maturing Christian? 1 Peter 2:1-2. Consider Galatians 5:19-21.**

NOTE: 'The fact is, many have entered the ministry with a babyish, childish, pettish, and self-willed spirit, just as their mothers allowed them to grow up. This is why I am speaking so often to fathers and mothers about realising the great responsibility that rests upon them. Every particle of this childishness must be left behind. You have grown to the full stature of men, therefore the childish things you entertained, the disagreeable traits of character which you know are not after Christ's order, your impetuous words, must be put away.' *General Conference Bulletin*, April 16, 1901.

### **'The beauty of the Lord our God'**

#### **9. What is to replace the childish things that must be put away? Galatians 5:22-23.**

NOTE: 'As you receive the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of unselfish love and labour for others, you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Galatians 5:22, 23. This fruit can never perish, but will produce after its kind a harvest unto eternal life.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 67-68.

#### **10. What should be the prayer of the maturing Christian? Psalm 90:17.**

NOTE: 'Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God's purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself. The soul, corrupted and deformed, is to be purified, transformed, that it may be clothed in "the beauty of the Lord our God," "conformed to the image of His Son."'*Reflecting Christ*, page 377.

## ‘Unto every one of us is given grace’

### 11. What is the means whereby Christians may grow in grace? Ephesians 4:7.

NOTE: ‘God imparts His blessing to us that we may give to others. And as long as we yield ourselves as the channels through which His love can flow, He will keep the channels supplied. When you ask God for your daily bread, He looks right into your heart to see if you will impart the same to others, more needy than yourself. When you pray, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” He watches to see if you will manifest compassion to those with whom you associate. This is the evidence of our connection with God, that we are merciful even as our Father who is in heaven is merciful. If we are His, we shall do with a cheerful heart just what He tells us to do, however inconvenient, however contrary it may be to our own feelings. It is in doing the works of Christ, ministering as He did to the suffering and afflicted, that we are to develop Christian character. It is for our good that God has called us to practise self-denial for Christ’s sake, to bear the cross, to labour and sacrifice in seeking to save that which is lost. This is the Lord’s process of refining, purging away the baser material, that the precious traits of character which were in Christ Jesus, may appear in the believer. All dross must be cleansed from the soul, through the sanctification of the truth. Through the grace of Christ our efforts to bless others are not only the means of our growth in grace, but they will enhance our future, eternal happiness. To those who have been co-workers with Christ it will be said, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” *Counsels on Stewardship*, pages 164-165.

‘There can be no growth or fruitfulness in the life that is centred in self. If you have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, you are to forget yourself, and try to help others. Talk of the love of Christ, tell of His goodness. Do every duty that presents itself. Carry the burden of souls upon your heart, and by every means in your power seek to save the lost. As you receive the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others, you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 67.

### 12. What is the measure of Christian maturity? Ephesians 4:12-15.

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

## Lesson 12: June 12-18 ‘Then shall I know’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.’ 1 Corinthians 13:12.

STUDY HELP: *My Life Today*, page 365.

LESSON AIM: To see the contrast between our present imperfect knowledge and the glorious prospect before us.

### Introduction

‘At His second coming the Lord Jesus will fulfil all the expectations and desires of His people. Expectation and desire are . . . the component parts of hope. The former has reference to what God has said, and the latter to the state of the heart toward it. A person may expect what he does not desire, and he may often desire what he has no good ground for expecting. Now what does the saint expect and desire? Perfect knowledge; he hopes soon to know as he is known, and no longer to see through a glass darkly. When Christ comes there will be a “revelation of God.” It will be “a morning without clouds,” a day of resplendent glory. Then the understanding will be clear, the memory retentive; the eye will then be satisfied with seeing, and the ear with hearing. Increase of knowledge will not increase sorrow then, but every new discovery in heavenly science will bring new tides of joy unto the soul.’ Uriah Smith, *Review & Herald*, August 30, 1864.

