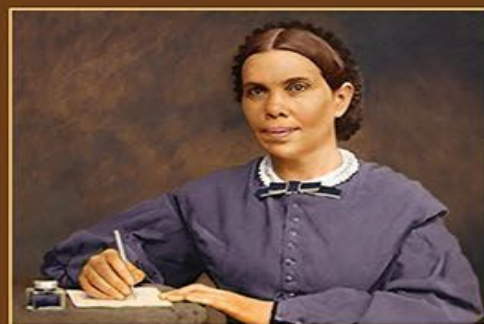


Ellen G. White
NOTES
for the Sabbath School Lessons



IN THE
CRUCIBLE
WITH CHRIST

July | Aug | Sept 2022

Spirit of Prophecy quotations arranged for
daily study with the adult Bible study guides

Ellen G. White

Notes for the Adult Bible Study Guide

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In the Crucible With Christ

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Lesson 1

The Shepherd's Crucible

Sabbath Afternoon, June 25

As Jesus, the great Teacher, presents His lessons to be learned from the open book of nature, He opens the eye of their understanding to reveal the attention that is given to objects in proportion to the rank they occupy in the scale of creation. If the grass of the field, which today is so beautiful, delighting the senses, [and] is tomorrow cut down and burned, receives so great attention from God, how much more will He not bestow upon man formed in His image. We cannot form exaggerated ideas of the value of the human soul, and the attention given by Heaven to man. He then gives the comforting assurance, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Jesus is the good Shepherd. His followers are the sheep of His pasture. A shepherd is always with his flock to defend them, to keep them from the wolves, to hunt up the lost sheep and carry them back to the fold, to lead them beside green pastures and beside living waters.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 215.

Let us never forget, even when we walk in the valley, that Christ is as much with us when we walk trustingly there as when we are on the mountaintop. The voice said to us, "Will you not roll your burden upon the Burden Bearer, the Lord Jesus Christ? Will you not live on the sunny side of the cross? saying, 'I know [Him] whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.' 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls' " (1 Timothy 1:12; 1 Peter 1:8, 9).

. . . I must trust in Him irrespective of the changes of my emotional atmosphere. I must show forth the praises of Him who has called me "out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). My heart must be

steadfast in Christ, my Saviour, beholding His love and gracious goodness. I must not trust Him now and then, but always, that I may manifest the results of abiding in Him who has bought me with His precious blood. We must learn to believe the promises, to have an abiding faith so that we may take them as the sure word of God.—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, pp. 811, 812.

Satan is our destroyer, but Christ is our restorer. We must put faith into constant exercise, and trust in God, whatever our feelings may be. . . . You can say with the psalmist, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 332.

Sunday, June 26—A Guide for the Journey: The Shepherd

As the shepherd loves his sheep, and cannot rest if even one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love every outcast soul. Men may deny the claim of His love, they may wander from Him, they may choose another master; yet they are God's, and He longs to recover His own. He says, "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Ezekiel 34:12.

In the parable the shepherd goes out to search for one sheep—the very least that can be numbered. So if there had been but one lost soul, Christ would have died for that one.

The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the soul that has wandered away from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine love had come to his rescue he could never find his way to God.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 187.

However much a shepherd may love his sheep, he loves his sons and daughters more. Jesus is not only our shepherd; He is our "everlasting Father." And He says, "I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father." John 10:14, 15, R. V. What a statement is this!—the only-begotten Son, He who is in the bosom of the Father, He whom God has declared to be "the Man that is My fellow" (Zechariah 13:7),—the communion between Him and the eternal God is taken to represent the communion between Christ and His children on the earth!

Because we are the gift of His Father, and the reward of His work, Jesus loves us. He loves us as His children. Reader, He loves you. Heaven itself can bestow nothing greater, nothing better. Therefore trust.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 483.

While we review, not the dark chapters in our experience, but the manifestations of God's great mercy and unfailing love, we shall praise far

more than complain. We shall talk of the loving faithfulness of God as the true, tender, compassionate shepherd of His flock, which He has declared that none shall pluck out of His hand. The language of the heart will not be selfish murmuring and repining. Praise, like clear-flowing streams, will come from God's truly believing ones. "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Psalm 23:6; 73:24, 25.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 367, 368.

Monday, June 27: Locations on the Journey

Human beings suffer much because they step out of the path that God has chosen for them to follow. They walk in the sparks of the fire they themselves have kindled, and the sure result is affliction, unrest, and sorrow, which they might have avoided if they had submitted their will to God. . . . Whatever path God chooses for us, whatever way He ordains for our feet, that is the only path of safety. With the eye of faith, with childlike submission as obedient children, we must look to God, to follow His guidance, and difficulties will clear away. The promise is, “I will instruct thee and teach thee.”

—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 175.

If your steps are ordered by the Lord, . . . you must not expect that your path will always be one of outward peace and prosperity. The path that leads to eternal day is not the easiest to travel, and at times it will seem dark and thorny. But you have the assurance that God’s everlasting arms encircle you, to protect you from evil. He wants you to exercise earnest faith in Him, and learn to trust Him in the shadow as well as in the sunshine.

The follower of Christ must have faith abiding in the heart; for without this it is impossible to please God. Faith is the hand that takes hold of infinite help; it is the medium by which the renewed heart is made to beat in unison with the heart of Christ.—*Messages to Young People*, p. 102.

Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. In every affliction God has a purpose to work out for our good. Every blow that destroys an idol, every providence that weakens our hold upon earth and fastens our affections more firmly upon God, is a blessing. The pruning may be painful for a time, but afterward it “yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.” We should receive with gratitude whatever will quicken the conscience, elevate the thoughts, and ennoble the life. The fruitless branches are cut off and cast into the fire. Let us be thankful that through painful pruning we may retain a connection with the living Vine; for if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with Him. The very trial that taxes

our faith the most severely and makes it seem as though God had forsaken us is to lead us more closely to Him, that we may lay all our burdens at the feet of Christ and experience the peace which He will give us in exchange. God loves and cares for the feeblest of His creatures, and we cannot dishonor Him more than by doubting His love to us. O let us cultivate that living faith that will trust Him in the hour of darkness and trial!—*My Life Today*, p. 93.

Tuesday, June 28—Unexpected Detour 1: The Valley

When Henry White, our eldest son, lay dying, he said, “A bed of pain is a precious place when we have the presence of Jesus.” When we are obliged to drink of the bitter waters, turn away from the bitter to the precious and the bright. In trial grace can give the human soul assurance, and when we stand at the deathbed and see how the Christian can bear suffering and go through the valley of death, we gather strength and courage to work, and we fail not, neither are we discouraged in leading souls to Jesus.

Those who have borne the greatest sorrows are frequently the ones who carry the greatest comfort to others, bringing sunshine wherever they go. Such ones have been chastened and sweetened by their afflictions; they did not lose confidence in God when trouble assailed them, but clung closer to His protecting love. Such ones are a living proof of the tender care of God, who makes the darkness as well as the light, and chastens us for our good. Christ is the light of the world; in Him is no darkness. Precious light! Let us live in that light! Bid adieu to sadness and repining. Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 274.

The word is: Go forward; discharge your individual duty, and leave all consequences in the hands of God. If we move forward where Jesus leads the way we shall see His triumph, we shall share His joy. We must share the conflicts if we wear the crown of victory. Like Jesus, we must be made perfect through suffering. Had Christ’s life been one of ease, then might we safely yield to sloth. Since His life was marked with continual self-denial, suffering, and self-sacrifice, we shall make no complaint if we are partakers with Him. We can walk safely in the darkest path if we have the Light of the world for our guide.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 28, 29.

Let us remember that the life of God’s children in this world is a pilgrim life. We have not wisdom to plan our own lives. It is not for us to shape our future. “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a

place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” Hebrews 11:8. . . .

Too many, in planning for a brilliant future, make an utter failure. Let God plan for you. As a little child, trust to the guidance of Him who will “keep the feet of His saints.” 1 Samuel 2:9. God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 478, 479.

Wednesday, June 29—Unexpected Detour 2: The Surrounded Table

In the discharge of our duties we are neither to despise nor to fear our enemies. . . . Putting our trust in God, we are to move steadily forward, doing His work with unselfishness, in humble dependence upon Him, committing to His providence ourselves and all that concerns our present and future, holding the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end, remembering that we receive the blessings of heaven, not because of our worthiness, but because of Christ's worthiness and our acceptance, through faith in Him, of God's abounding grace.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 108.

If we encounter difficulties, and in Christ's strength overcome them; if we meet enemies, and in Christ's strength put them to flight; if we accept responsibilities, and in Christ's strength discharge them faithfully, we are gaining a precious experience. We learn, as we could not otherwise have learned, that our Saviour is a present help in every time of need.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 34.

Christ did not tell His disciples that their work would be easy. He showed them the vast confederacy of evil arrayed against them. They would have to fight "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12. But they would not be left to fight alone. He assured them that He would be with them; and that if they would go forth in faith, they should move under the shield of Omnipotence. He bade them be brave and strong; for One mightier than angels would be in their ranks—the General of the armies of heaven. He made full provision for the prosecution of their work and took upon Himself the responsibility of its success. So long as they obeyed His word, and worked in connection with Him, they could not fail. Go to all nations, He bade them. Go to the farthest part of the habitable globe and be assured that My presence will be with you even there. Labor in faith and confidence; for the time will never come when I will forsake you. I will be with you always, helping

you to perform your duty, guiding, comforting, sanctifying, sustaining you, giving you success in speaking words that shall draw the attention of others to heaven.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 29.

Thursday, June 30: A Certain Promise for the Journey

How shall we know for ourselves God's goodness and His love? The psalmist tells us—not, hear and know, read and know, or believe and know; but—“Taste and see that the Lord is good.” Instead of relying upon the word of another, taste for yourself.

Experience is knowledge derived from experiment. Experimental religion is what is needed now. “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” Some—yes, a large number—have a theoretical knowledge of religious truth, but have never felt the renewing power of divine grace upon their own hearts. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 221.

God has provided a balm for every wound. There is a balm in Gilead, there is a physician there. Will you not now as never before study the Scriptures? Seek the Lord for wisdom in every emergency. In every trial plead with Jesus to show you a way out of your troubles, then your eyes will be opened to behold the remedy and to apply to your case the healing promises that have been recorded in His Word. In this way the enemy will find no place to lead you into mourning and unbelief, but instead you will have faith and hope and courage in the Lord. The Holy Spirit will give you clear discernment that you may see and appropriate every blessing that will act as an antidote to grief, as a branch of healing to every draught of bitterness that is placed to your lips. Every draught of bitterness will be mingled with the love of Jesus, and in place of complaining of the bitterness, you will realize that Jesus' love and grace are so mingled with sorrow that it has been turned into subdued, holy, sanctified joy.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 273, 274.

When God's people take their eyes off the things of this world and place them on heaven and heavenly things they will be a peculiar people, because they will see the mercy and goodness and compassion that God has shown to the children of men. His love will call forth a response from them, and their lives will show to those around them that the Spirit of God is controlling them, that they are setting their affections on things above, not on the things of the earth.

. . . As we think of how Christ came to our world to die for fallen man, we understand something of the price that was paid for our redemption, and we realize that there is no true goodness or greatness apart from God.

. . .

We are almost home; we shall soon hear the voice of the Saviour richer than any music, saying, Your warfare is accomplished. Enter into the joy of thy Lord. Blessed, blessed benediction; I want to hear it from His immortal lips. I want to praise Him; I want to honor Him that sitteth on the throne. I want my voice to echo and re-echo through the courts of heaven. Will you be there? God help us, and fill us with all fullness and power, and then we can taste of the joys of the world to come.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 368.

Friday, July 1: For Further Reading

Lift Him Up, “Brought Back by the Shepherd,” p. 214;

Sons and Daughters of God, “God’s Goodness and Mercy Inspire Courage,” p. 198.

Lesson 2

The Crucibles That Come

Sabbath Afternoon, July 2

Our wrong traits of character are not always visible to ourselves, although they may be very apparent to others. But time and circumstances will surely prove us and bring to light the gold of character or discover the baser metal. Not one of us is known or read of all men, till the crucible of God tests us. Every base thought, every wrong action, reveals some defect in the character. These rugged traits must be brought under the chisel and hammer in God's great workshop, and the grace of God must smooth and polish before we can be fitted for a place in the glorious temple.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 540, 541.

Many today think that when they begin their Christian life they will find freedom from all want and difficulty. But everyone who takes up his cross to follow Christ comes to a Rephidim in his experience. Life is not all made up of green pastures and cooling streams. Disappointment overtakes us, privations come, circumstances occur which bring us into difficult places. As we follow in the narrow way, doing our best, as we think, we find that grievous trials come to us. . . . Conscience stricken, we reason, if we had walked with God, we would never have suffered so. . . .

But of old the Lord led His people to Rephidim, and He may choose to bring us there also, in order to test our faithfulness and loyalty to Him. In mercy to us, He does not always place us in the easiest places; for if He did, in our self-sufficiency we would forget that the Lord is our helper in time of necessity. But He longs to manifest Himself to us in our emergencies, and reveal the abundant supplies that are at our disposal, independent of our surroundings; and disappointment and trial are permitted to come upon us that we may realize our own helplessness, and learn to call upon the Lord for aid, as a child, when hungry and thirsty, calls upon its earthly father.—*Signs of the Times*, September 10, 1896.

There are thorns in every path. All who follow the Lord's leading must expect to meet with disappointments, crosses, and losses. But a spirit of true heroism will help them to overcome these. Many greatly magnify seeming difficulties, and then begin to pity themselves and give way to despondency. Such need to make an entire change in themselves. They need to discipline themselves to put forth exertion, and to overcome all childish feelings. . . .

Every one should have an aim, an object, in life. The loins of the mind should be girded up, and the thoughts be trained to keep to the point, as the compass to the pole. . . . Worthy purposes should be kept constantly in view, and every thought and act should tend to their accomplishment. Let there ever be a fixedness of purpose to carry out that which is undertaken.
—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 316.

Sunday, July 3: Surprises

It was to Peter a bitter lesson, and one which he learned but slowly, that the path of Christ on earth lay through agony and humiliation. The disciple shrank from fellowship with his Lord in suffering. But in the heat of the furnace fire he was to learn its blessing. Long afterward, when his active form was bowed with the burden of years and labors, he wrote, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter 4:12, 13.

. . . [Jesus] said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." The cross was associated with the power of Rome. It was the instrument of the most cruel and humiliating form of death. The lowest criminals were required to bear the cross to the place of execution; and often as it was about to be laid upon their shoulders, they resisted with desperate violence, until they were overpowered, and the instrument of torture was bound upon them. But Jesus bade His followers take up the cross and bear it after Him. To the disciples His words, though dimly comprehended, pointed to their submission to the most bitter humiliation,—submission even unto death for the sake of Christ. No more complete self-surrender could the Saviour's words have pictured.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 416, 417.

The followers of Christ know little of the plots which Satan and his hosts are forming against them. But He who sitteth in the heavens will overrule all these devices for the accomplishment of His deep designs. The Lord permits His people to be subjected to the fiery ordeal of temptation, not because He takes pleasure in their distress and affliction, but because this process is essential to their final victory.

By God's mighty cleaver of truth we have been taken from the quarry of the world and brought into the workshop of the Lord to be prepared for a place in His temple. In this work the hammer and chisel must act their part, and then comes the polishing. Rebel not under this process of grace. You may be a rough stone, on which much work must be done before you

are prepared for the place God designs you to fill. You need not be surprised if with the hammer and the chisel of trial God cuts away your defects of character. He alone can accomplish this work. And be assured that He will not strike one useless blow.—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 317.

The bright and cheerful side of our religion will be represented by all who are daily consecrated to God. We should not dishonor God by the mournful relation of trials that appear grievous. All trials that are received as educators will produce joy.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 365.

Monday, July 4: Crucibles of Satan

Satan . . . counseled with his angels, and with bitter hatred against God's government told them that while he retained his power and authority upon earth their efforts must be tenfold stronger against the followers of Jesus. They had prevailed nothing against Christ but must overthrow His followers, if possible. In every generation they must seek to ensnare those who would believe in Jesus. He related to his angels that Jesus had given His disciples power to rebuke them and cast them out, and to heal those whom they should afflict. Then Satan's angels went forth like roaring lions, seeking to destroy the followers of Jesus.—*Early Writings*, pp. 191, 192.

Let every soul be on the alert. The adversary is on your track. Be vigilant, watching diligently lest some carefully concealed and masterly snare shall take you unawares. Let the careless and indifferent beware lest the day of the Lord come upon them as a thief in the night. Many will wander from the path of humility, and, casting aside the yoke of Christ, will walk in strange paths. Blinded and bewildered, they will leave the narrow path that leads to the city of God. . . .

He who overcomes must watch; for, with worldly entanglements, error, and superstition, Satan strives to win Christ's followers from Him. It is not enough that we avoid glaring dangers and perilous, inconsistent moves. We are to keep close to the side of Christ, walking in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. We are in an enemy's country. He who was cast out of heaven has come down with great power. With every conceivable artifice and device he is seeking to take souls captive. Unless we are constantly on guard we shall fall an easy prey to his unnumbered deceptions.—*Maranatha*, p. 90.

Henceforward Christ's followers [are] to look upon Satan as a conquered foe. Upon the cross, Jesus was to gain the victory for them; that victory He desired them to accept as their own. "Behold," He said, "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

. . . The Saviour is by the side of His tempted and tried ones. With Him there can be no such thing as failure, loss, impossibility, or defeat; we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. When temptations and trials come, do not wait to adjust all the difficulties, but look to Jesus, your helper.