### ‘Through a glass darkly’

#### 1. How does Paul describe the limitations of our understanding in this world? 1 Corinthians 12:12, first part.

NOTE: ‘Often God’s soldiers will find themselves brought into difficult places, they know not why. But are they to relax their hold because difficulties arise? Is their faith to diminish because they cannot see their way through the darkness? God forbid. They are to cherish an abiding sense of God’s power to uphold them in their work. They can not perish, neither can they lose their way, if they will follow His guidance, and strive to uphold His law.’ *Signs of the Times*, October 8, 1896.

‘Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33. Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. Our only questions will be, What is God’s command? and what [is] His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 121.

**2. What attitude will help us in this time of limited understanding? Philippians 3:12-13.**

NOTE: 'Paul never doubted the ability of God or His willingness to give him the grace he needed to live the life of a Christian. He does not live under a cloud of doubt, groping his way in the mist and darkness of uncertainty, complaining of hardship and trials. A voice of gladness, strong with hope and courage, sounds all along the line down to our time. Paul had a healthful religious experience. The love of Christ was his grand theme, and the constraining power that governed him. When in the most discouraging circumstances, which would have had a depressing influence upon half-way Christians, he is firm of heart, full of courage and hope and cheer. The same hope and cheerfulness is seen when he is upon the deck of the ship, the tempest beating about him, the ship going to pieces. He gives orders to the commander of the ship and preserves the lives of all on board. Although a prisoner, he is really the master of the ship, the freest and happiest man on board.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 352.

**'Take heed that no man deceive you'**

**3. What warnings are we given of the powers of evil to perplex and deceive God's people? Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 23-25.**

NOTE: 'The time is upon us when the miracle-working power of the arch deceiver will be more decidedly revealed. And his deceptions will increase in their delusive attraction, so that they will perplex, and if possible, deceive, the very elect. The prince of darkness with his evil angels is working upon the Christian world, inducing those who profess the name of Christ to stand under the banner of darkness, to make war with those who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus. An apostate church will unite with the powers of earth and hell to place upon the forehead or in the hand, the mark of the beast, and prevail upon the children of God to worship the beast and his image. They will seek to compel them to renounce their allegiance to God's law, and yield homage to the papacy. Then will come the times which will try men's souls; for the confederacy of apostasy will demand that the loyal subjects of God shall renounce the law of Jehovah, and repudiate the truth of His word.' *Review & Herald*, November 8, 1892.

**4. To what extent may these deceptions go? 2 Corinthians 11:14-15.**

NOTE: 'As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: "Christ has come! Christ has come!" The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion.' *Great Controversy*, page 624.

**5. What are we warned against in these times of perplexity and deception? 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11.**

NOTE: 'Then will the gold be separated from the dross, and it will be made apparent who are the godly, who are loyal and true, and who are the disloyal, the dross and the tinsel. What clouds of chaff will then be borne away by the fan of God! Where now our eyes can discover only rich floors of wheat, will be chaff blown away with the fan of God. Every one who is not centred in Christ will fail to stand the test and ordeal of that day. While those who are clothed with Christ's righteousness will stand firm to truth and duty, those who have trusted in their own righteousness will be ranged under the black banner of the prince of darkness. Then it will be seen whether the choice is for Christ or Belial. Those who have been self-distrustful, who have been so circumstanced that they have not dared to face stigma and reproach, will at last openly declare themselves for Christ and His law; while many who have appeared to be flourishing trees, but who have borne no fruit, will go with the multitude to do evil, and will receive the mark of apostasy in the forehead or in the hand.' *Review & Herald*, November 8, 1892.

**'Now I know in part'**

**6. What must we always bear in mind in our conversation with others? 1 Corinthians 13:12, middle part.**

NOTE: 'Here, from the vantage ground of God's word, the student is afforded a view of the vast field of history and may gain some knowledge of the principles that govern the course of human events. But his vision is still clouded, and his knowledge incomplete. Not until he stands in the light of eternity will he see all things clearly.' *Education*, page 304.