There are Christians who think and speak altogether too much about the power of Satan. They think of their adversary, they pray about him, they talk about him, and he looms up greater and greater in their imagination. It is true that Satan is a powerful being; but, thank God, we have a mighty Saviour, who cast out the evil one from heaven. Satan is pleased when we magnify his power. Why not talk of Jesus? Why not magnify His power and His love?—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 490–493.

Tuesday, July 5: Crucibles of Sin

It is no light matter to sin against God, to set the perverse will of man in opposition to the will of his Maker. It is for the best interest of men, even in this world, to obey God's commandments. And it is surely for their eternal interest to submit to God, and be at peace with Him. . . . Of all the creatures that God has made upon the earth, man alone is rebellious. Yet he possesses reasoning powers to understand the claims of the divine law and a conscience to feel the guilt of transgression and the peace and joy of obedience. God made him a free moral agent, to obey or disobey. The reward of everlasting life—an eternal weight of glory—is promised to those who do God's will, while the threatenings of His wrath hang over all who defy His law.—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 76.

Heaven with its attractions is before you, an eternal weight of glory, which you may lose or gain. Which shall it be? Your life and your character will testify the choice you have made. I feel the more anxious because I see so many indifferent upon the subjects of infinite importance. They are always busy here and there about matters of minor importance, and the one great subject is put out of their thoughts. They have no time to pray, no time to watch, no time to search the Scriptures. They are altogether too busy to make the necessary preparation for the future life. They cannot devote time to perfect Christian characters and in diligence to secure a title to heaven.

If you have life eternal, you must be earnest and work to the point. Glorify God by choosing His way, His will. He will be your wise counselor and your fast, unchanging friend.—*Our High Calling*, p. 44.

Few believe that humanity has sunk so low as it has or that it is so thoroughly bad, so desperately opposed to God, as it is. When the mind is not under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, Satan can mold it as he chooses. All the rational powers which he controls he will carnalize. He is directly opposed to God in his tastes, views, preferences, likes and dislikes, choice of things and pursuits; there is no relish for what God loves or approves, but a delight in those things which He despises. . . .

If Christ is abiding in the heart, He will be in all our thoughts. Our deepest thoughts will be of Him, His love, His purity. He will fill all the chambers of the mind. Our affections will center about Jesus. All our hopes and expectations will be associated with Him. To live the life we now live by faith in the Son of God, looking forward to and loving His appearing, will be the soul's highest joy. He will be the crown of our rejoicing.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 163.

Wednesday, July 6: Crucibles of Purification

A refining, purifying process is going on among the people of God, and the Lord of hosts has set His hand to this work. This process is most trying to the soul, but it is necessary in order that defilement may be removed. Trials are essential in order that we may be brought close to our heavenly Father, in submission to His will, that we may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. The Lord brings His children over the same ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed; then they are victorious over self, and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven. The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering. . . . He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. True grace is willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril. . . .

. . . In order to bring to them a true knowledge of their condition, He permits the fire of affliction to assail them, so that they may be purified. The trials of life are God's workmen to remove the impurities, infirmities, and roughness from our characters, and fit them for the society of pure, heavenly angels in glory. The fire will not consume us, but only remove the dross, and we shall come forth seven times purified, bearing the impress of the Divine.—*My Life Today*, p. 92.

The Lord will work to purify His church. . . .

Just how soon this refining process will begin I cannot say, but it will not be long deferred. He whose fan is in His hand will cleanse His temple of its moral defilement. He will thoroughly purge His floor. God has a controversy with all who practice the least injustice; for in so doing they reject the authority of God and imperil their interest in the atonement, the redemption which Christ has undertaken for every son and daughter of Adam. Will it pay to take a course abhorrent to God? Will it pay to put upon your censers strange fire to offer before God, and say it makes no difference?

—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 373.

Trials and obstacles are the Lord's chosen methods of discipline and His appointed conditions of success. . . .

The fact that we are called upon to endure trial shows that the Lord Jesus sees in us something precious which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name, He would not spend time in refining us. He does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He refines. The blacksmith puts the iron and steel into the fire that he may know what manner of metal they are.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 471.

Thursday, July 7: Crucibles of Maturity

The apostle Paul was highly honored of God, being taken in holy vision to the third heaven, where he looked upon scenes whose glories might not be revealed to mortals. Yet all this did not lead him to boastfulness or self-confidence. He realized the importance of constant watchfulness and self-denial, and plainly declares, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” . . .

Paul had a bodily affliction; his eyesight was bad. He thought that by earnest prayer the difficulty might be removed. But the Lord had His own purpose, and He said to Paul, Speak to Me no more of this matter. My grace is sufficient. It will enable you to bear the infirmity.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1107.

When we take into our hands the management of things with which we have to do, and depend upon our own wisdom for success, we are taking a burden which God has not given us, and are trying to bear it without His aid. We are taking upon ourselves the responsibility that belongs to God, and thus are really putting ourselves in His place. We may well have anxiety and anticipate danger and loss, for it is certain to befall us. But when we really believe that God loves us and means to do us good we shall cease to worry about the future. We shall trust God as a child trusts a loving parent. Then our troubles and torments will disappear, for our will is swallowed up in the will of God.

Christ has given us no promise of help in bearing today the burdens of tomorrow. He has said, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Corinthians 12:9); but, like the manna given in the wilderness, His grace is bestowed daily, for the day’s need. Like the hosts of Israel in their pilgrim life, we may find morning by morning the bread of heaven for the day’s supply.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 100, 101.

Untiring energy is required of the Christian; but he is not obliged to work in his own strength; divine power awaits his demand. Everyone who

is sincerely striving for the victory over self will appropriate the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Through personal effort joined with the prayer of faith the soul is trained. Day by day the character grows into the likeness of Christ. It may cost a severe conflict to overcome habits which have been long indulged, but we may triumph through the grace of Christ.

If we are true to the promptings of the Spirit of God, we shall go on from grace to grace and from glory to glory until we shall receive the finishing touch of immortality.—*My Life Today*, p. 99.

Friday, July 8: For Further Reading

That I May Know Him, “How to Resist Satan,” p. 245;
Signs of the Times, “Effectual Prayer,” November 18, 1903.

Lesson 3

The Birdcage

Sabbath Afternoon, July 9

Do not look upon trial as something strange, but as the means by which we are to be purified and strengthened. “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations,” James admonishes; “knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:2, 3).

In the future life we shall understand things that here greatly perplex us. We shall realize how strong a helper we had and how angels of God were commissioned to guard us as we followed the counsel of the Word of God.

To all who receive Him, Christ will give power to become the sons of God. He is a present help in every time of need. Let us be ashamed of our wavering faith. Those who are overcome have only themselves to blame for their failure to resist the enemy. All who choose can come to Christ and find the help they need.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 257.

“Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:8. This will require earnest prayer and unceasing watchfulness. We must be aided by the abiding influence of the Holy Spirit, which will attract the mind upward, and habituate it to dwell on pure and holy things. And we must give diligent study to the word of God. . . . “Thy word,” says the psalmist, “have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.” Psalm 119:11.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 460.

The Lord’s agents should have a sanctified zeal, a zeal that is wholly under His control. Stormy times will come rapidly enough upon us, and we should take no course of our own that will hasten them. Tribulation

will come of a character that will drive to God all who wish to be His, and His alone. Until tested and proved in the furnace of trial, we do not know ourselves, and it is not proper for us to measure the characters of others and to condemn those who have not yet had the light of the third angel's message.

If we wish men to be convinced that the truth we believe sanctifies the soul and transforms the character, let us not be continually charging them with vehement accusations. In this way we shall force them to the conclusion that the doctrine we profess cannot be the Christian doctrine, since it does not make us kind, courteous, and respectful. Christianity is not manifested in pugilistic accusations and condemnation.

. . . One of the greatest curses in our world (and it is seen in churches and in society everywhere) is the love of supremacy. Men become absorbed in seeking to secure power and popularity. This spirit has manifested itself in the ranks of Sabbathkeepers, to our grief and shame. But spiritual success comes only to those who have learned meekness and lowliness in the school of Christ.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 396, 397.

Sunday, July 10: To the Promised Land via a Dead End

The children of Israel seemed to possess an evil heart of unbelief. They were unwilling to endure hardships in the wilderness. When they met with difficulties in the way, they would regard them as impossibilities. Their confidence in God would fail, and they could see nothing before them but death. . . .

. . . The Lord was willing that they should be brought short in their food, and that they should meet with difficulties, that their hearts should turn to Him who had hitherto helped them, that they might believe in him. He was ready to be to them a present help. If in their want they would call upon him, he would manifest to them tokens of his love, and continual care. But they seemed to be unwilling to trust the Lord any farther than they could witness before their eyes the continual evidences of his power. If they had possessed true faith and a firm confidence in God, inconveniences and obstacles, or even real suffering, would have been cheerfully borne, after the Lord had wrought in such a wonderful manner for their deliverance from servitude. Moreover, the Lord promised them if they would obey his commandments, no disease should rest upon them; for he says, "I am the Lord that healeth thee."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 249, 250.

The unbelief and murmurings of the children of Israel illustrate the people of God now upon the earth. Many . . . do not know themselves. God frequently proves them, and tries their faith in small things, and they do not endure the trial any better than did ancient Israel.

. . . When difficulties arise, or when they are brought into strait places—when their faith and love to God is tested, they shrink from the trial, and murmur at the process by which God has chosen to purify them. Their love does not prove pure and perfect, to bear all things. The faith of the people of the God of Heaven should be strong, active, and enduring—the substance of things hoped for. Then the language of such will be, Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name; for he hath dealt bountifully with me.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 251, 252.

The history of the Old Testament was recorded for the benefit of those who should live in the generations following. . . . Both Old and New Testament Scriptures teach the principles of obedience to the commandments of God as the terms of securing that life which measures with the life of God, for it is through obedience that we become partakers of the divine nature, and learn to escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Therefore its maxims are to be studied, its commands obeyed, its principles, which are more precious than gold, brought into the daily life.—Letter 342, September 2, 1907,

Monday, July 11: Bitter Waters

By the command of God, the children of Israel were brought to Rephidim, a place destitute of water. He who was enshrouded in the pillar of cloud was leading them, and it was by His express command that they were encamped at this place. God knew of the lack of water at Rephidim, and He brought His people hither to test their faith.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 353.

Moses smote the rock, but it was Christ who stood by him and caused the water to flow from the flinty rock. The people tempted the Lord in their thirst, and said, If God has brought us out here, why does He not give us water, as well as bread. [This] showed criminal unbelief and made Moses afraid that God would punish them for their wicked murmurings. The Lord tested the faith of His people, but they did not endure the trial. They murmured for food and for water, and complained of Moses. Because of their unbelief, God suffered their enemies to make war with them, that He might manifest to His people from whence cometh their strength.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 132, 133.

Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. Exodus 17:6. . . .

The refreshing water, welling up in a parched and barren land, . . . is an emblem of the divine grace which Christ alone can bestow, and which is as the living water purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul. He in whom Christ is abiding has within him a never-failing fountain of grace and strength.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 23.

Tuesday, July 12: The Great Controversy in the Desert

After the fall of man, Satan declared that human beings were proved to be incapable of keeping the law of God, and he sought to carry the universe with him in this belief. Satan's words appeared to be true, and Christ came to unmask the deceiver. The Majesty of heaven undertook the cause of man, and with the same facilities that man may obtain, withstood the temptations of Satan as man must withstand them. This was the only way in which fallen man could become a partaker of the divine nature. In taking human nature, Christ was fitted to understand man's trials and sorrows and all the temptations wherewith he is beset. Angels who were unacquainted with sin could not sympathize with man in his peculiar trials. Christ condescended to take man's nature, and was tempted in all points like as we, that He might know how to succor all who should be tempted.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 252.

The thrones and kingdoms of the world and the glory of them were offered to Christ if He would only bow down to Satan. Never will man be tried with temptations as powerful as those which assailed Christ. . . .

Satan has better success in approaching man. All this money, this gain, this land, this power, these honors and riches, will I give thee—for what? His conditions generally are, that integrity shall be yielded, conscientiousness blunted, and selfishness indulged. Through devotion to worldly interests, Satan receives all the homage he asks. The door is left open for him to enter as he pleases, with his evil train of impatience, love of self, pride, avarice, overreaching, and his whole catalogue of evil spirits. Man is charmed and treacherously allured on to ruin. If we yield ourselves to worldliness of heart and life, Satan is satisfied.

Christ's example is before us. He overcame Satan, showing us how we may also overcome. Christ resisted Satan with scripture. . . . Christ's example is before us. If the Sacred Scriptures were studied and followed, the Christian would be fortified to meet the wily foe; but the word of God is neglected, and disaster and defeat follow.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 45, 46.

The human family have all the help that Christ had in their conflicts with Satan. They need not be overcome. They may be more than conquerors through Him who has loved them and given His life for them. "Ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20). And what a price! The Son of God in His humanity wrestled with the very same fierce, apparently overwhelming temptations that assail men—temptations to indulgence of appetite, to presumptuous venturing where God has not led them, and to the worship of the god of this world, to sacrifice an eternity of bliss for the fascinating pleasures of this life. Everyone will be tempted, but the Word declares that we shall not be tempted above our ability to bear. We may resist and defeat the wily foe.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 95.

Wednesday, July 13: An Enduring Legacy

Are you filled with sorrow today? Fasten your eyes on the Sun of righteousness. Do not try to adjust all the difficulties, but turn your face to the light, to the throne of God. What will you see there? The rainbow of the covenant, the living promise of God. Beneath it is the mercy seat, and whosoever avails himself of the provisions of mercy that have been made and appropriates the merits of the life and death of Christ has in the rainbow of the covenant a blessed assurance of acceptance with the Father as long as the throne of God endures.

Faith is what you need. Do not let faith waver. Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. It will be a severe fight, but fight it at any cost, for the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Put your hand in the hand of Christ. There are difficulties to be overcome, but angels that excel in strength will cooperate with the people of God. Face Zion, press your way to the city of solemnities. A glorious crown and a robe woven in the loom of heaven await the overcomer. Though Satan would cast his hellish shadow athwart your pathway and seek to hide from your view the mystic ladder that stretches from earth to the throne of God, on which ascend and descend the angels who are ministering spirits to those who shall be heirs of salvation, yet press your way upward, plant your feet on one round after another, and advance to the throne of the Infinite.—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, pp. 462, 463.

“Ye greatly rejoice,” Peter wrote, “though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, . . . ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

The apostle’s words were written for the instruction of believers in every age, and they have a special significance for those who live at the time when “the end of all things is at hand.” His exhortations and

warnings, and his words of faith and courage, are needed by every soul who would maintain his faith “steadfast unto the end.” Hebrews 3:14.

The apostle sought to teach the believers how important it is to keep the mind from wandering to forbidden themes or from spending its energies on trifling subjects. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan’s devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 518, 519.

Thursday, July 14: Trial by Fire

We should not present our petitions to God to *prove* whether He will fulfill His word, but because He will fulfill it; not to prove that He loves us, but because He loves us. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6.

But faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption. For presumption is Satan’s counterfeit of faith. Faith claims God’s promises, and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises, but uses them as Satan did, to excuse transgression. Faith would have led our first parents to trust the love of God, and to obey His commands. Presumption led them to transgress His law, believing that His great love would save them from the consequence of their sin. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions on which mercy is to be granted. Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 126.

In His providence He brings these persons into different positions and varied circumstances that they may discover in their character the defects which have been concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to correct these defects and to fit themselves for His service. Often He permits the fires of affliction to assail them that they may be purified.

. . . The Lord allows His chosen ones to be placed in the furnace of affliction to prove what temper they are of and whether they can be fashioned for His work.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 471.

Do the work that is nearest you. Do it, even though it may be amid perils and hardships in the missionary field; but do not, I beg of you, complain of hardships and self-sacrifices. Look at the Waldenses. See what plans they devised that the light of the gospel might shine into benighted minds. We should not labor with the expectation of receiving our reward in this life, but with our eyes fixed steadfastly upon the prize at the end of

the race. Men and women are wanted now who are as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men and women who will work without having their way smoothed and every obstacle removed.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 406.

Friday, July 15: For Further Reading

The Desire of Ages, “The Temptation,” pp. 114–123;
This Day With God, “Light Out of Darkness,” p. 348.

Lesson 4

Seeing the Goldsmith's Face

Sabbath Afternoon, July 16

“And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. . . .” This is the process, the refining, purifying process, which is to be carried on by the Lord of hosts. The work is most trying to the soul, but it is only through this process that the rubbish and defiling impurities can be removed. Our trials are all necessary to bring us close to our heavenly Father, in obedience to His will, that we may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 541.

The conflicts of earth, in the providence of God, furnish the very training necessary to develop characters fit for the courts of heaven. We are to become members of the royal family, the sons of God, and “all things work together for good” to those who love God, and submit themselves to His will.

Our God is an ever-present help in every time of need. He is perfectly acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our heart, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distress, He is making arrangements for our deliverance. Our sorrow is not unnoticed. He always knows much better than we do, just what is necessary for the good of His children, and He leads us as we would choose to be led if we could discern our own hearts and see our necessities and perils, as God sees them. But finite beings seldom know themselves. They do not understand their own weakness. God knows them better than they know themselves, and He understands how to lead them. . . .

If we will trust Him, and commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps in the very path that will result in our obtaining the victory over

every evil passion, and every trait of character that is unlike the character of our divine Pattern.—*Our High Calling*, p. 316.

Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God.

We may measure ourselves by ourselves, we may compare ourselves among ourselves, we may say we do as well as this one or that one, but the question to which the judgment will call for an answer is, Do we meet the claims of high heaven? Do we reach the divine standard? Are our hearts in harmony with the God of heaven?—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 320, 321.

Sunday, July 17: “In His Image”

Such transformation of character as is seen in the life of John is ever the result of communion with Christ. There may be marked defects in the character of an individual, yet when he becomes a true disciple of Christ, the power of divine grace transforms and sanctifies him. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed from glory to glory, until he is like Him whom he adores.

John was a teacher of holiness, and in his letters to the church he laid down unerring rules for the conduct of Christians. “Every man that hath this hope in him,” he wrote, “purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.” 1 John 3:3; 2:6. He taught that the Christian must be pure in heart and life. Never should he be satisfied with an empty profession. As God is holy in His sphere, so fallen man, through faith in Christ, is to be holy in his sphere.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 559.

The more you study the character of Christ, the more attractive will He appear to you. He will become as one near you, in close companionship with you; your affections will go out after Him. If the mind is molded by the objects with which it has most to do, then to think of Jesus, to talk of Him, will enable you to become like Him in spirit and character. You will reflect His image in that which is great and pure and spiritual. You will have the mind of Christ, and He will send you forth to the world as His spiritual representative.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 65.

I have been shown that in the future we shall see how closely all our trials were connected with our salvation, and how these light afflictions worked out for us “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” . . .

. . . The years of self-denial, of privation, of trial, affliction, and persecution that Paul endured, he called a moment. The things of the present time were not considered worth mentioning when compared with the eternal weight of glory that awaited them when the warfare should be over. These very afflictions were God’s workmen, ordained for the perfection of Christian character. Whatever may be the circumstances of

the Christian, however dark and mysterious may be the ways of Providence, however great his deprivation and suffering, he may look away from them all to the unseen and the eternal. He has the blessed assurance that all things are working for his good.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1099.

Monday, July 18: Faith Amid the Refining Fire

The Christian who loves his heavenly Father may not discern by outward providences or visible signs any heavenly favor above that given those with little or no consecration. Often he is sorely afflicted, distressed, perplexed, and hedged in on every side. Appearances seem to be against him. . . .

. . . Job was stripped of his earthly treasures, bereaved of his children, and made a spectacle of loathing to his friends, but in God's time He showed He had not forsaken His servant. . . .

If you are called to go through the fiery furnace for His sake, Jesus will be by your side even as He was with the faithful three in Babylon. Those who love their Redeemer will rejoice at every opportunity of sharing with Him humiliation and reproach. The love they bear their Lord makes suffering for His sake sweet.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 271.

God will reward the man of faith and obedience. If this faith is brought into the life experience, it will enable everyone who fears and loves God to endure trials. Moses was full of confidence in God because he had appropriating faith. He needed help, and he prayed for it, grasped it by faith, and wove into his experience the belief that God cared for him. He believed that God ruled his life in particular. He saw and acknowledged God in every detail of his life and felt that he was under the eye of the All-seeing One, who weighs motives, who tries the heart. He looked to God and trusted in Him for strength to carry him uncorrupted through every form of temptation. He knew that a special work had been assigned to him, and he desired as far as possible to make that work thoroughly successful. But he knew that he could not do this without divine aid, for he had a perverse people to deal with. The presence of God was sufficient to carry him through the most trying situations in which a man could be placed.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 651, 652.

When trials come to us, let us not dwell upon the greatness of the difficulties and feel that we cannot have joy in the Lord. It is true we will have changes of feelings. There will come to us times of discouragement

and depression. But shall we live by feeling or by faith? When our brethren and friends speak unadvisedly, and cause us grief, let us not be cast down. Let us remember that we are in a world of trial and grief, of sorrow and disappointment. When these experiences come to us, they should drive us to Christ. If they do not, we meet with loss. . . .

The purging is not pleasant, but let us remember that Christ came to our world and took humanity that He might bear the afflictions that humanity must bear and be an example of faithful endurance under every form of trial. God wants us to realize that we are a part of the great human family, and that we must bear its tests.—*The Upward Look*, p. 252.

Tuesday, July 19: Jesus' Last Words

We cannot be ready to meet the Lord by waking when the cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" and then gathering up our empty lamps to have them replenished. We cannot keep Christ apart from our lives here, and yet be fitted for His companionship in heaven. . . .

. . . Through the Holy Spirit, God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom's home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 413, 414.

Humanity has in itself no light. Apart from Christ we are like an unkindled taper, like the moon when her face is turned away from the sun; we have not a single ray of brightness to shed into the darkness of the world. But when we turn toward the Sun of Righteousness, when we come in touch with Christ, the whole soul is aglow with the brightness of the divine presence.

Christ's followers are to be more than a light in the midst of men. They are the light of the world. Jesus says to all who have named His name, You have given yourselves to Me, and I have given you to the world as My representatives. As the Father had sent Him into the world, so, He declares, "have I also sent them into the world." John 17:18. As Christ is the channel for the revelation of the Father, so we are to be the channel for the revelation of Christ. While our Saviour is the great source of illumination, forget not, O Christian, that He is revealed through humanity. God's blessings are bestowed through human instrumentality. Christ Himself came to the world as the Son of man. Humanity, united to the divine nature, must touch humanity. The church of Christ, every individual disciple of the Master, is heaven's appointed channel for the revelation of God to men. Angels of glory wait to communicate through you heaven's light and power to souls that are ready to perish.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 40.

God calls upon His people to be bright lights in the world shining amid the darkness of sin. Living the life of the Life-giver brings its reward. He went about doing good. This, every true follower of His will do, filled with a sacred sense of his loyalty to God and his duty to his fellow beings. Through the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, Christians are to grow in grace, constantly drawing nearer perfection of character.—*The Upward Look*, p. 177.

Wednesday, July 20: “The Wise”

God chose from among the Gentiles a people for Himself, and gave to them the name of Christian. This is a royal name, given to those who join themselves to Christ. . . . Peter says: “If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” . . .

O that God’s people would take Him at His word, and lay hold of the wonderful treasure of knowledge opened to them! . . .

We have before us the highest, holiest example. In thought, word, and deed Jesus was sinless. Perfection marked all that He did. He points us to the path that He trod, saying, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 291.

One sentence of Scripture is of more value than ten thousand of man’s ideas or arguments. Those who refuse to follow God’s way will finally receive the sentence, “Depart from Me.” But when we submit to God’s way, the Lord Jesus guides our minds and fills our lips with assurance. We may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Receiving Christ, we are clothed with power. An indwelling Saviour makes His power our property. The truth becomes our stock in trade. No unrighteousness is seen in the life. We are able to speak words in season to those who know not the truth. Christ’s presence in the heart is a vitalizing power, strengthening the entire being.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 71.

The day is coming, and it is close upon us, when every phase of character will be revealed by special temptation. Those who remain true to principle, who exercise faith to the end, will be those who have proved true under test and trial during the previous hours of their probation, and have formed characters after the likeness of Christ. It will be those who have cultivated close acquaintance with Christ, who, through his wisdom and grace, are partakers of the divine nature. But no human being can give to another, heart-devotion and noble qualities of mind, and supply his deficiencies with moral power. We can each do much for each other by giving to men a Christlike example, thus influencing them to go to Christ

for the righteousness without which they cannot stand in the judgment. Men should prayerfully consider the important matter of character-building, and frame their characters after the divine model.

Our precious Redeemer is standing before the Father as our intercessor, and is preparing mansions for all those who believe in him as their personal Saviour.—*The Youth's Instructor*, January 16, 1896.

Thursday, July 21: Character and Community

Those who are of the household of faith should never neglect the assembling of themselves together; for this is God's appointed means of leading His children into unity, in order that in Christian love and fellowship they may help, strengthen, and encourage one another. . . .

As brethren of our Lord, we are called with a holy calling to a holy, happy life. Having entered the narrow path of obedience, let us refresh our minds by communion with one another and with God. As we see the day of God approaching, let us meet often to study His Word and to exhort one another to be faithful unto the end.—*Our High Calling*, p. 166.

While Paul possessed high intellectual endowments, his life revealed the power of a rarer wisdom, which gave him quickness of insight and sympathy of heart, and brought him into close touch with others, enabling him to arouse their better nature and inspire them to strive for a higher life. His heart was filled with an earnest love for the Corinthian believers. He longed to see them revealing an inward piety that would fortify them against temptation. He knew that at every step in the Christian pathway they would be opposed by the synagogue of Satan and that they would have to engage in conflicts daily. . . .

The Corinthian believers needed a deeper experience in the things of God. They did not know fully what it meant to behold His glory and to be changed from character to character. They had seen but the first rays of the early dawn of that glory. Paul's desire for them was that they might be filled with all the fullness of God, following on to know Him whose going forth is prepared as the morning, and continuing to learn of Him until they should come into the full noontide of a perfect gospel faith.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 307, 308.

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and

governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. . . .

It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial. We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 29, 30.

Friday, July 22: For Further Reading

Sons and Daughters of God, “God Promises Us a New Heart of Flesh,” p. 100;

Testimonies for the Church, “Press Together,” vol. 6, p. 292.

Lesson 5

Extreme Heat

Sabbath Afternoon, July 23

God permitted His beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory, to a world marred and blighted with sin, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted Him to leave the bosom of His love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. . . .

But this great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father's heart a love for man, not to make Him willing to save. No, no! "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 13, 14.

In the vision that came to Isaiah in the temple court, he was given a clear view of the character of the God of Israel. "The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy," had appeared before him in great majesty; yet the prophet was made to understand the compassionate nature of his Lord. He who dwells "in the high and holy place" dwells "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15. . . .

In beholding his God, the prophet, like Saul of Tarsus at the gate of Damascus, had not only been given a view of his own unworthiness; there had come to his humbled heart the assurance of forgiveness, full and free; and he had arisen a changed man. He had seen his Lord. He had caught a

glimpse of the loveliness of the divine character.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 314.

Men are losing their knowledge of [God's] character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. . . . His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth.

. . . Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.

The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works—in words of truth and deeds of holiness.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 415, 416.

Sunday, July 24: Abraham in the Crucible

What is temptation?—It is the means by which those who claim to be the children of God are tested and tried. We read that God tempted Abraham, that He tempted the children of Israel. This means that He permitted circumstances to occur to test their faith, and lead them to look to Him for help. God permits temptation to come to His people today, that they may realize that He is their helper. If they draw nigh to Him when they are tempted, He strengthens them to meet the temptation. But if they yield to the enemy, neglecting to place themselves close to their Almighty Helper, they are overcome. They separate themselves from God. They do not give evidence that they walk in God's way.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1094.

Abraham's test was the most severe that could come to a human being. Had he failed under it, he would never have been registered as the father of the faithful. Had he deviated from God's command, the world would have lost an inspiring example of unquestioning faith and obedience. The lesson was given to shine down through the ages, that we may learn that there is nothing too precious to be given to God. It is when we look upon every gift as the Lord's, to be used in His service, that we secure the heavenly benediction. Give back to God your entrusted possession, and more will be entrusted to you. Keep your possessions to yourself, and you will receive no reward in this life, and will lose the reward of the life to come. . . .

. . . The offering of Isaac was designed by God to prefigure the sacrifice of His Son. Isaac was a figure of the Son of God, who was offered a sacrifice for the sins of the world. God desired to impress upon Abraham the gospel of salvation to men; and in order to make the truth a reality, and to test his faith, He required Abraham to slay his darling Isaac. All the agony that Abraham endured during that dark and fearful trial was for the purpose of deeply impressing upon his understanding the plan of redemption for fallen man.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1094.

Just such faith and confidence as Abraham had the messengers of God need today. But many whom the Lord could use will not move onward, hearing and obeying the one Voice above all others. The connection with kindred and friends, the former habits and associations, too often have so great an influence upon God's servants that He can give them but little instruction, can communicate to them but little knowledge of His purposes; and often after a time He sets them aside and calls others in their place, whom He proves and tests in the same manner. The Lord would do much more for His servants if they were wholly consecrated to Him, esteeming His service above the ties of kindred and all other earthly associations.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 524.

Monday, July 25: Wayward Israel

The Lord did not give Israel up without first doing all that could be done to lead them back to their allegiance to Him. Through long, dark years when ruler after ruler stood up in bold defiance of Heaven and led Israel deeper and still deeper into idolatry, God sent message after message to His backslidden people. Through His prophets He gave them every opportunity to stay the tide of apostasy and to return to Him. During the years that were to follow the rending of the kingdom, Elijah and Elisha were to live and labor, and the tender appeals of Hosea and Amos and Obadiah were to be heard in the land. Never was the kingdom of Israel to be left without noble witnesses to the mighty power of God to save from sin. Even in the darkest hours some would remain true to their divine Ruler and in the midst of idolatry would live blameless in the sight of a holy God. These faithful ones were numbered among the goodly remnant through whom the eternal purpose of Jehovah was finally to be fulfilled.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 108.

Many complain that Jesus seems a long way off. Who has placed Him a long way off? Has it not been your own course of action that has separated you from Jesus? He has not forsaken you, but you have forsaken Him for other lovers. It is when you wander from His side, and are charmed with the voice of the seducer, and fasten your affections upon some trifling thing, that you are in danger of losing your peace and trust and confidence in God. Then it is that Satan presents to you the thought that Jesus has forsaken you; but is it not that you have forsaken Jesus? . . .

. . . [Many have] ideas of Christ and the plan of salvation [that] are vague, dreary, and confused. If they had, like David, set the Lord ever before them, . . . their feet would be upon solid rock. Behold Jesus crucified for you. Behold Him grieved with your sins; and when you pray, repent, and earnestly desire to see Him as your sin-pardoning Redeemer, ready to bless you, and to hear your acknowledgment of Him. Keep close to His side.—*Our High Calling*, p. 30.

We need an abiding, heartfelt dependence upon the Son of God for salvation and for all wisdom and spiritual influences. Unless there is much more love to God and to man, and a continual dependence upon the renewing, sanctifying grace of Christ to work a transformation of character by a divine change in the heart, which will be manifestly seen in word, spirit, and action, we shall fail in our work. . . .

We need increased faith, far less confidence and assurance in what we can do, and far greater confidence in what the Lord is longing to do for us individually, if we will prepare the way for Him. We need, O so much more than we now have, the longing of soul for communion with God. We need to plead most earnestly with Him. If thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, when thou shalt seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.—*The Upward Look*, p. 333.

Tuesday, July 26: Surviving Through Worship

There is wickedness in our world, but all the suffering is not the result of a perverted course of life. Job is brought distinctly before us as a man whom the Lord allowed Satan to afflict. The enemy stripped him of all he possessed; his family ties were broken; his children were taken from him. For a time his body was covered with loathsome sores, and he suffered greatly. His friends came to comfort him, but they tried to make him see that he was responsible, by his sinful course, for his afflictions. But he defended himself, and denied the charge, declaring, Miserable comforters are ye all. By seeking to make him guilty before God, and deserving of His punishment, they brought a grievous test upon him, and represented God in a false light; but Job did not swerve from his loyalty, and God rewarded His faithful servant.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1140.

We have drunk at the same cup of sorrow, but it was mingled with joy and rest and peace in Jesus. He doeth all things well. Our heavenly Father doth not willingly afflict and grieve the children of men. . . .

This world is the scene of our trials, our griefs, our sorrows. We are here to bear the test of God. The fire of the furnace is to kindle till our dross is consumed and we come forth as gold purified in the furnace of affliction. Light will come out of this darkness which to you at times seems incomprehensible. “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21). Let this be the language of your heart. The cloud of mercy is hovering over your head even in the darkest hour. God’s benefits to us are as numerous as the drops of rain falling from the clouds upon the parched earth to water and refresh it. The mercy of God is over you. . . .

Could your eyes be opened, you would see your heavenly Father bending over you in love; and could you hear His voice it would be in tones of compassion to you who are prostrate with suffering and affliction. Stand fast in His strength; there is rest *for you*.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 272.

In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous.

The power and malice of Satan and his host might justly alarm us, were it not that we may find shelter and deliverance in the superior power of our Redeemer. Those who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people.—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 328.

Wednesday, July 27: Surviving Through Hope

By contemplation of Christ, by conformity to the divine likeness, your conceptions of the divine character will expand, and your mind and heart will be elevated, refined, and ennobled. Let the youth aim high, not relying upon human wisdom, but living day by day as seeing Him who is invisible, doing their work as in the sight of the intelligences of heaven. . .

He who constantly depends upon God through simple trust and prayerful confidence, will be surrounded by the angels of heaven. He who lives by faith in Christ, will be strengthened and upheld, able to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon eternal life.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 16.

Those who have borne the greatest sorrows are frequently the ones who carry the greatest comfort to others, bringing sunshine wherever they go. Such ones have been chastened and sweetened by their afflictions; they did not lose confidence in God when trouble assailed them, but clung closer to His protecting love. Such ones are living proof of the tender care of God, who makes the darkness as well as the light and chastens us for our good. Christ is the light of the world; in Him is no darkness. Precious light! Let us live in that light! Bid adieu to sadness and repining. Rejoice in the Lord always.