**7. How may our failure to recognise the limitations of our knowledge be a hindrance to ourselves and others? Matthew 15:14.**

NOTE: 'There are men of the world who will volunteer to be our guides; they regard their course as wise, but they are of the class who, professing to be wise, need to become fools in order to become wise in God's wisdom. They lead away from the path where the voice of Jesus is heard, saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it." They are false teachers, blind leaders of the blind. They divert the attention from the very work to be done in this period of the world's history. But those who follow the Leader step by step, will hear and recognise the voice of the True Shepherd.' *Review & Herald*, January 31, 1893.  
'Many will not search the Scriptures for themselves. They remain in willing ignorance of the origin and perpetuity of the law of the Ten Commandments. They trust to the researches of others to settle this matter for them. Blind leaders say, "You need

not keep the law of God, for it is not binding. It is a yoke of bondage.” And the willingly ignorant are blind, led by the blind. Neither are guiltless. God has provided for them in His law a mirror, that they may see their true character. Does it improve their condition to break this faithful looking-glass, because it reveals to them their defects? The work they should engage in is to put away sin, and every impurity, and work righteousness. Their remaining in willing ignorance of the claims of the law of God will not shield them from the penalty to be inflicted in consequence of its violation.’ *Review & Herald*, March 8, 1870.

### ‘Face to face’

#### **8. What glorious prospect awaits those who exercise true Christian love? 1 Corinthians 13:12, middle part, Revelation 22:4.**

NOTE: “Now we see through a glass, darkly.” 1 Corinthians 13:12. We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence, and behold the glory of His countenance.” *The Faith I Live By*, page 363.

‘In this lower school of earth we are to learn the lessons that will prepare us to enter the higher school, where our education will continue under the personal instruction of Christ. Then He will open to us the meaning of His word. Shall we not, in the few days of probation remaining to us, act like men and women who are seeking for life in the kingdom of God, even an eternity of bliss? We cannot afford to miss the privilege of seeing Christ face to face and of hearing from His lips the story of redemption.’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 33.

#### **9. What kind of people will be able to behold the Lord face to face? 1 John 3:2-3.**

NOTE: ‘Perfection of character is based upon that which Christ is to us. If we have constant dependence on the merits of our Saviour, and walk in His footsteps, we shall be like Him, pure and undefiled. Our Saviour does not require impossibilities of any soul. He expects nothing of His disciples that He is not willing to give them grace and strength to perform. He would not call upon them to be perfect if He had not at His command every perfection of grace to bestow on the ones upon whom He would confer so high and holy a privilege. Our work is to strive to attain in our sphere of action the perfection that Christ in His life on the earth attained in every phase of character. He is our example. In all things we are to strive to honour God in character. We are to be wholly dependent on the power that He has promised to give us. 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. Our Saviour is a Saviour for the perfection of the whole man. He is not the God of part of the being only. The grace of Christ works to the disciplining of the whole human fabric. He made all. He has redeemed all. He has made the mind, the strength, the body as well as the soul, partaker of the divine nature, and all is His purchased possession. He must be served with the whole mind, heart, soul, and strength. Then the Lord will be glorified in His saints in even the common, temporal things with which they are connected. “Holiness unto the Lord” will be in the inscription placed upon them.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 230.

### ‘Then shall I know’

#### **10. What assurance did Paul have that the limitations and barriers to our knowledge will be taken away? 1 Corinthians 13:12, last part.**

NOTE: ‘All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar, worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through the ages upon ages in contemplation of God’s handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation, suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator’s name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character.’ *The Adventist Home*, page 548.