It is your privilege to receive grace from Christ that will enable you to comfort others with the same comfort wherewith you yourselves are comforted of God. . . . Let each try to help the next one. Thus you may have a little heaven here below, and angels of God will work through you to make right impressions. . . . Seek to help wherever you can. Cultivate the best dispositions that the grace of God may rest richly upon you.—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 122.

A Christian . . . feels his weakness, he lays hold with earnest purpose and living faith upon the strength of God, and is an overcomer. Great becomes his peace, his joy, for it comes from the Lord, and there is nothing more acceptable in the sight of God than the continual

humiliation of the soul before Him. These evidences are unmistakable proofs that the Lord has touched hearts by His Holy Spirit. More wonderful than miracles of physical healing is the miracle wrought in the child of God in wrestling with natural defects and overcoming them. The universe of God looks upon him with joy far greater than on any splendid outward display. The inward character is molded after the divine Pattern. .

..

. . . This is done only through the light reflected from the cross of Calvary. The law is complete and full in the great plan of salvation, only as it is presented in the light shining from the crucified and risen Saviour. This can be only spiritually discerned. It kindles in the heart of the beholder ardent faith, hope, and joy that Christ is his righteousness. This joy is only for those who love and keep the words of Jesus, which are the words of God.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 150.

Thursday, July 28: Extreme Heat

As the shepherd leads his flock over the rocky hills, through forest and wild ravines, to grassy nooks by the riverside; as he watches them on the mountains through the lonely night, shielding from robbers, caring tenderly for the sickly and feeble, his life comes to be one with theirs. A strong and tender attachment unites him to the objects of his care. However large the flock, the shepherd knows every sheep. Every one has its name, and responds to the name at the shepherd's call.

As an earthly shepherd knows his sheep, so does the divine shepherd know His flock that are scattered throughout the world. "Ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God." Jesus says, "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands" (Ezekiel 34:31; Isaiah 43:1; 49:16).—*Lift Him Up*, p. 203.

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

Jesus read the character of His disciples. He knew how sorely their faith was to be tried. In this incident on the sea He desired to reveal to Peter his own weakness,—to show that his safety was in constant dependence upon divine power. Amid the storms of temptation he could walk safely only as in utter self-distrust he should rely upon the Saviour. It was on the point where he thought himself strong that Peter was weak; and not until he discerned his weakness could he realize his need of dependence upon Christ. Had he learned the lesson that Jesus sought to teach him in that experience on the sea, he would not have failed when the great test came upon him.

Day by day God instructs His children. By the circumstances of the daily life He is preparing them to act their part upon that wider stage to which His providence has appointed them. It is the issue of the daily test that determines their victory or defeat in life's great crisis.

Those who fail to realize their constant dependence upon God will be overcome by temptation. We may now suppose that our feet stand secure, and that we shall never be moved. We may say with confidence, "I know in whom I have believed; nothing can shake my faith in God and in His word." . . . Only through realizing our own weakness and looking steadfastly unto Jesus can we walk securely.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 382.

Friday, July 29: For Further Reading

My Life Today, “In Christ There Is Strength,” p. 316;
Sons and Daughters of God, “We Are to Labor With Love,” p. 268.

Lesson 6

Struggling With All Energy

Sabbath Afternoon, July 30

In order that God might qualify him for his great work as the keeper of the sacred oracles, Abraham must be separated from the associations of his early life. The influence of kindred and friends would interfere with the training which the Lord purposed to give His servant. . . .

It was no light test that was thus brought upon Abraham, no small sacrifice that was required of him. There were strong ties to bind him to his country, his kindred, and his home. But he did not hesitate to obey the call. . . .

Many are still tested as was Abraham. They do not hear the voice of God speaking directly from the heavens, but He calls them by the teachings of His word and the events of His providence. They may be required to abandon a career that promises wealth and honor, to leave congenial and profitable associations and separate from kindred, to enter upon what appears to be only a path of self-denial, hardship, and sacrifice. . . . [He] leads them to feel the need of His help, and to depend upon Him alone, that He may reveal Himself to them.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 126, 127.

Why is it that religion occupies so little of our attention, while the world has the strength of brain, bone, and muscle? It is because the whole force of our being is bent in that direction. We have trained ourselves to engage with earnestness and power in worldly business, until it is easy for the mind to take that turn. This is why Christians find a religious life so hard and a worldly life so easy. The faculties have been trained to exert their force in that direction. In religious life there has been an assent to the truths of God's word, but not a practical illustration of them in the life.

To cultivate religious thoughts and devotional feelings is not made a part of education. These should influence and control the entire being. The

habit of doing right is wanting. There is spasmodic action under favorable influences, but to think naturally and readily upon divine things is not the ruling principle of the mind.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 264.

It is by close, testing trials that God disciplines His servants. He sees that some have powers which may be used in the advancement of His work, and He puts these persons upon trial; in His providence He brings them into positions that test their character and reveal defects and weaknesses that have been hidden from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to correct these defects and to fit themselves for His service. He shows them their own weakness, and teaches them to lean upon Him; for He is their only help and safeguard. . . . When God calls them to action, they are ready, and heavenly angels can unite with them in the work to be accomplished on the earth.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 129, 130.

Sunday, July 31: The Spirit of Truth

The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The Infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit's grace. And under the influence of the Spirit, words of penitence and confession mingled with songs of praise for sins forgiven. Words of thanksgiving and of prophecy were heard. All heaven bent low to behold and to adore the wisdom of matchless, incomprehensible love. Lost in wonder, the apostles exclaimed, "Herein is love." They grasped the imparted gift. And what followed? The sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightnings of heaven, cut its way through unbelief.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 38.

The Spirit is given as a regenerating agency, to make effectual the salvation wrought by the death of our Redeemer. The Spirit is constantly seeking to draw the attention of men to the great offering that was made on the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things of the Scriptures.

Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness. "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13), the Saviour declared. If men are willing to be molded, there will be brought about a sanctification of the whole being. The Spirit will take the things of God and stamp them on the soul. By His power the way of life will be made so plain that none need err therein.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 52, 53.

As trials thicken around us, both separation and unity will be seen in our ranks. Some who are now ready to take up weapons of warfare will in times of real peril make it manifest that they have not built upon the solid rock; they will yield to temptation. Those who have had great light and precious privileges, but have not improved them, will, under one pretext or another, go out from us. Not having received the love of the truth, they

will be taken in the delusions of the enemy; they will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and will depart from the faith. But, on the other hand, when the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd's voice. Self-denying efforts will be put forth to save the lost, and many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd. The people of God will draw together and present to the enemy a united front. In view of the common peril, strife for supremacy will cease; there will be no disputing as to who shall be accounted greatest.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 400, 401.

Monday, August 1: The Divine-Human Combination

The agency of the Spirit of God does not remove from us the necessity of exercising our faculties and talents, but teaches us how to use every power to the glory of God. The human faculties, when under the special direction of the grace of God, are capable of being used to the best purpose on earth. Ignorance does not increase the humility or spirituality of any professed follower of Christ. The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be best glorified by those who serve Him intelligently. The great object of education is to enable us to use the power which God has given us in such a manner as to represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God.

We are indebted to Him who gave us existence, for the talents that have been entrusted to us, and it is a duty we owe our Creator to cultivate and improve these talents. Education will discipline the mind, develop its powers, and understandingly direct them, that we may be useful in advancing the glory of God.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 361, 362.

I saw evil angels contending for souls, and angels of God resisting them. The conflict was severe. Evil angels were crowding about them, corrupting the atmosphere with their poisonous influence, and stupefying their sensibilities. Holy angels were anxiously watching these souls, and were waiting to drive back Satan's host. But it is not the work of good angels to control minds against the will of the individuals. If they yield to the enemy, and make no effort to resist him, then the angels of God can do but little more than hold in check the host of Satan, that they should not destroy, until further light be given to those in peril, to move them to arouse and look to heaven for help. Jesus will not commission holy angels to extricate those who make no effort to help themselves.

If Satan sees he is in danger of losing one soul, he will exert himself to the utmost to keep that one. And when the individual is aroused to his danger, and, with distress and fervor, looks to Jesus for strength, Satan fears he shall lose a captive, and he calls a re-enforcement of his angels to hedge in the poor soul, and form a wall of darkness around him, that

heaven's light may not reach him. But if the one in danger perseveres, and in helplessness and weakness casts himself upon the merits of the blood of Christ, Jesus listens to the earnest prayer of faith, and sends a reinforcement of those angels which excel in strength to deliver him.

. . . And when angels, all-powerful, clothed with the armory of heaven, come to the help of the fainting, pursued soul, Satan and his host fall back, well knowing that their battle is lost.—*Messages to Young People*, pp. 52, 53.

Tuesday, August 2: The Disciplined Will

We have each of us an individual work to do, to gird up the loins of our minds, to be sober, to watch unto prayer. The mind must be firmly controlled to dwell upon subjects that will strengthen the moral powers. . . . The thoughts must be pure, the meditations of the heart must be clean, if the words of the mouth are to be words acceptable to Heaven and helpful to your associates.

The mind should be guarded carefully. Nothing should be allowed to enter that will harm or destroy its healthy vigor. But to prevent this, it should be preoccupied with good seed, which, springing to life, will bring forth fruit-bearing branches. . . .

[He] who finds joy and happiness in reading the Word of God and in the hour of prayer is constantly refreshed by drafts from the Fountain of life. He will attain a height of moral excellence and a breadth of thought of which others cannot conceive. Communion with God encourages good thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, and lofty purposes of action. Those who thus connect their souls with God are acknowledged by Him as His sons and daughters. They are constantly reaching higher and still higher, obtaining clear views of God and of eternity, until the Lord makes them channels of light and wisdom to the world.—*My Life Today*, p. 83.

Few realize that it is a duty to exercise control over the thoughts and imaginations. It is difficult to keep the undisciplined mind fixed upon profitable subjects. But if the thoughts are not properly employed, religion cannot flourish in the soul. The mind must be preoccupied with sacred and eternal things, or it will cherish trifling and superficial thoughts. Both the intellectual and the moral powers must be disciplined, and they will strengthen and improve by exercise.

In order to understand this matter aright, we must remember that our hearts are naturally depraved, and we are unable of ourselves to pursue a right course. It is only by the grace of God, combined with the most earnest effort on our part, that we can gain the victory.—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 327.

For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. Isaiah 50:7.

Strength of character consists of two things—power of will and power of self-control. Many youth mistake strong, uncontrolled passion for strength of character; but the truth is that he who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. The real greatness and nobility of the man is measured by the power of the feelings that he subdues, not by the power of the feelings that subdue him. The strongest man is he, who, while sensitive to abuse, will yet restrain passion and forgive his enemies. Such men are true heroes.—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 316.

Wednesday, August 3: Radical Commitment

The Christian life is a warfare. The apostle Paul speaks of wrestling against principalities and powers as he fought the good fight of faith. Again, he declares: "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Ah, no. Today sin is cherished and excused. The sharp sword of the Spirit, the word of God, does not cut to the soul. Has religion changed? Has Satan's enmity to God abated? A religious life once presented difficulties and demanded self-denial. All is made very easy now. And why is this? The professed people of God have compromised with the power of darkness.

There must be a revival of the strait testimony. The path to heaven is no smoother now than in the days of our Saviour. All our sins must be put away. Every darling indulgence that hinders our religious life must be cut off. The right eye or the right hand must be sacrificed if it cause us to offend. Are we willing to renounce our own wisdom and to receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child? Are we willing to part with self-righteousness? Are we willing to give up our chosen worldly associates? Are we willing to sacrifice the approbation of men? The prize of eternal life is of infinite value. Will we put forth efforts and make sacrifices proportionate to the worth of the object to be attained?—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 222.

It will require a sacrifice to give yourself to God; but it is a sacrifice of the lower for the higher, the earthly for the spiritual, the perishable for the eternal. God does not design that our will should be destroyed, for it is only through its exercise that we can accomplish what He would have us do. Our will is to be yielded to Him, that we may receive it again, purified and refined, and so linked in sympathy with the Divine that He can pour through us the tides of His love and power. However bitter and painful this surrender may appear to the willful, wayward heart, yet "it is profitable for thee."

Not until he fell crippled and helpless upon the breast of the covenant angel did Jacob know the victory of conquering faith and receive the title of a prince with God. . . . So the Captain of our salvation was made

“perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:10), and the children of faith “out of weakness were made strong,” and “turned to flight the armies of the aliens” (Hebrews 11:34).—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 62.

What kind of faith is it that overcomes the world? It is that faith which makes Christ your own personal Saviour—that faith which, recognizing your helplessness, your utter inability to save yourself, takes hold of the Helper who is mighty to save, as your only hope. It is faith that will not be discouraged, that hears the voice of Christ saying, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and My divine strength is yours.” It is the faith that hears Him say, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 21.

Thursday, August 4: The Need to Persevere

The warfare which we are to wage is the “good fight of faith.” “I also labor,” said the apostle Paul, “striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.” Colossians 1:29.

Jacob, in the great crisis of his life, turned aside to pray. He was filled with one overmastering purpose—to seek for transformation of character. But while he was pleading with God, an enemy, as he supposed, placed his hand upon him, and all night he wrestled for his life. But the purpose of his soul was not changed by peril of life itself. When his strength was nearly spent, the Angel put forth His divine power, and at His touch Jacob knew Him with whom he had been contending. Wounded and helpless, he fell upon the Saviour’s breast, pleading for a blessing. He would not be turned aside nor cease his intercession, and Christ granted the petition of this helpless, penitent soul, according to His promise, “Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.” Isaiah 27:5. Jacob pleaded with determined spirit, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” Genesis 32:26. This spirit of persistence was inspired by Him who wrestled with the patriarch. It was He who gave him the victory, and He changed his name from Jacob to Israel, saying, “As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” Genesis 32:28. That for which Jacob had vainly wrestled in his own strength was won through self-surrender and steadfast faith. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 144.

God requires [all] to possess moral courage, steadiness of purpose, fortitude and perseverance, minds that cannot take the assertions of another, but which will investigate for themselves before receiving or rejecting, that will study and weigh evidence, and take it to the Lord in prayer. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” Now the condition: “But let him ask in *faith*, nothing wavering. . . .” This petition for wisdom is not to be a meaningless prayer, out of mind as soon as finished. It is a prayer that expresses the strong, earnest desire of the

heart, arising from a conscious lack of wisdom to determine the will of God.

After the prayer is made, if the answer is not realized immediately, do not weary of waiting and become unstable. Waver not. Cling to the promise, "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." Like the importunate widow, urge your case, being firm in your purpose. Is the object important and of great consequence to you? It certainly is. Then waver not, for your faith may be tried. If the thing you desire is valuable, it is worthy of a strong, earnest effort. You have the promise; watch and pray. Be steadfast and the prayer will be answered; for is it not God who has promised? If it costs you something to obtain it you will prize it the more when obtained. You are plainly told that if you waver you need not think that you shall receive anything of the Lord. A caution is here given not to become weary, but to rest firmly upon the promise. If you ask, He will give you liberally and upbraid not.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 130, 131.

Friday, August 5: For Further Reading

The Upward Look, “Follow Christ’s Example of Sacrifice,” p. 235;
Patriarchs and Prophets, “The Night of Wrestling,” pp. 195–203.

Lesson 7

Indestructible Hope

Sabbath Afternoon, August 6

When trials come, remember that they are sent for your good. . . . When trials and tribulations come to you know that they are sent in order that you may receive from the Lord of glory renewed strength and increased humility, so that He may safely bless and support and uphold you. In faith and with the hope that “maketh not ashamed,” lay hold of the promises of God. . . .

The Lord designs that His people shall be happy, and He opens before us one source of consolation after another, that we may be filled with joy and peace in the midst of our present experience. We are not to wait until we shall get into heaven for brightness and comfort and joy. We are to have them right here in this life. . . . We miss very much because we do not grasp the blessings that may be ours in our afflictions. All our sufferings and sorrows, all our temptations and trials, all our sadness and griefs, all our persecutions and privations, and in short all things, work together for our good. All experiences and circumstances are God’s workmen whereby good is brought to us. Let us look at the light behind the cloud.—*My Life Today*, p. 185.

Now when you can no longer be active, and infirmities press upon you, all that God requires of you is to trust Him. Commit the keeping of your soul to Him as unto a faithful Creator. His mercies are sure, His covenant is everlasting. Happy is the man whose hope is in the Lord his God, who keepeth truth forever. Let your mind grasp the promises and hold to them. If you cannot call to mind readily the rich assurance contained in the precious promises, listen to them from the lips of another. What fullness, what love and assurance are found in these words from the lips of God Himself, proclaiming His love, His pity and interest in the children of His care:

“The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” (Exodus 34:6, 7).—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 231.

The Bible reveals Christ to us as the Good Shepherd, seeking with unwearied feet for the lost sheep. By methods peculiarly His own He helped all who were in need of help. With tender, courteous grace He ministered to sin-sick souls, bringing healing and strength. . . .

The Saviour’s entire life was characterized by disinterested benevolence and the beauty of holiness. He is our pattern of goodness. From the beginning of His ministry, men began to comprehend more clearly the character of God. He carried out His teachings in His own life. He showed consistency without obstinacy, benevolence without weakness, tenderness and sympathy without sentimentalism. He was highly social, yet He possessed a reserve that discouraged any familiarity. His temperance never led to bigotry or austerity. He was not conformed to the world, yet He was attentive to the wants of the least among men.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 261, 262.

Sunday, August 7: The Big Picture

Viewing the situation of the faithful in his day, [Habakkuk] expressed the burden of his heart in the inquiry: “O Lord, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save! Why dost Thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? . . .” Habakkuk 1:2–4.