#### **11. How much wisdom does the Lord have? Colossians 2:3.**

NOTE: ‘If it were possible for created beings to attain to a full understanding of God and His works, then, having reached this point, there would be for them no further discovery of truth, no growth in knowledge, no further development of mind or heart. God would no longer be supreme; and men, having reached the limit of knowledge and attainment, would cease to advance. Let us thank God that it is not so. God is infinite; in Him are “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” And to all eternity men may be ever searching, ever learning, and yet they can never exhaust the treasures of His wisdom, His goodness, and His power.’ *Counsels for the Church*, page 88.

### ‘Even as also I am known’

#### **12. What assurance did Paul give that we will retain our identity when we are either resurrected or translated? 1 Corinthians 13:12, last part. Consider Psalm 139:16.**

NOTE: ‘We shall know our friends, even as the disciples knew Jesus. They may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured, in this mortal life, and they rise in perfect health and symmetry; yet in the glorified body their identity will be perfectly preserved. In the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, we shall recognise the lineaments of those we love.’ *Maranatha*, page 303.

### **13. How are those pictured who will see Him face to face? Revelation 7:9-10, 15-17.**

NOTE: 'The redeemed will meet and recognise those whose attention they have directed to the uplifted Saviour. What blessed converse they have with these souls! "I was a sinner," it will be said, "without God and without hope in the world, and you came to me and drew my attention to the precious Saviour as my only hope." Others will say, "I was a heathen in heathen lands. You left your friends and comfortable home and came to teach me how to find Jesus and believe in Him as the only true God. I demolished my idols and worshiped God, and now I see Him face to face. I am saved, eternally saved, ever to behold Him whom I love." Others will express their gratitude to those who fed the hungry and clothed the naked. "When despair bound my soul in unbelief, the Lord sent you to me," they say, "to speak words of hope and comfort. You brought me food for my physical necessities, and you opened to me the Word of God, awakening me to my spiritual needs. You treated me as a brother. You sympathised with me in my sorrows, and restored my bruised and wounded soul, so that I could grasp the hand of Christ that was reached out to save me. In my ignorance you taught me patiently that I had a Father in heaven who cared for me. You read to me the precious promises of God's Word. You inspired in me the faith that He would save me. My heart was softened, subdued, broken, as I contemplated the sacrifice which Christ had made for me. I am here, saved, eternally saved, ever to live in His presence and to praise Him who gave His life for me." What rejoicing there will be as these redeemed ones meet and greet those who have had a burden in their behalf! And those who have lived, not to please themselves, but to be a blessing to the unfortunate who have so few blessings, how their hearts will thrill with satisfaction!' *Maranatha*, page 303.

## **Lesson 13: June 19-25 'The greatest of these is charity'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.' 1 Corinthians 13:13.

STUDY HELP: *In Heavenly Places*, page 233.

LESSON AIM: To see how important love really is.

### **Introduction**

'The Lord desires me to call the attention of His people to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Read this chapter every day, and from it obtain comfort and strength. Learn from it the value that God places on sanctified, heaven-born love, and let the lesson that it teaches come home to your hearts. Learn that Christlike love is of heavenly birth, and that without it all other qualifications are worthless. In the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians the apostle Paul defines true Christlike love. This chapter is an expression of the obedience of all who love God and keep His commandments. It is brought into action in the life of every true believer.' *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 6*, page 1091.

### **'And now abideth . . . these three'**

#### **1. What three things remain supreme in the experience of the Christian? 1 Corinthians 13:13, first part.**

NOTE: "'Now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three," faith, which takes hold of Omnipotence and refuses to be baffled; hope, which turns the future triumphs of the good and the true into present encouragement and joy; and love, which consecrates all to God and for God.' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 193.

#### **2. How does Paul explain the importance of these three in the Christian life? 1 Thessalonians 5:8.**

NOTE: 'God has furnished every one with a full armour, but we are under the necessity of putting it on.' *Signs of the Times*, December 5, 1895.