God answered the cry of His loyal children. Through His chosen mouthpiece He revealed His determination to bring chastisement upon the nation that had turned from Him to serve the gods of the heathen. Within the lifetime of some who were even then making inquiry regarding the future, He would miraculously shape the affairs of the ruling nations of earth and bring the Babylonians into the ascendancy. . . . The princes of Judah and the fairest of the people were to be carried captive to Babylon; the Judean cities and villages and the cultivated fields were to be laid waste; nothing was to be spared.

Confident that even in this terrible judgment the purpose of God for His people would in some way be fulfilled, Habakkuk bowed in submission to the revealed will of Jehovah. . . . And then, his faith reaching out beyond the forbidding prospect of the immediate future, and laying fast hold on the precious promises that reveal God’s love for His trusting children, the prophet added, “We shall not die.” Verse 12. With this declaration of faith he rested his case, and that of every believing Israelite, in the hands of a compassionate God.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 385, 386.

The faith that strengthened Habakkuk and all the holy and the just in those days of deep trial was the same faith that sustains God’s people today. In the darkest hours, under circumstances the most forbidding, the Christian believer may keep his soul stayed upon the source of all light and power. Day by day, through faith in God, his hope and courage may be renewed. “The just shall live by his faith.” In the service of God there need be no despondency, no wavering, no fear. The Lord will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him. He will

give them the wisdom their varied necessities demand.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 386, 387.

The time of waiting may seem long, the soul may be oppressed by discouraging circumstances, many in whom confidence has been placed may fall by the way; but with the prophet who endeavored to encourage Judah in a time of unparalleled apostasy, let us confidently declare, “The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.” Habakkuk 2:20. Let us ever hold in remembrance the cheering message, “The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” Verse 3.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 387, 388.

Monday, August 8: Who Our Father Is

It was generally believed by the Jews that sin is punished in this life. Every affliction was regarded as the penalty of some wrongdoing, either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God's law, but this truth had become perverted. Satan, the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God,—as punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin. Hence one upon whom some great affliction or calamity had fallen had the additional burden of being regarded as a great sinner. . . .

God had given a lesson designed to prevent this. The history of Job had shown that suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy. But Israel did not understand the lesson. The same error for which God had reproved the friends of Job was repeated by the Jews in their rejection of Christ.

The belief of the Jews in regard to the relation of sin and suffering was held by Christ's disciples. While Jesus corrected their error, He did not explain the cause of the man's affliction, but told them what would be the result. Because of it the works of God would be made manifest.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 471.

True holiness and humility are inseparable. The nearer the soul comes to God, the more completely is it humbled and subdued. When Job heard the voice of the Lord out of the whirlwind, he exclaimed, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). It was when Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord and heard the cherubim crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts," that he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone" (Isaiah 6:3, 5). . . .

He who catches a glimpse of the matchless love of Christ counts all other things as loss, and looks upon Him as the chiefest among ten thousand and as the one altogether lovely. As seraphim and cherubim look upon Christ, they cover their faces with their wings. Their own perfection and beauty are not displayed in the presence and glory of their Lord. Then how improper it is for men to exalt themselves! Let them rather be clothed with humility, cease all strife for supremacy, and learn what it means to be

meek and lowly of heart. He who contemplates God's glory and infinite love, will have humble views of himself, but by beholding the character of God, he will be changed into His divine image.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 175.

Tuesday, August 9: Our Father's Presence

Many have confused ideas as to what constitutes faith, and they live altogether below their privileges. They confuse feeling and faith, and are continually distressed and perplexed in mind; for Satan takes all possible advantage of their ignorance and inexperience. . . . We are to believe that we are chosen of God, to be saved by the exercise of faith, through the grace of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit; and we are to praise and glorify God for such a marvelous manifestation of His unmerited favor. It is the love of God that draws the soul to Christ, to be graciously received, and presented to the Father. . . .

The Father sets His love upon His elect people who live in the midst of men. These are the people whom Christ has redeemed by the price of His own blood; and because they respond to the drawing of Christ, through the sovereign mercy of God, they are elected to be saved as His obedient children. Upon them is manifested the free grace of God, the love wherewith He hath loved them. Everyone who will humble himself as a little child, who will receive and obey the word of God with a child's simplicity, will be among the elect of God.—*Our High Calling*, p. 77.

With the beloved John I call upon you to “behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” What love, what matchless love, that, sinners and aliens as we are, we may be brought back to God and adopted into His family! We may address Him by the endearing name, “Our Father,” which is a sign of our affection for Him and a pledge of His tender regard and relationship to us. . . .

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and

compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 739, 740.

Wednesday, August 10: Our Father's Plans for Us

Let us be hopeful and courageous. . . . [God] knows our every necessity. He has all power. He can bestow upon His servants the measure of efficiency that their need demands. His infinite love and compassion never weary. With the majesty of omnipotence He unites the gentleness and care of a tender shepherd. We need have no fear that He will not fulfill His promises. He is eternal truth. Never will He change the covenant that He has made with those that love Him. His promises to His church stand fast forever. He will make her an eternal excellence, a joy of many generations.

Study the forty-first chapter of Isaiah, and strive to understand it in all its significance. . . .

He who has chosen Christ has joined himself to a power that no array of human wisdom or strength can overthrow. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee," He declares; "be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee Fear not; I will help thee." Verses 10, 13.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 38, 39.

God is Himself the source of all mercy. His name is "merciful and gracious." Exodus 34:6. He does not treat us according to our desert. He does not ask if we are worthy of His love, but He pours upon us the riches of His love, to make us worthy. He is not vindictive. He seeks not to punish, but to redeem. Even the severity which He manifests through His providences is manifested for the salvation of the wayward. He yearns with intense desire to relieve the woes of men and to apply His balsam to their wounds.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 22.

The purpose which God seeks to accomplish through His people today is the same that He desired to accomplish through Israel when He brought them forth out of Egypt. By beholding the goodness, the mercy, the justice, and the love of God revealed in the church, the world is to have a representation of His character. And when the law of God is thus exemplified in the life, even the world will recognize the superiority of

those who love and fear and serve God above every other people on the earth. The Lord has His eye upon every one of His people; He has His plans concerning each. It is His purpose that those who practice His holy precepts shall be a distinguished people. To the people of God today as well as to ancient Israel belong the words written by Moses through the Spirit of Inspiration: "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Deuteronomy 7:6. . . .

Even these words fail of expressing the greatness and the glory of God's purpose to be accomplished through His people. Not to this world only but to the universe are we to make manifest the principles of His kingdom.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 12, 13.

Thursday, August 11: Our Father's Discipline

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

Many who profess the name of Christ and claim to be looking for His speedy coming, know not what it is to suffer for Christ's sake. Their hearts are not subdued by grace, and they are not dead to self, as is often shown in various ways. At the same time they are talking of having trials. But the principal cause of their trials is an unsubdued heart, which makes self so sensitive that it is often crossed. If such could realize what it is to be a humble follower of Christ, a true Christian, they would begin to work in good earnest and begin right. They would first die to self, then be instant in prayer, and check every passion of the heart. Give up your self-confidence and self-sufficiency, brethren, and follow the meek Pattern. Ever keep Jesus in your mind that He is your example and you must tread in His footsteps. Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself. He for our sins was once the meek, slain lamb, wounded, bruised, smitten, and afflicted.

Let us, then, cheerfully suffer something for Jesus' sake, crucify self daily, and be partakers of Christ's sufferings here, that we may be made partakers with Him of His glory, and be crowned with glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life.—*Early Writings*, pp. 113, 114.

If we hope to wear the crown, we must expect to bear the cross. Our greatest trials will come from those who profess godliness. It was so with the world's Redeemer; it will be so with His followers. . . . Those who are in earnest to win the crown of eternal life need not be surprised or disheartened because at every step toward the heavenly Canaan they meet with obstacles and encounter trials. . . .

The Saviour knows what is best. Faith grows by conflict with doubt and difficulty and trial. Virtue gathers strength by resistance to temptation. . . . John in holy vision beholds the faithful souls that come up out of great tribulation, surrounding the throne of God, clad in white robes, and crowned with immortal glory. . . . Their faithfulness to God and to His Word stands revealed, and Heaven's high honors are awarded them as conquerors.—*Our High Calling*, p. 361.

Friday, August 12: For Further Reading

This Day With God, “Rejoice in the Lord,” p. 156;
Education, “The School of the Hereafter,” pp. 301–309.

Lesson 8

Seeing the Invisible

Sabbath Afternoon, August 13

It is faith that enables us to look beyond the present, with its burdens and cares, to the great hereafter, where all that now perplexes us shall be made plain. Faith sees Jesus standing as our Mediator at the right hand of God. Faith beholds the mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for those who love Him. Faith sees the robe and crown prepared for the overcomer, and hears the song of the redeemed. . . .

Faith is not feeling. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” [Hebrews 11:1.] True faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption, for presumption is Satan’s counterfeit of faith.—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 259, 260.

Many have their present wants supplied; yet they will not trust the Lord for the future. They manifest unbelief and sink into despondency and gloom at anticipated want. Some are in continual trouble lest they shall come to want and their children suffer. When difficulties arise or when they are brought into strait places—when their faith and their love to God are tested—they shrink from the trial and murmur at the process by which God has chosen to purify them. Their love does not prove pure and perfect, to bear all things.

The faith of the people of the God of heaven should be strong, active, and enduring—the substance of things hoped for. Then the language of such will be, “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name,” for He hath dealt bountifully with me.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 128, 129.

Jesus does not call on us to follow Him, and then forsake us. If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for

which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. If in our ignorance we make missteps, Christ does not leave us. His voice, clear and distinct, is heard, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." [John 14:6.] "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper." [Psalm 72:12.]

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." [Isaiah 26:3.] The arm of Omnipotence is outstretched to lead us onward and still onward. Go forward, the Lord says; I will send you help. It is for My name's glory that you ask; and you shall receive. Those who are watching for your failure shall yet see My word triumph gloriously. "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." [Matthew 21:22.]—*Gospel Workers*, p. 263.

Sunday, August 14: Our Father's Extravagance

The Father's presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. Whatever comes to him comes from the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Nothing can touch him except by the Lord's permission. All our sufferings and sorrows, all our temptations and trials, all our sadness and griefs, all our persecutions and privations, in short, all things work together for our good. All experiences and circumstances are God's workmen whereby good is brought to us.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 488, 489.

[God's] love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise.

God is our Father and Governor. . . . The principles which rule in heaven should rule upon earth, the same love that animates the angels, the same purity and holiness that reign in heaven, should, as far as possible, be reproduced upon earth.

If you call God your Father, you acknowledge yourselves His children, to be guided by His wisdom and to be obedient in all things, knowing that His love is changeless. You will accept His plan for your life. As children of God, you will hold His honor, His character, His family, His work, as the objects of your highest interest. It will be your joy to recognize and honor your relation to your Father and to every member of His family. You will rejoice to do any act, however humble, that will tend to His glory or to the well-being of your kindred.—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 65.

When [God] gave Himself in Christ for the sin of the world, He undertook the case of every soul. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32. Will He not fulfill the gracious word given for our encouragement and strength?

Christ desires nothing so much as to redeem His heritage from the dominion of Satan. But before we are delivered from Satan's power without, we must be delivered from his power within. The Lord permits trials in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from harsh, unchristlike traits of character. He suffers the deep waters of affliction to go over our souls in order that we may know Him and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, in order that we may have deep heart longings to be cleansed from defilement, and may come forth from the trial purer, holier, happier. Often we enter the furnace of trial with our souls darkened with selfishness; but if patient under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine character.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 174, 175.

Monday, August 15: In the Name of Jesus

“If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” [John 14:14]. . . .

“In my name,” Christ bade His disciples pray. In Christ’s name His followers are to stand before God. Through the value of the sacrifice made for them, they are of value in the Lord’s sight. Because of the imputed righteousness of Christ they are accounted precious. For Christ’s sake the Lord pardons those that fear Him. He does not see in them the vileness of the sinner. He recognizes in them the likeness of His Son, in whom they believe.

The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He has placed upon them. God wanted them, else He would not have sent His Son on such an expensive errand to redeem them. He has a use for them, and He is well pleased when they make the very highest demands upon Him, that they may glorify His name. They may expect larger things if they have faith in His promises.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 667, 668.

To talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul-hunger and living faith, avails nothing. A nominal faith in Christ, which accepts Him merely as the Saviour of the world, can never bring healing to the soul. The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth. He who waits for entire knowledge before he will exercise faith, cannot receive blessing from God.

It is not enough to believe *about* Christ; we must believe *in* Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. But saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 260, 261.

[The disciples] met together to present their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus. They knew that they had a Representative in heaven, an

Advocate at the throne of God. In solemn awe they bowed in prayer, repeating the assurance, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:23, 24. Higher and still higher they extended the hand of faith, with the mighty argument, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Romans 8:34.

As the disciples waited for the fulfillment of the promise, they humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief. As they called to remembrance the words that Christ had spoken to them before His death they understood more fully their meaning. . . . As they meditated upon His pure, holy life they felt that no toil would be too hard, no sacrifice too great, if only they could bear witness in their lives to the loveliness of Christ's character.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 35, 36.

Tuesday, August 16: The Power of the Resurrection

To the believer, Christ is the resurrection and the life. In our Saviour the life that was lost through sin is restored; for He has life in Himself to quicken whom He will. He is invested with the right to give immortality. The life that He laid down in humanity, He takes up again, and gives to humanity. "I am come," He said, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." . . . John 10:10. . . .

. . . The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church, and glorify it with Him, above all principalities, above all powers, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 786, 787.

We may rejoice in hope. Our Advocate is in the heavenly sanctuary, pleading in our behalf. Through His merits we have pardon and peace. He died that He might wash away our sins, clothe us with His righteousness, and fit us for the society of heaven, where we may dwell in light forever. . . . [W]hen Satan would fill your mind with despondency, gloom, and doubt, resist his suggestions. Tell him of the blood of Jesus, that cleanses from all sin. You cannot save yourself from the tempter's power, but he trembles and flees when the merits of that precious blood are urged. Then will you not gratefully accept the blessings Jesus bestows? Will you not take the cup of salvation that He presents, and call on the name of the Lord? . . .

. . . If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer. We would abound more and more in the love of God and have more bestowed to praise Him for.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 316, 317.

Genuine faith is life, and where there is life there is growth. The life which Jesus imparts cannot but grow more and more abundantly. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power. He who drinks of the water of life which Jesus gives, possesses within himself a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Though it shall be cut off from all created springs, it is fed

from the hidden fountain. It is a perpetual spring, in immediate communication with the inexhaustible fountain of life.

The Lord is dishonored when any who profess His name have an emptiness. This misrepresents God. Nothing but Christ manifested in spirit and life and character can reveal God to a world that knows Him not. The soul renewed in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, demonstrates its divine fullness in a living, growing experience—even the fullness of Him that filleth all things.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 227.

Wednesday, August 17: To Carry All Our Worry

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

To praise God in fullness and sincerity of heart is as much a duty as is prayer. We are to show to the world and to all the heavenly intelligences that we appreciate the wonderful love of God for fallen humanity and that we are expecting larger and yet larger blessings from His infinite fullness. Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience. After a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, our joy in the Lord and our efficiency in His service would be greatly increased by recounting His goodness and His wonderful works in behalf of His children.

These exercises drive back the power of Satan. They expel the spirit of murmuring and complaint, and the tempter loses ground. They cultivate those attributes of character which will fit the dwellers on earth for the heavenly mansions.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 299, 300.

Tenderly [Jesus] bade the toiling people, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:29.

In these words, Christ was speaking to every human being. Whether they know it or not, all are weary and heavy-laden. All are weighed down with burdens that only Christ can remove. The heaviest burden that we bear is the burden of sin. If we were left to bear this burden, it would crush us. But the Sinless One has taken our place. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6.

. . . He invites us to cast all our care upon Him; for He carries us upon His heart.

. . . He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. The Lord “telleteth the number of the stars;” and yet “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Psalm 147:4, 3.

Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be open for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon your Burden Bearer.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 71, 72.

Thursday, August 18: Still Faithful When God Cannot Be Seen

Faith takes God at His word, not asking to understand the meaning of the trying experiences that come. But there are many who have little faith. They are always fearing and borrowing trouble. Every day they are surrounded by the tokens of God's love, every day they enjoy the bounties of His providence; but they overlook these blessings. And the difficulties they encounter, instead of driving them to God, separate them from Him, by arousing unrest and repining.

Do they well to be thus unbelieving? Jesus is their friend. All heaven is interested in their welfare, and their fear and repining grieve the Holy Spirit. Not because we see or feel that God hears us are we to believe. We are to trust His promises. When we come to Him in faith, we should believe that every petition enters into the heart of Christ. When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it, and thank Him that we have it. Then we are to go about our duties, assured that the blessing will be sent when we need it most. When we have learned to do this, we shall know that our prayers are answered. God will do for us "exceeding abundantly," "according to the riches of His glory," and "the working of His mighty power." [Ephesians 3:20, 16, 19.]—*Gospel Workers*, p. 261.

Workers for God will meet with turmoil, discomfort, and weariness. At times, uncertain and distracted, the heart is almost in despair. When this restless nervousness comes, the worker should stop and rest. Christ invites him, "Come . . . apart, . . . and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. . . . They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:29-31). . . .

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord" (Psalm 27:14). "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord" (Lamentations 3:26).—*Lift Him Up*, p. 263.

Friday, August 19: For Further Reading

That I May Know Him, “I Pray for Guidance,” p. 266;

Reflecting Christ, “Prayer Is Appropriate Anytime, Anywhere,” p. 122;

Lesson 9

A Life of Praise

Sabbath Afternoon, August 20

Take the word of Christ as your assurance. Has He not invited you to come unto Him? Never allow yourself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way. If you do you will lose much. By looking at appearances and complaining when difficulties and pressure come, you give evidence of [an] enfeebled faith. Talk and act as if your faith was invincible. The Lord is rich in resources; He owns the world. Look heavenward in faith. Look to Him who has light and power and efficiency.

There is in genuine faith a buoyancy, a steadfastness of principle, and a fixedness of purpose that neither time nor toil can weaken. “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:30, 31.—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 146, 147.

Often the Christian life is beset with dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage and death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, Go forward. Let us obey the command, even though our sight cannot penetrate the darkness. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every uncertainty disappears, and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey. Faith looks beyond the difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen, even Omnipotence, therefore it cannot be baffled. Faith is the clasping of the hand of Christ in every emergency.—*Gospel Workers*, p. 262.

The Lord desires us to make mention of His goodness and tell of His power. He is honored by the expression of praise and thanksgiving. He says, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.” Psalm 50:23. The people of

Israel, as they journeyed through the wilderness, praised God in sacred song. The commandments and promises of the Lord were set to music, and all along the journey these were sung by the pilgrim travelers. And in Canaan as they met at their sacred feasts God's wonderful works were to be recounted, and grateful thanksgiving was to be offered to His name. God desired that the whole life of His people should be a life of praise. Thus His way was to be made "known upon earth," His "saving health among all nations." Psalm 67:2.

So it should be now. . . .

The Lord desires us to . . . serve Him in newness of life, with gladness every day. He longs to see gratitude welling up in our hearts because our names are written in the Lamb's book of life, because we may cast all our care upon Him who cares for us. He bids us rejoice because we are the heritage of the Lord, because the righteousness of Christ is the white robe of His saints, because we have the blessed hope of the soon coming of our Saviour.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 298, 299.

Sunday, August 21: Framework for Praise

“In everything give thanks” (1 Thessalonians 5:18) for the keeping power of God through Jesus Christ. . . . At the moment when you are offering your prayer for help you may not feel all the joy and blessing that you would like to feel, but if you believe that Christ will hear and answer your petition, the peace of Christ will come. . . .

If you take hold of the strength of the mighty Helper, and not reason with your adversary and never complain of God, His promises will be verified. The experience that you gain today in trusting Him will help you in meeting the difficulties of tomorrow. Each day you are to come, trusting as a little child drawing nearer to Jesus and heaven. In meeting with unwavering trust in God the daily trials and difficulties, you will again and again test the promises of Heaven, and each time you will learn a lesson of faith. Thus you will gain strength to resist temptation, and when the harder trials come, you will be able to endure.—*Our High Calling*, p. 326.

“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing”—that is, be not overanxious—“but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” What a privilege is this given to everyone to trust in Jesus and tell Him everything! “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4–7).

Have faith in God. However stormy may be the times, looking unto Jesus who is the author and the finisher of your faith, you will be complete in Him. Abide in the old paths, whoever may turn back. Be rooted and grounded and built up in the most holy faith, a living epistle known and read of all men.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 212.

[Late in 1891, Ellen G. White . . . journeyed to Australia to assist in strengthening the newly established work there. . . . Soon after her arrival she was overtaken by an extended and painful illness. The following items record her fortitude in this affliction.—Compilers.] . . .

. . . In the long weary hours of the night, when sleep has been out of the question, I have devoted much time to prayer; and when every nerve seemed to be shrieking with pain, when if I considered myself, it seemed I should go frantic, the peace of Christ has come into my heart in such measure that I have been filled with gratitude and thanksgiving. I know that Jesus loves me, and I love Jesus. Some nights I have slept three hours, a few nights four hours, and much of the time only two, and yet in these long Australian nights, in the darkness, all seems light about me, and I enjoy sweet communion with God.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 233, 234.

Monday, August 22: Praying Down Walls

All was silent, save the measured tread of many feet, and the occasional sound of the trumpet, breaking the stillness of the early morning. The massive walls of solid stone seemed to defy the siege of men. . . . As the seventh circuit was completed, the long procession paused, the trumpets, which for an interval had been silent, now broke forth in a blast that shook the very earth. The walls of solid stone, with their massive towers and battlements, tottered and heaved from their foundations, and with a crash fell in ruin to the earth. The inhabitants of Jericho were paralyzed with terror, and the hosts of Israel marched in and took possession of the city.

The Israelites had not gained the victory by their own power; the conquest had been wholly the Lord's; and as the first fruits of the land, the city, with all that it contained, was to be devoted as a sacrifice to God. It was to be impressed upon Israel that in the conquest of Canaan they were not to fight for themselves, but simply as instruments to execute the will of God; not to seek for riches or self-exaltation, but the glory of Jehovah their King.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 491.

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.” Hebrews 11:30. . . . [The] plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls afforded opportunity for the development of faith among the Israelites. It was to be impressed upon their minds that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to relying wholly upon their divine Leader.

God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 493.

This [sixty-sixth] psalm and portions of the sixty-eighth and seventy-second psalms were often sung by Christ. Thus in the most simple and unassuming way He taught others.

. . . Would it not be well to cultivate gratitude, and to offer grateful songs of thanksgiving to God? As Christians we ought to praise God more than we do. We ought to bring more of the brightness of His love into our lives. As by faith we look to Jesus His joy and peace are reflected from the countenances. How earnestly we should seek so to relate ourselves to God that our faces may reflect the sunshine of His love! When our own souls are vivified by the Holy Spirit, we shall exert an uplifting influence upon others who know not the joy of Christ's presence.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1148.

Tuesday, August 23: The Life of Praise

The Lord is good, and greatly to be praised. Let us learn to praise Him with our voices, and to realize that at all times we are in excellent companionship—even with God and with His Son, Jesus. We are a spectacle to the unfallen worlds, to angels, and to our fellow men. A realization of this will lead us to go forth as the Lord may direct, with a firm, well-garrisoned heart.—*This Day With God*, p. 238.

“O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! . . . When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” “All thy works praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee” (Psalm 8:1, 3, 4; Psalm 145:10).

. . . The goodness, wisdom, and power of God are manifest everywhere. In mountains, rocks, hills, and valleys, I see the works of divine power. I can never be lonely while viewing the grand scenery of nature. On the journey over the plains and mountains I have had feelings of the deepest reverence and awe while viewing the frowning precipice and snow-capped mountain heights.

The mountains, hills, and valleys should be to us as schools in which to study the character of God in His created works. The works of God which we may view in the ever-varying scenes—in mountains, hills, and valleys, in trees, shrubs, and flowers, in every leaf, every spire of grass—should teach us lessons of the skill and love of God and of His infinite power.

Those who study nature cannot be lonesome. They love the quiet hours of meditation, for they feel that they are brought in close communion with God while tracing His power in His created works.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 9.

We are not only to contemplate the glory of Christ, but also to speak of His excellences. Isaiah not only beheld the glory of Christ, but he also spoke of Him. While David mused, the fire burned; then spoke he with his tongue. While he mused upon the wondrous love of God he could not but speak of that which he saw and felt. Who can by faith behold the

wonderful plan of redemption, the glory of the only-begotten Son of God, and not speak of it? Who can contemplate the unfathomable love that was manifested upon the cross of Calvary in the death of Christ, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life—who can behold this and have no words with which to extol the Saviour’s glory?

“In His temple doth everyone speak of His glory.” Psalm 29:9. The sweet singer of Israel praised Him upon the harp, saying, “I will speak of the glorious honor of Thy majesty, and of Thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of Thy terrible acts: and I will declare Thy greatness.” Psalm 145:5, 6.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 43, 44.

Wednesday, August 24: A Witness Who Convicts

The keeper of the jail had heard with amazement the prayers and songs of the imprisoned apostles. When they were led in, he had seen their swollen and bleeding wounds, and had himself caused their feet to be fastened in the stocks. He had expected to hear from them bitter groans and imprecations, but he heard instead songs of joy and praise. With these sounds in his ears the jailer had fallen into a sleep from which he was awakened by the earthquake and the shaking of the prison walls. . . .

The severity with which the jailer had treated the apostles had not aroused their resentment. Paul and Silas had the spirit of Christ, not the spirit of revenge. Their hearts, filled with the love of the Saviour, had no room for malice against their persecutors. . . .

. . . A sanctifying influence diffused itself among the inmates of the prison, and the minds of all were opened to listen to the truths spoken by the apostles. They were convinced that the God whom these men served had miraculously released them from bondage.

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 215–217.

The apostles counted not their lives dear unto themselves, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. Paul and Silas suffered the loss of all things. They suffered scourging, and were in no gentle manner thrown upon the cold floor of a dungeon in a most painful position, their feet elevated and fastened in the stocks. Did repinings and complaints then reach the ear of the jailer? Oh, no! From the inner prison, voices broke the silence of midnight with songs of joy and praise to God. These disciples were cheered by a deep and earnest love for the cause of their Redeemer, for which they suffered.

As the truth of God fills our hearts, absorbs our affections, and controls our lives, we also will count it joy to suffer for the truth's sake. No prison walls, no martyr's stake, can then daunt or hinder us in the great work.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 406, 407.

Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith, courage, and hope,

and sweet with the fragrance of love. . . . By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected. . . .

. . . The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence. By revealing in our own life the character of Christ we co-operate with Him in the work of saving souls. It is only by revealing in our life His character that we can co-operate with Him. And the wider the sphere of our influence, the more good we may do. When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 339, 340.

Thursday, August 25: A Weapon That Conquers

With confidence Jehoshaphat could say to the Lord, “Our eyes are upon Thee.” For years he had taught the people to trust in the One who in past ages had so often interposed to save His chosen ones from utter destruction; and now, when the kingdom was in peril, Jehoshaphat did not stand alone; “all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.” Unitedly they fasted and prayed; unitedly they besought the Lord to put their enemies to confusion, that the name of Jehovah might be glorified. . . .

God was the strength of Judah in this crisis, and He is the strength of His people today. We are not to trust in princes, or to set men in the place of God. We are to remember that human beings are fallible and erring, and that He who has all power is our strong tower of defense. In every emergency we are to feel that the battle is His. His resources are limitless, and apparent impossibilities will make the victory all the greater.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 217.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will never betray your trust. If you will ask help of God you need not ask in vain. In order to encourage us to have confidence and trust He comes near us by His holy Word and Spirit, and seeks in a thousand ways to win our confidence. But in nothing does He take more delight than in receiving the weak who come to Him for strength. If we will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to find an ear to hear and an arm to save.

There is not a single instance in which God has hidden His face from the supplication of His people. When every other resource failed He was a present help in every emergency. God bless you, poor, stricken, wounded soul. Cling to His hand; hold fast. He will take you, your children, and all your griefs and burdens if you will only cast them all upon Him.—Letter 42, July 4, 1875.

If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer. We would abound more and more in the love of God and have more bestowed to praise Him for.

You who complain that God does not hear your prayers, change your present order and mingle praise with your petitions. When you consider His goodness and mercies you will find that He will consider your wants. .

..

Our God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, declares: “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.” All heaven unite in praising God. Let us learn the song of the angels now, that we may sing it when we join their shining ranks. Let us say with the psalmist: “While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.” “Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 317–319.

Friday, August 26: For Further Reading

Sons and Daughters of God, “Be Strong, for God Is With Us,” p. 202;
Patriarchs and Prophets, “The Fall of Jericho,” pp. 487–498.

Lesson 10

Meekness in the Crucible

Sabbath Afternoon, August 27

Christ's Sermon on the Mount declares who are the truly blessed: "Blessed are the poor in spirit [those who are not self-exalted, but candid, and of a humble disposition, not too proud to be taught, not vain and ambitious for the honors of the world]: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn [those who are penitential, submissive, and who grieve over their failures and errors because the Spirit of God is grieved]: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek [those who are gentle and forgiving, who, when reviled, will not revile again, but who manifest a teachable spirit, and do not hold themselves in high esteem]: for they shall inherit the earth." Those who possess the qualifications here enumerated will not only be blessed of God here in this life, but will be crowned with glory, honor, and immortality in His kingdom.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 631.

In [Christ's] sermon on the mount, the very first sentences that came from His lips were calculated to lay . . . ambitions low in the dust. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," He said, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. . . . Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

This whole sermon was an exposition of the law. Christ presented the far-reaching claims of the law of God. He tried to correct their high imaginings by exalting true sentiments, and proclaiming a blessing upon those traits of character that were entirely opposite to the attributes they were cherishing. He presented before them a kingdom where human

ambitions and earthly passions cannot find an entrance.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 135.

Meekness is a precious, Christian attribute. The meekness and lowliness of Christ are only learned by wearing Christ's yoke. . . . That yoke signifies entire submission.

The heavenly universe looks upon an absence of meekness and lowliness of heart. The self-exaltation, the feeling of swelling importance, makes the human agent so large in his own estimation that he feels that he has no need of a Saviour, no need to wear Christ's yoke. But the invitation to each soul is, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29). . . .

The submission which Christ demands [is] brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit. There must be a transformation of the entire being, heart, soul, and character. . . . Only at the altar of sacrifice, and from the hand of God, can the selfish, grasping man receive the celestial torch which reveals his own incompetence and leads him to submit to Christ's yoke, to learn His meekness and lowliness.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 236.

Sunday, August 28: “Broken Bread and Poured-Out Wine”

[Moses] had been highly honored of God, being privileged to talk with the Lord face to face, as a man speaks with a friend. He was permitted to see the bright light and excellent glory that enshrouded the Father. The Lord through Moses delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Moses was a mediator for his people, often standing between them and the wrath of God. When the anger of the Lord was greatly kindled against Israel for their unbelief, their murmurings, and their grievous sins, Moses' love for them was tested. God proposed to destroy them and to make of him a mighty nation. Moses showed his love for Israel by his earnest pleading in their behalf. In his distress he prayed God to turn from His fierce anger and forgive Israel, or blot his name out of His book.—*Early Writings*, pp. 162, 163.

It was through suffering that Jesus obtained the ministry of consolation. In all the affliction of humanity He is afflicted; and “in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Isaiah 63:9; Hebrews 2:18. In this ministry every soul that has entered into the fellowship of His sufferings is privileged to share. . . . The Lord has special grace for the mourner, and its power is to melt hearts, to win souls. His love opens a channel into the wounded and bruised soul, and becomes a healing balsam to those who sorrow. “The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort . . . comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 13.

The difficulties we have to encounter may be very much lessened by that meekness which hides itself in Christ. If we possess the humility of our Master, we shall rise above the slights, the rebuffs, the annoyances, to which we are daily exposed, and they will cease to cast a gloom over the spirit. The highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control. He who under abuse or cruelty fails to maintain a calm and trustful spirit robs God of His right to reveal in him His own perfection of character.

Lowliness of heart is the strength that gives victory to the followers of Christ; it is the token of their connection with the courts above.

. . . Those who reveal the meek and lowly spirit of Christ are tenderly regarded by God. They may be looked upon with scorn by the world, but they are of great value in His sight. . . . [The] poor in spirit, who crave the presence of an abiding Christ, the humble in heart, whose highest ambition is to do God's will,—these will gain an abundant entrance [to Heaven]. They will be among that number who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 301, 302.

Monday, August 29: Interceding for Grace

Moses was a humble man; God called him the meekest man on earth. . . . He could successfully exhort his fellow-men, because his life itself was a living representation of what man can become and accomplish with God as his helper, of what he taught to others, of what he desired them to be, and of what God required of him. He spoke from the heart and it reached the heart. He was accomplished in knowledge and yet simple as a child in the manifestation of his deep sympathies. Endowed with a remarkable instinct, he could judge instantly of the needs of all who surrounded him, and of the things which were in bad condition and required attention, and he did not neglect them. . . .

. . . God talked with him face to face, as a man talks with a friend.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1113.

Moses realized how dreadful would be the fate of the sinner; yet if the people of Israel were to be rejected by the Lord, he desired his name to be blotted out with theirs; he could not endure to see the judgments of God fall upon those who had been so graciously delivered. The intercession of Moses in behalf of Israel illustrates the mediation of Christ for sinful men. But the Lord did not permit Moses to bear, as did Christ, the guilt of the transgressor. “Whosoever hath sinned against Me,” He said, “him will I blot out of My book.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 326, 327.

God’s children are not to be subject to feelings and emotions. When they fluctuate between hope and fear, the heart of Christ is hurt; for He has given them unmistakable evidence of His love. He wants them to be established, strengthened, and settled in the most holy faith. He wants them to do the work He has given them; then their hearts will become in His hands as sacred harps, every chord of which will send forth praise and thanksgiving to the One sent by God to take away the sins of the world.

Christ’s love for His children is as tender as it is strong. . . . It is without variableness or shadow of turning—the same yesterday, today, and forever.

. . .

God loves the sinless angels, who do His service and are obedient to all His commands; but He does not give them grace; they have never needed it, for they have never sinned. Grace is an attribute shown to undeserving human beings. We did not seek after it; it was sent in search of us. God rejoices to bestow grace upon all who hunger and thirst for it, not because we are worthy, but because we are unworthy. Our need is the qualification which gives us the assurance that we shall receive the gift.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 518, 519.