'To those living so near the great consummation, the words of Paul should come with telling force: "Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." The watchful Christian is a working Christian, seeking zealously to do all in his power for the advancement of the gospel. As love for his Redeemer increases, so also does love for his fellow men. He has severe trials, as had his Master; but he does not allow affliction to sour his temper or destroy his peace of mind. He knows that trial, if well borne, will refine and purify him, and bring him into closer fellowship with Christ. Those who are partakers of Christ's sufferings will also be partakers of His consolation and at last sharers of His glory.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 260-261.

### **'Faith'**

#### **3. What part does faith play in the Christian life? Habakkuk 2:4.**

NOTE: "'The just shall live by faith.'" Hebrews 10:38. You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Saviour. You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believe that He for Christ's sake did all this for you. By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him, by giving and taking. You are to give all, your heart, your will, your service, give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must take all, Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your right-

eousness, your everlasting helper, to give you power to obey. Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, "Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee." This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be moulded more and more after the life of Christ.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 125.

#### **4. How are we shown the importance of faith? Hebrews 11:6. Compare Hebrews 10:38.**

NOTE: 'The fact that human beings can please God is a wonderful incentive for us to make the most persevering, intense efforts, efforts which are proportionate to the value of the object that we are seeking to gain. "We are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." Enoch walked with God. He was not satisfied with his own companionship. He walked with God. He pleased God. The Lord is not pleased when those whom He has created are sinners. We are ever to walk with God and learn of Jesus Christ, who has overcome every temptation wherewith we are beset. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. The Lord draws people close to His side, to walk with them, to work with them, to teach them how He overcame every temptation in humanity, and how, therefore, they may overcome through the provision the Lord has made. With every temptation there is a way of escape, by walking humbly with God. Without faith, ever increasing faith, it is impossible to please God.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 53.

'When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our lives; not one will be missing.' *Desire of Ages*, page 676.

### **'Hope'**

#### **5. What part does hope play in our salvation? Romans 8:24.**

NOTE: 'Let me entreat you not to be discouraged if your searchings after the Saviour do not bring an immediate assurance of pardon and of peace. Christ parried the Syrophenician woman's entreaties in order to test the sincerity of her faith. If a heart's happy hope were gained too easily, it might be valued too lightly. Give not up, my friend! If every hour were required to be spent in search for Jesus until your dying day. But no such protracted experience need be yours. I fear that you do not grasp the full meaning of God's permission to come "with boldness" to the throne of grace. Ask what you want, and all you want. You are not a stranger at the door of the Great King. The King's Son is ready Himself to take in your petition, and intercede with His Almighty Father for you, and to press your suit. Despair never saved a sinner yet. We are "saved by hope." You lose everything by discouragement and retreat. You gain everything by pressing on. Suppose that Columbus, when within a few leagues of the West Indies, had yielded to despair, and sailed homewards. It was the last league sailed over that gave immortality to him, and a new continent to civilisation. So it will be the last decisive step of surrendering your whole soul to Christ that unlocks to you the eternal glories of the heavenly inheritance.' Uriah Smith, *Review & Herald*, February 26, 1861.

#### **6. In what is our hope based? Hebrews 6:17-20.**

NOTE: 'We have a good hope through Jesus. It is sure and steadfast and entereth into that within the veil. It yields us consolation in affliction, it gives us joy amid anguish, disperses the gloom around us, and causes us to look through it all to immortality and eternal life. Earthly treasures are no inducement to us, for while we have this hope it reaches clear above the treasures of earth that are passing away and takes hold of the immortal inheritance, the treasures that are durable, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fade not away. Our mortal bodies may die and be laid away in the grave. Yet the blessed hope lives on until the resurrection, when the voice of Jesus calls forth the sleeping dust. We shall then enjoy the fullness of the blessed, glorious hope. We know in whom we have believed. We have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. A rich, a glorious reward is before us; it is the prize for which we run, and if we persevere with courage we shall surely obtain it.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 352

### **'Love'**

#### **7. What does genuine Christian love reveal about a person? 1 John 4:12.**

NOTE: 'These sacred lessons, if received into the heart, will bring about the reformation essential. Many will lose heaven unless they change their selfish, unlovable, unsympathetic ways, and learn that the Spirit of Christ is not selfish and forbidding, discourteous and loveless. . . . Unless we practise Christ's ways, and receive His Spirit, we are none of His. He desires us to reveal His love in word and action. All that we do should flow from a deep, abiding principle of love, a principle that is after the similitude of Christ, who is love and light and peace. But how little, how very little, of Christ's character is revealed! The spirit of self-denial is becoming a rare thing. Yet there is love in our churches. There are those who love God supremely and their neighbours as themselves. Their prayers and their alms come up before God as a memorial. The Lord does not lose sight of them. He is watching those who are walking in the light as fast as they receive it. They are the objects of His special care.' *Review & Herald*, April 3, 1900.

#### **8. What does a lack of love reveal about a person? 1 John 4:8.**

NOTE: "'He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.'" It is not the opposition of the world that most endangers the church of Christ. It is the evil cherished in the hearts of believers that works their most grievous disaster and most surely retards the progress of God's cause. There is no surer way of weakening spirituality than by cherishing envy, suspicion, faultfinding, and evil surmis-

ing. On the other hand, the strongest witness that God has sent His Son into the world is the existence of harmony and union among men of varied dispositions who form His church. This witness it is the privilege of the followers of Christ to bear. But in order to do this, they must place themselves under Christ's command. Their characters must be conformed to His character and their wills to His will.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 549.

### 'These three'

#### **9. Are faith, hope and love alternatives, or should we possess them all? 1 Corinthians 13:13.**

NOTE: 'The apostle Paul says: And now abideth faith, hope, and charity [love]. In all our words and acts these three Christian graces are to be interwoven.' *Bible Training School*, June 1, 1903.

#### **10. How does Paul link these three in the experience of the Christian? 1 Thessalonians 1:3.**

NOTE: 'How precious to those who are losing their love of this world are their faith and hope in the promises of God, which open before them the future immortal life! Their hopes may fasten upon unseen realities of the future world. Christ has risen from the dead the first-fruits. Hope and faith strengthen the soul to pass through the dark shadows of the tomb, in full faith of coming forth to immortal life in the morning of the resurrection. The paradise of God, the home of the blessed! There all tears shall be wiped from off all faces! When Christ shall come the second time, to be "admired in all them that believe," death shall be swallowed up in victory, and there shall be no more sickness, no more sorrow, no more death! A rich promise is given to us: "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." Is not this promise rich and comforting to those who love God? And the promise is found in the garden of God's word: "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." Paul declares: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'" *Review & Herald*, October 11, 1887.

### 'A more excellent way'

#### **11. What is of greater importance than the possession of spiritual gifts? 1 Corinthians 12:31.**

NOTE: 'The greatest of all gifts, all talents, is true, Christlike love. It is not position or profession that makes a man of value in God's sight. It is being good and doing good.' *Pacific Health Journal*, December 1, 1901.

#### **12. Why is love the greatest of these three? 1 John 4:7.**

NOTE: 'Love is the basis of godliness. No man has love to God, no matter what his profession may be, unless he has unselfish love for his brother. As we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We shall not feel like letting the soul who is in the greatest peril, and in the greatest need, go unwarned, unlaboured for, and uncared for. We shall not feel like holding the erring off, and being critical and exacting, or letting them alone to plunge into further unhappiness and discouragement, and to fall on Satan's battleground, for God will deal with us as He deals with our brethren or the younger members of the Lord's family.' *Our Father Cares*, page 241.