Tuesday, August 30: Loving Those Who Hurt Us

Do not allow bitter thoughts to continue to fill your mind. . . . Go to your brother and in humility and sincerity talk with him about the matter. . . .

All heaven is interested in the interview between the one who has been injured and the one who is in error. . . . The oil of love removes the soreness caused by the wrong. The Spirit of God binds heart to heart, and there is music in heaven over the union brought about. . . .

. . . It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity. Even sinners whose hearts are not utterly closed to God's Spirit will respond to kindness. . . . [It] is only the Spirit of God that gives love for hatred. To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the royalty of heaven, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate.—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, pp. 529, 530.

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. . . .

The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. . . . Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of man; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was God in the flesh. His character is to be ours. The Lord says of those who believe in Him, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 2 Corinthians 6:16.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 311.

All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son. . . .

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. . . .

“Love your enemies,” He bade them; “bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven;” “for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” Matthew 5:44, 45; Luke 6:35, 36.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 286, 287.

Wednesday, August 31: A Closed Mouth

We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. . . . Whatever others may think of us or do to us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit. “What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” 1 Peter 2:20. . . .

If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit. Remember that “a soft answer turneth away wrath.” Proverbs 15:1. And there is wonderful power in silence. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry sometimes serve only to exasperate. But anger met with silence, in a tender, forbearing spirit, quickly dies away.

Under a storm of stinging, faultfinding words, keep the mind stayed upon the word of God. Let mind and heart be stored with God’s promises. If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the precious promises.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 485, 486.

It is not how much feeling we manifest over injustice in treatment that evidences strength of character, but it is the self-control, the firm check put upon a strong emotion, that evidences strength of character and the spirit of Jesus. The tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God is to be given to the overcomer. It is the reward given to conquest, to toil and self-sacrifice, to the working Christian who will fight the good fight of faith. We must be nobly striving and fighting for the victory. The grace of Christ will be given to all who fight lawfully.

. . . Take as little notice as possible of what people say. Let them say what they will, but do not by word or deportment show the rising up of self. The Lord would have you pursue such a course that you will be considered worthy of trust and confidence. . . . If you evidence that you have a firm reliance upon God, you will gain respect and confidence and then you will exert an influence for good. You will let your light shine forth to the best advantage. You will seek to represent Jesus. You know our Saviour was reviled, but He reviled not again. He was despised and

rejected of men; and can His followers expect anything better in this life? May our gracious heavenly Father impart to each of us more grace and may we rejoice in His love.—Letter 99, June 18, 1886.

A Christian will cultivate a meek and quiet spirit; he will be calm, considerate of others, and will have a happy temper that sickness will not make irritable or the weather or circumstances disturb. . . . The children of God never forget to do good. Good works are spontaneous with them, for God has transformed their natures by His grace.—*My Life Today*, p. 193.

Thursday, September 1: Our Rock and Refuge

Our enemies may triumph. They may speak lying words, and their slandering tongue frame slander, deceit, guile; yet will we not be moved. We know in whom we believe. We have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. Jesus knows us. . . . A reckoning day is coming and all will be judged according to the deeds that are done in the body. . . .

It is true the world is dark. Opposition may wax strong. The trifler and scorner may grow bolder and harder in their iniquity. Yet, for all this, we will not be moved. We have not run as uncertain. No, no. My heart is fixed, trusting in God. We have a whole Saviour. We can rejoice in His rich fullness. I long to be more devoted to God, more consecrated to Him. This world is too dark for me. Jesus said He would go away and prepare mansions for us, that where He is we may be also. Praise God for this. My heart leaps with joy at the cheering prospect.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 351.

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

. . . A divine element combines with the human when the soul reaches out after God and the longing heart can say, “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him.” Psalm 62:5.

If you have a sense of need in your soul, if you hunger and thirst after righteousness, this is an evidence that Christ has wrought upon your heart, in order that He may be sought unto to do for you, through the endowment of the Holy Spirit, those things which it is impossible for you to do for yourself. We need not seek to quench our thirst at shallow streams; for the great fountain is just above us, of whose abundant waters we may freely drink, if we will rise a little higher in the pathway of faith. —*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 19.

Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! . . .

The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 94, 95.

Friday, September 2: For Further Reading

Reflecting Christ, “Christ a Perfect Example for All,” p. 37;
Evangelism, “The Worker and His Qualifications,” p. 630.

Lesson 11

Waiting in the Crucible

Sabbath Afternoon, September 3

Christ presented to men that which was entirely contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the love of the Father, who “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them and treated them despitefully. In all this He was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 29, 30.

The lives of His people are to reveal love, meekness, long-suffering. Long-suffering bears something, yea, many things, without seeking to be avenged by word or act.

“Long-suffering” is patience with offence; long endurance. If you are long-suffering, you will not impart to others your supposed knowledge of your brother’s mistakes and errors. You will seek to help and save him, because he has been purchased with the blood of Christ. “Tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” To be long-suffering is not to be gloomy and sad, sour and hardhearted; it is to be exactly the opposite.—*My Life Today*, p. 52.

I saw that those who profess the truth should hold the standard high, and induce others to come up to it. I saw that some would have to walk the straight path alone. Their companions and children will not walk the

self-denying pathway with them. Patience and forbearance should ever characterize the lives of those lone pilgrims, following the example of their blessed Master. They will have many trials to endure, but they have a hope that makes the soul strong, that bears them up above the trials of earth, that elevates them above scorn, derision and reproach. Those who possess a hope like this should never indulge a harsh, unkind spirit. This will only injure their own souls, and drive their friends farther from the truth. Treat them tenderly. Give them no occasion to reproach the cause of Christ; but never yield the truth to please any one. Be decided, be fixed, be established, be not of a doubtful mind.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, p. 266.

Sunday, September 4: The God of Patience

We may walk in the enjoyment of the truth. It need not be to us a yoke of bondage, but a consolation, a message to us of glad tidings of great joy, animating our hearts and causing us to make melody in our hearts unto God. Through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we have hope. The Christian hope is not gloomy, comfortless. Oh, no, no. It does not shut us up in a prison of doubts and fears. The truth makes free those who love and are sanctified through it. They walk in the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

We who claim to believe the truth should reveal its fruits in our words and character. We are to be far advanced in a knowledge of Jesus Christ, in the reception of His love for God and for our neighbor, in order to have the sunlight of heaven shining in our daily life. Truth must reach down to the deepest recesses of the soul, and cleanse away everything unlike the spirit of Christ, and the vacuum be supplied by the attributes of His character who was pure and holy and undefiled, that all the springs of the heart may be as flowers, fragrant with perfume, a sweet-smelling savor, a savor of life unto life.—*Our High Calling*, p. 33.

When we are encompassed with doubt, perplexed by circumstances, or afflicted by poverty or distress, Satan seeks to shake our confidence in Jehovah. It is then that he arrays before us our mistakes and tempts us to distrust God, to question His love. He hopes to discourage the soul and break our hold on God.

. . . But God understands, and He still pities and loves. He reads the motives and the purposes of the heart. To wait patiently, to trust when everything looks dark, is the lesson that the leaders in God's work need to learn. Heaven will not fail them in their day of adversity. Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on God.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 174, 175.

The lessons that God sends will always, if well learned, bring help in due time. Put your trust in God. Pray much, and believe. Trusting, hoping,

believing, holding fast the hand of Infinite Power, you will be more than conquerors.

True workers walk and work by faith. Sometimes they grow weary with watching the slow advance of the work when the battle wages strong between the powers of good and evil. But if they refuse to fail or be discouraged they will see the clouds breaking away and the promise of deliverance fulfilling. Through the mist with which Satan has surrounded them, they will see the shining of the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

Work in faith, and leave results with God. Pray in faith, and the mystery of His providence will bring its answer. At times it may seem that you cannot succeed. But work and believe, putting into your efforts faith, hope, and courage. After doing what you can, wait for the Lord, declaring His faithfulness, and He will bring His word to pass. Wait, not in fretful anxiety, but in undaunted faith and unshaken trust.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 245.

Monday, September 5: In God's Time

I cannot read the purpose of God in my affliction, but He knows what is best, and I will commit my soul, body, and spirit to Him as unto my faithful Creator. "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12). If we educated and trained our souls to have more faith, more love, greater patience, and a more perfect trust in our heavenly Father, I know we would have more peace and happiness day by day as we pass through the conflicts of this life.

The Lord is not pleased to have us fret and worry ourselves out of the arms of Jesus. More is needed of the quiet waiting and watching combined. We think unless we have feeling that we are not in the right track, and we keep looking within for some sign befitting the occasion; but the reckoning is not of feeling but of faith.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 242.

We need not expect all sunshine in this world. Clouds and storms will cluster about us, and we must be prepared to keep our eyes directed where we saw the light last. Its rays may be hidden but they still live, still shine beyond the cloud. It is our work to wait, to watch, to pray, and to believe. We shall prize the light of the sun more highly after the clouds disappear. We shall see the salvation of God if we trust in God in the darkness as well as in the light.

All trials, all afflictions, all peace, all safety, health, hope, life, and success are in God's hands, and He can control them all for the good of His children. It is our privilege to be suppliants, to ask anything and everything of God, submitting our request in submission to His wise purposes and infinite will.—*Our High Calling*, p. 318.

God designs that His people shall fix their eyes heavenward, looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. While the attention of worldlings is turned to various enterprises, ours should be to the heavens; our faith should reach further and further into the glorious mysteries of the heavenly treasure, drawing the precious, divine rays of

light from the heavenly sanctuary to shine in our hearts, as they shine upon the face of Jesus. The scoffers mock the waiting, watching ones, and inquire: "Where is the promise of His coming? . . ." The waiting ones look upward and answer: "We are watching." And by turning from earthly pleasure and worldly fame, and from the deceitfulness of riches, they show themselves to be in that position. By watching they become strong; they overcome sloth and selfishness and love of ease. Affliction's fire kindles upon them, and the waiting time seems long. They sometimes grieve, and faith falters; but they rally again, overcome their fears and doubts, and while their eyes are directed heavenward, say to their adversaries: "I am watching, I am waiting the return of my Lord. I will glory in tribulation, in affliction, in necessities."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 194, 195.

Tuesday, September 6—David: An Object Lesson in Waiting

Hidden by the deep shadows of the hills, David and his attendant entered the encampment of the enemy. As they sought to ascertain the exact number of their foes, they came upon Saul sleeping, his spear stuck in the ground, and a cruse of water at his head. Beside him lay Abner, his chief commander, and all around them were the soldiers, locked in slumber. Abishai raised his spear, and said to David, “God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee. . . .” He waited for the word of permission; but there fell upon his ear the whispered words: “Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed, and be guiltless? . . . As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord’s anointed.” . . .

The second instance of David’s respect for his sovereign’s life made a still deeper impression upon the mind of Saul and brought from him a more humble acknowledgment of his fault. He was astonished and subdued at the manifestation of such kindness. In parting from David, Saul exclaimed, “Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail.” But the son of Jesse had no hope that the king would long continue in this frame of mind.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 668–672.

It is important to believe God’s word and act upon it promptly, while His angels are waiting to work for us. Evil angels are ready to contest every step of advance. And when God’s providence bids His children go forward, when He is ready to do great things for them, Satan tempts them to displease the Lord by hesitation and delay; he seeks to kindle a spirit of strife or to arouse murmuring or unbelief, and thus deprive them of the blessings that God desired to bestow. God’s servants should be minutemen, ever ready to move as fast as His providence opens the way. And delay on their part gives time for Satan to work to defeat them.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 423.

The Lord does not always choose for His work men of the greatest talents, but He selects those whom He can best use. Individuals who might do good service for God, may for a time be left in obscurity, apparently unnoticed and unemployed by their Master. But if they faithfully perform the duties of their humble position, cherishing a willingness to labor and to sacrifice for Him, He will in His own time entrust them with greater responsibilities.

Before honor is humility. The Lord can use most effectually those who are most sensible of their own unworthiness and inefficiency. He will teach them to exercise the courage of faith. He will make them strong by uniting their weakness to His might, wise by connecting their ignorance with His wisdom.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1003.

Wednesday, September 7—Elijah: The Problem of Rushing

God met His tried servant with the inquiry, “What doest thou here, Elijah?” I sent you to the brook Cherith and afterward to the widow of Sarepta. I commissioned you to return to Israel and to stand before the idolatrous priests on Carmel, and I girded you with strength to guide the chariot of the king to the gate of Jezreel. But who sent you on this hasty flight into the wilderness? What errand have you here? . . .

Much depends on the unceasing activity of those who are true and loyal, and for this reason Satan puts forth every possible effort to thwart the divine purpose to be wrought out through the obedient. He causes some to lose sight of their high and holy mission, and to become satisfied with the pleasures of this life. . . . Others he causes to flee in discouragement from duty, because of opposition or persecution. . . . To every child of God whose voice the enemy of souls has succeeded in silencing, the question is addressed, “What doest thou here?” I commissioned you to go into all the world and preach the gospel, to prepare a people for the day of God. Why are you here?—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 214.

Remember that prayer is the source of your strength. A worker cannot gain success while he hurries through his prayers and rushes away to look after something that he fears may be neglected or forgotten. He gives only a few hurried thoughts to God; he does not take time to think, to pray, to wait upon the Lord for a renewal of physical and spiritual strength. He soon becomes weary. He does not feel the uplifting, inspiring influence of God’s Spirit. He is not quickened by fresh life. His jaded frame and tired brain are not soothed by personal contact with Christ.

. . . There are those who work all day and far into the night to do what seems to them must be done. The Lord looks pityingly upon these weary, heavy-laden burden bearers and says to them: “Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, pp. 243, 244.

When men are as devoted as Elijah was and possess the faith that he had, God will reveal Himself as He did then. When men plead with the Lord as did Jacob, the results that were seen then will again be seen. Power will come from God in answer to the prayer of faith.

Because the life of Jesus was a life of constant trust, sustained by continual communion, His service for heaven was without failure or faltering. . . . Christ knew that He must strengthen His humanity by prayer. In order to be a blessing to men, He must commune with God, from Him obtaining energy, perseverance, steadfastness.—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 255, 256.

Thursday, September 8: Learning to Take Delight in the Lord

The psalmist says, “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.” Psalm 37:3. “Trust in the Lord.” Each day has its burdens, its cares and perplexities; and when we meet how ready we are to talk of our difficulties and trials. So many borrowed troubles intrude, so many fears are indulged, such a weight of anxiety is expressed, that one might suppose we had no pitying, loving Saviour ready to hear all our requests and to be to us a present help in every time of need.

Some are always fearing, and borrowing trouble. Every day they are surrounded with the tokens of God’s love; every day they are enjoying the bounties of His providence; but they overlook these present blessings. Their minds are continually dwelling upon something disagreeable which they fear may come; or some difficulty may really exist which, though small, blinds their eyes to the many things that demand gratitude.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 121, 122.

In every trial we have strong consolation. Is not our Saviour touched with the feeling of our infirmities? Has He not been tempted in all points like as we are? And has He not invited us to take every trial and perplexity to Him? Then let us not make ourselves miserable over tomorrow’s burdens. Bravely and cheerfully carry the burdens of today. Today’s trust and faith we must have. But we are not asked to live more than a day at a time. He who gives strength for today will give strength for tomorrow. . . .

Nothing wounds the soul like the sharp darts of unbelief. When trial comes, as it will, do not worry or complain. Silence in the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. “Then are they glad because they be quiet” (Psalm 107:30). Remember that underneath you are the everlasting arms. “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him” (Psalm 37:7). He is guiding you into a harbor of gracious experience.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 269.

We need to appreciate more fully the meaning of the words: “I sat down under His shadow with great delight.” Song of Solomon 2:3. These

words do not bring to our minds the picture of hasty transit, but of quiet rest. . . .

Let us turn from the dusty, heated thoroughfares of life to rest in the shadow of Christ's love. Here we gain strength for conflict. Here we learn how to lessen toil and worry, and how to speak and sing to the praise of God. Let the weary and the heavy-laden learn from Christ the lesson of quiet trust. They must sit under His shadow if they would be possessors of His peace and rest.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, pp. 69, 70.

Friday, September 9: For Further Reading

In Heavenly Places, “Graces to Cherish,” p. 244;

Testimonies for the Church, “Christian Forbearance,” vol. 5, pp. 331–336.

Lesson 12

Dying Like a Seed

Sabbath Afternoon, September 10

All who would bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ must first fall into the ground and die. The life must be cast into the furrow of the world's need. Self-love, self-interest, must perish. But the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation. The seed buried in the ground produces fruit, and in turn this is planted. Thus the harvest is multiplied. The husbandman preserves his grain by casting it away. So in human life, to give is to live. The life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man. Those who for Christ's sake sacrifice their life in this world, will keep it unto life eternal.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 86.

Those who till the soil have the illustration ever before them. Year by year man preserves his supply of grain by apparently throwing away the choicest part. For a time it must be hidden under the furrow, to be watched over by the Lord. Then appears the blade, then the ear, and then the corn in the ear. But this development cannot take place unless the grain is buried out of sight, hidden, and to all appearance, lost.

The seed buried in the ground produces fruit, and in turn this is planted. Thus the harvest is multiplied. So the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary will bear fruit unto eternal life. The contemplation of this sacrifice will be the glory of those who, as the fruit of it, will live through the eternal ages.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 623.