**In 1388 John Wycliffe's translation of 1 Corinthians 13 was issued, part of the first complete Bible in English. Wycliffe has been called 'The Morning Star of the Reformation.' For more information, see *Great Controversy*, chapter 5.**

Here is how its earliest readers would have seen it, except that a modern typeface has been used:

CAP 13

If Y speke with tungis of men and of aungels, and Y haue not charite, Y am maad as bras sownynge, or a cymbal tynkyng. And if Y haue prophecie, and knowe alle mysteries, and al kunnyng, and if Y haue al feith, so that Y meue hillis fro her place, and Y haue not charite, Y am nouyt. And if Y departe alle my goodis in to the metis of pore men, and yf Y bitake my bodi, so that Y brenne, and if Y haue not charite, it profitith to me no thing. Charite is pacient, it is benygne; charite enuyeth not, it doith not wickidli, it is not blowun, it is not coueytouse, it sekith not tho thingis that ben hise owne, it is not stird to wraththe, it thenkith not uel, it ioyeth not on wickidnesse, but it ioieth togidere to treuthe; it suffrith alle thingis, it bileueth alle thingis, it hopith alle thingis, it susteyneth alle thingis. Charite fallith neuere down, whether prophecies schulen be voidid, ethir langagis schulen ceesse, ethir science schal be distried. For a parti we knowun, and a parti we prophecien; but whanne that schal come that is parfit, that thing that is of parti schal be auoidid. Whanne Y was a litil child, Y spak as a litil child, Y vnderstood as a litil child, Y thouyte as a litil child; but whanne Y was maad a man, Y auoidide tho thingis that weren of a litil child. And we seen now bi a myrour in derknesse, but thanne face to face; now Y knowe of parti, but thanne Y schal knowe, as Y am knowun. And now dwellen feith, hope, and charite, these thre; but the most of these is charite.

(The same passage is here rendered into modern spelling and tactfully modernised, to make its meaning clearer.)

'If I speak with tongues of men and of angels, and I have not charity, I am made as brass sounding, or a cymbal tinkling. And if I have prophecy, and know all mysteries, and all cunning [skill], and if I have all faith, so that I move hills from their place,

and I have not charity, I am naught. And if I depart all my goods into the meats of poor men, and if I betake my body, so that I burn, and if I have not charity, it profits me nothing.

Charity is patient. It is benign. Charity envieth not. It doth not wickedly. It is not blown up. It is not covetous. It seeketh not those things that are its own. It is not stirred to wrath. It thinketh not evil. It joyeth not in wickedness, but it joyeth together to truth. It suffereth all things. It believeth all things. It hopeth all things. It sustaineth all things. Charity falleth never down, whether prophecies shall be voided, or languages shall cease, or science shall be destroyed. For a part we know, and a part we prophesy; but when that shall come that is perfect, that thing that is in part shall be made void.

When I was a little child, I spake as a little child, I understood as a little child, I thought as a little child; but when I was made a man, I avoided those things that were of a little child. And we see now by a mirror in darkness, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know, as I am known. And now dwelleth faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the most of these is charity.'

*(Wycliffe's translation was not divided into verses.)*

**Here is the same passage as William Tyndale translated it in 1534 (modern spelling):**

'Though I spake with the tongues of men and angels, and yet had no love, I were even as sounding brass or as a tinkling cymbal. And though I could prophesy, and understood all secrets, and all knowledge: yea, if I had all faith so that I could move mountains out of their places, and yet had no love, I were nothing. And though I bestowed all my goods to feed the poor, and though I gave my body even that I burned, and yet had no love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth love, and is courteous. Love envieth not. Love doth not forwardly, swelleth not, dealeth not dishonestly, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh not evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity: but rejoiceth in the truth, suffereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Though that prophesyings fail, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge vanish away, yet love falleth never away. For our knowledge is imperfect, and our prophesying is imperfect. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I imagined as a child. But as soon as I was a man, I put away childishness. Now we see in a glass even in a dark speaking, but then shall we see face to face. Now I know imperfectly: but then shall I know even as I am known. Now abideth faith, hope, and love, even these three: but the chief of these is love.'

*(Tyndale did not divide his chapters into verses.)*