The reason many in this age of the world make no greater advancement in the divine life is because they interpret the will of God to be just what they will to do. While following their own desires, they flatter themselves that they are conforming to God's will. These have no conflicts with self. There are others who for a time are successful in the struggle against their selfish desire for pleasure and ease. They are sincere and earnest, but grow

weary of protracted effort, of daily death, of ceaseless turmoil. Indolence seems inviting, death to self repulsive; and they close their drowsy eyes and fall under the power of temptation instead of resisting it.

The directions laid down in the word of God leave no room for compromise with evil. The Son of God was manifested that He might draw all men unto Himself. He came not to lull the world to sleep, but to point out the narrow path in which all must travel who reach at last the gates of the City of God. His children must follow where He has led the way; at whatever sacrifice of ease or selfish indulgence, at whatever cost of labor or suffering, they must maintain a constant battle with self.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 565.

Sunday, September 11: Submission for Service

[Paul] bids us possess the mind “which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:4–8.

. . . [Paul] was convinced that if men could be led to consider the amazing sacrifice made by the Majesty of heaven, selfishness would be banished from their hearts. The apostle lingers over point after point, that we may in some measure comprehend the wonderful condescension of the Saviour in behalf of sinners. He directs the mind first to the position which Christ occupied in heaven in the bosom of His Father; he reveals Him afterward as laying aside His glory, voluntarily subjecting Himself to the humbling conditions of man’s life, assuming the responsibilities of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death, and that the most ignominious and revolting, the most agonizing—the death of the cross.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 501.

I was shown the Waldenses, and what they suffered for their religion. They conscientiously studied the word of God, and lived up to the light which shone upon them. They were persecuted, and driven from their homes; their possessions, gained by hard labor, were taken from them, and their houses burned. They fled to the mountains and there suffered incredible hardships. They endured hunger, fatigue, cold, and nakedness. The only clothing which many of them could obtain was the skins of animals. And yet the scattered and homeless ones would assemble to unite their voices in singing, and praising God that they were accounted worthy to suffer for Christ’s name. They encouraged and cheered one another, and were grateful for even their miserable retreat. Many of their children sickened and died from cold and hunger, yet the parents did not for a moment think of yielding their religion. They prized the love and favor of God far above earthly ease or worldly riches. They received consolation

from God and with pleasing anticipations looked forward to the recompense of reward.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 371.

[God] wants prayerful, faithful workers who will sow beside all waters. Those who labor thus will be surprised to find how trials, resolutely borne in the name and strength of Jesus, will give firmness to the faith and renew the courage. In the path of humble obedience is safety and power, comfort and hope; but the reward will finally be lost by those who do nothing for Jesus. Weak hands will be unable to cling to the Mighty One, feeble knees will fail to support in the day of adversity. Bible readers and Christian workers will receive the glorious prize, and hear the “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 76.

Monday, September 12: Dying Comes Before Knowing God's Will

Those who are seeking the righteousness of Christ will be dwelling upon the themes of the great salvation. The Bible is the storehouse that supplies their souls with nourishing food. They meditate upon the incarnation of Christ, they contemplate the great sacrifice made to save them from perdition, to bring in pardon, peace, and everlasting righteousness. The soul is aglow with these grand and elevating themes. Holiness and truth, grace and righteousness, occupy the thoughts. Self dies, and Christ lives in His servants. In contemplation of the word, their hearts burn within them, as did the hearts of the two disciples while they went to Emmaus, and Christ walked with them by the way, and opened to them the scriptures concerning Himself.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 87, 88.

Heaven will be cheap enough, if we obtain it through suffering. We must deny self all along the way, die to self daily, let Jesus alone appear, and keep His glory continually in view. I saw that those who of late have embraced the truth would have to know what it is to suffer for Christ's sake, that they would have trials to pass through that would be keen and cutting, in order that they may be purified and fitted through suffering to receive the seal of the living God. . . .

As I saw what we must be in order to inherit glory, and then saw how much Jesus had suffered to obtain for us so rich an inheritance, I prayed that we might be baptized into Christ's sufferings, that we might not shrink at trials, but bear them with patience and joy. . . . Said the angel, "Deny self; ye must step fast." Some of us have had time to get the truth and to advance step by step, and every step we have taken has given us strength to take the next. But now time is almost finished, and what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a few months. They will also have much to unlearn and much to learn again.—*Early Writings*, p. 67.

Christ is our example. For our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. He taught that all should come together in love and unity, to work as He worked, to sacrifice as He sacrificed, to love as the children of God.

. . . [P]ractice the self-denial of Christ. Dress plainly but neatly. Spend as little as possible upon yourselves. Keep in your homes a self-denial box into which you can put the money saved by little acts of self-denial. Day by day gain a clearer understanding of the word of God, and improve every opportunity to impart the knowledge you have gained. Do not become weary in well-doing, for God is constantly imparting to you the great blessing of His Gift to the world. Co-operate with the Lord Jesus, and He will teach you the priceless lessons of His love.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 131.

Tuesday, September 13: Willingness to Listen

Eli was a good man, pure in morals; but he was too indulgent. He incurred the displeasure of God because he did not strengthen the weak points in his character. He did not want to hurt the feelings of anyone and had not the moral courage to rebuke and reprove sin. His sons were vile men; yet he did not remove them from their position of trust. These sons profaned the house of God. He knew this, and felt sad in consequence of it, for he loved purity and righteousness; but he had not sufficient moral force to suppress the evil. He loved peace and harmony, and became more and more insensible to impurity and crime.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 516.

During the first three years of the life of Samuel the prophet, his mother carefully taught him to distinguish between good and evil. By every familiar object surrounding him she sought to lead his thoughts up to the Creator. In fulfillment of her vow to give her son to the Lord, with great self-denial she placed him under the care of Eli the high priest, to be trained for service in the house of God. . . . His early training led him to choose to maintain his Christian integrity. What a reward was Hannah's! And what an encouragement to faithfulness is her example!—*Child Guidance*, p. 197.

God gave men eyes, that they might behold wondrous things out of His law. He gave them the hearing ear, that they might listen to His message, spoken by the living preacher. He gave men the talent of speech, that they might present Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

. . . All should guard the senses, lest Satan gain victory over them; for these are the avenues of the soul.

You will have to become a faithful sentinel over your eyes, ears, and all your senses if you would control your mind and prevent vain and corrupt thoughts from staining your soul. The power of grace alone can accomplish this most desirable work.

Satan and his angels are busy creating a paralyzed condition of the senses so that cautions, warnings, and reproofs shall not be heard; or, if heard, that they shall not take effect upon the heart and reform the life.—*The Adventist Home*, p. 401.

God requires that all of us should be self-sacrificing workers. Every part of the truth has a practical application to our daily lives. Blessed are they that hear the word of the Lord and keep it. *Hearing* is not enough; we must *act*, we must *do*. It is in the doing of the Commandments that there is great reward.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 59, 60.

Wednesday, September 14: Self-Reliance

Saul had failed to bear the test of faith in the trying situation at Gilgal, and had brought dishonor upon the service of God; but his errors were not yet irretrievable, and the Lord would grant him another opportunity to learn the lesson of unquestioning faith in His word and obedience to His commands.

When reproved by the prophet at Gilgal, Saul saw no great sin in the course he had pursued. He felt that he had been treated unjustly, and endeavored to vindicate his actions and offered excuses for his error. From that time he had little [interaction] with the prophet. Samuel loved Saul as his own son, while Saul, bold and ardent in temper, had held the prophet in high regard; but he resented Samuel's rebuke, and thenceforth avoided him so far as possible.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 627.

When called to the throne, Saul had a humble opinion of his own capabilities, and was willing to be instructed. He was deficient in knowledge and experience and had serious defects of character. But the Lord granted him the Holy Spirit as a guide and helper, and placed him in a position where he could develop the qualities requisite for a ruler of Israel. Had he remained humble, seeking constantly to be guided by divine wisdom, he would have been enabled to discharge the duties of his high position with success and honor. . . .

But Saul presumed upon his exaltation, and dishonored God by unbelief and disobedience. Though when first called to the throne he was humble and self-distrustful, success made him self-confident. The very first victory of his reign had kindled that pride of heart which was his greatest danger . . . and though at first Saul ascribed the glory to God, he afterward took honor to himself. He lost sight of his dependence upon God, and in heart departed from the Lord. Thus the way was prepared for his sin of presumption and sacrilege at Gilgal. The same blind self-confidence led him to reject Samuel's reproof. Saul acknowledged Samuel to be a prophet sent from God; hence he should have accepted the reproof, though he could not himself see that he had sinned. Had he been willing

to see and confess his error, this bitter experience would have proved a safeguard for the future. . . .

When Saul turned away from the reproof sent him by God's Holy Spirit, and persisted in his stubborn self-justification, he rejected the only means by which God could work to save him from himself. He had willfully separated himself from God. He could not receive divine help or guidance until he should return to God by confession of his sin.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 632–634.

Thursday, September 15: Substitutes

He who loses sight of his entire dependence upon God is sure to fall. We are contending with those who are stronger than we. Satan and his hosts are constantly watching to assail us with temptations, and in our own strength and wisdom it is impossible for us to withstand them. Hence, whenever we permit our hearts to be drawn away from God, whenever we indulge self-exaltation or self-dependence, we are sure to be overthrown.—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 322, 323.

Make God your entire dependence. When you do otherwise, then it is time for a halt to be called. Stop right where you are, and change the order of things. . . . In sincerity, in soul-hunger, cry after God. Wrestle with the heavenly agencies until you have the victory. Put your whole being into the Lord's hands soul, body, and spirit, and resolve to be His loving, consecrated agency, moved by His will, controlled by His mind, infused by His Spirit . . . then you will see heavenly things clearly.

If we would permit our minds to dwell more upon Christ and the heavenly world, we should find a powerful stimulus and support in fighting the battles of the Lord. Pride and love of the world will lose their power as we contemplate the glories of that better land so soon to be our home. Beside the loveliness of Christ, all earthly attractions will seem of little worth.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 105.

Zerubbabel had gone to Jerusalem to build the house of the Lord. But he was compassed with difficulties. His adversaries "weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building," "and made them to cease by force and power." But the Lord interposed in their behalf, and the house was finished. [Zechariah 4:6, 7, 10 quoted.]

The very same difficulties which were created to hinder the restoration and upbuilding of the work of God, the great mountains of difficulty which loomed in Zerubbabel's way, will be met by all who today are loyal to God and to His work. Many human inventions are used to carry out plans after the mind and will of men with whom God is not working. But it is not boastful words nor a multitude of ceremonies that show that the

Lord is working with His people. The assumed power of the human agent does not decide this question. Those who place themselves in opposition to the Lord's work may hinder for a time, but the same Spirit that has guided the Lord's work all the way through will guide it today. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." . . .

The Lord would have every soul strong in His strength. He would have us look to Him, receiving our directions from Him.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1179.

The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been wholehearted in this work.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 511, 512.

Friday, September 16: For Further Reading

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, “The Lord Has a Controversy With His People,” p. 374;

Patriarchs and Prophets, “The Presumption of Saul,” pp. 616–626.

Lesson 13

Christ in the Crucible

Sabbath Afternoon, September 17

It was a being of wonderful power and glory that had set himself against God. Of Lucifer the Lord says, “Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.” Ezekiel 28:12. Lucifer had been the covering cherub. He had stood in the light of God’s presence. He had been the highest of all created beings, and had been foremost in revealing God’s purposes to the universe. After he had sinned, his power to deceive was the more deceptive, and the unveiling of his character was the more difficult, because of the exalted position he had held with the Father.

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan’s government. The Lord’s principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God’s government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 758, 759.

Jesus did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do; and He exclaimed with His parting breath, “It is finished!” Angels rejoiced as the words were uttered, for the great plan of redemption was being triumphantly carried out. There was joy in heaven that the sons of Adam could now, through a life of obedience, be exalted finally to the presence of God. Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 226, 227.

[Satan] had hoped to break up the plan of salvation; but it was laid too deep. And now by the death of Christ he knew that he himself must finally die, and his kingdom be given to Jesus. He held a council with his angels. He had prevailed nothing against the Son of God, and now they

must increase their efforts and with their power and cunning turn to His followers. They must prevent all whom they could from receiving the salvation purchased for them by Jesus. By so doing Satan could still work against the government of God. Also it would be for his own interest to keep from Jesus as many as possible. For the sins of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ will at last be rolled back upon the originator of sin, and he must bear their punishment, while those who do not accept salvation through Jesus will suffer the penalty of their own sins.—*Early Writings*, p. 178.

Sunday, September 18: The Early Days

After Christ had condescended to leave His high command, step down from an infinite height and assume humanity, He could have taken upon Him any condition of humanity He might choose. But greatness and rank were nothing to Him, and He selected the lowest and most humble walk of life. The place of His birth was Bethlehem, and on one side His parentage was poor, but God, the Owner of the world, was His Father. No trace of luxury, ease, selfish gratification, or indulgence was brought into His life, which was a continual round of self-denial and self-sacrifice. In accordance with His humble birth, He had apparently no greatness or riches, in order that the humblest believer need not say that Christ never knew the stress of pinching poverty. Had He possessed the semblance of outward show, of riches, of grandeur, the poorest class of humanity would have shunned His society; therefore He chose the lowly condition of the far greater number of the people. The truth of heavenly origin was to be His theme: He was to sow the earth with truth; and He came in such a way as to be accessible to all, that the truth alone might make an impression upon human hearts.

Christ's contentment in any position provoked His brethren. They could not explain the reason of His peace and serenity; and no persuasion of theirs could lead Him to enter into any plans or arrangements which bore the impression of commonness or of guilt. On every occasion He would turn from them, plainly stating that they would mislead others, and were unworthy of the sons of Abraham. He must set such an example that little children, the younger members of the Lord's family, would see nothing in His life or character to justify any evil deed. You are altogether too particular and peculiar, said the members of his own family. Why not be as other children? But this could not be; for Christ was to be a sign and a wonder from His youth, as far as strict obedience and integrity were concerned.—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 401.

Every act of transgression, every neglect or rejection of the grace of Christ, is reacting upon yourself; it is hardening the heart, depraving the will, benumbing the understanding, and not only making you less inclined

to yield, but less capable of yielding, to the tender pleading of God's Holy Spirit. . . .

Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire, persistently cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. Every sinful indulgence strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The man who manifests an infidel hardihood, or a stolid indifference to divine truth, is but reaping the harvest of that which he has himself sown. In all the Bible there is not a more fearful warning against trifling with evil than the words of the wise man that the sinner "shall be holden with the cords of his sins." Proverbs 5:22.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 33, 34.

Monday, September 19: Despised and Rejected of Men

A human body and a human mind were [Christ's]. He was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He was subjected to poverty from his first entrance into the world. He was subject to disappointment and trial in his own home, among his own brethren. He was not surrounded, as in the heavenly courts, with pure and lovely characters. He was compassed with difficulties. He came into our world to maintain a pure, sinless character, and to refute Satan's lie that it was not possible for human beings to keep the law of God. Christ came to live the law in his human character in just that way in which all may live the law in human nature if they will do as Christ was doing. He had inspired holy men of old to write for the benefit of man: "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me" (Isaiah 27:5).—*Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 129, 130.

[The] scribes and Pharisees . . . were filled with envy because the people listened so attentively to the words of this new Teacher. They determined to break His hold upon the multitudes. They began by attacking His character, saying that He was born in sin, and that He cast out devils through the prince of the devils. Thus were fulfilled the words "They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25; cf. Psalm 69:4). The Jewish leaders maligned and persecuted the One who is chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely.

As we separate from the world and its customs, we shall meet with the displeasure of worldlings. The world hated the One who was the very embodiment of virtue, because He was better than they were. The servant is not greater than his Lord. If our ways please God, the world will hate us. If the Majesty of heaven came to this world, and endured a life of humiliation and a death of shame, why should we shrink back because obedience involves a cross? If He was persecuted, can we expect better treatment? . . . I point you to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He will comfort and sustain all who come to Him for help.—*The Upward Look*, p. 325.

The tears of Jesus were not in anticipation of His own suffering. Just before Him was Gethsemane, where soon the horror of a great darkness would overshadow Him. . . . Yet it was not because of these reminders of His cruel death that the Redeemer wept and groaned in anguish of spirit. His was no selfish sorrow. The thought of His own agony did not intimidate that noble, self-sacrificing soul. It was the sight of Jerusalem that pierced the heart of Jesus—Jerusalem that had rejected the Son of God and scorned His love, that refused to be convinced by His mighty miracles, and was about to take His life. He saw what she was in her guilt of rejecting her Redeemer, and what she might have been had she accepted Him who alone could heal her wound. He had come to save her; how could He give her up?—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 576.

Tuesday, September 20: Jesus in Gethsemane

When in the garden of Gethsemane, the cup of suffering was placed in the Saviour's hand, the thought came to Him, Should He drink it or should He leave the world to perish in sin? His suffering was too great for human comprehension. As the agony of soul came upon Him, "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). The mysterious cup trembled in His hand. In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, came to the side of Christ, not to take the cup from His hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love.

Christ drank of the cup, and this is the reason that sinners can come to God and find pardon and grace. But those who share in Christ's glory must share also in His suffering. . . .

Shall we take up the cross, and intelligently understand what it means to follow Christ, practicing self-denial at every step?—*This Day With God*, p. 49.

In that thick darkness God's presence was hidden. He makes darkness His pavilion, and conceals His glory from human eyes. God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed. Had His glory flashed forth from the cloud, every human beholder would have been destroyed. And in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted with the Father's presence. He trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him.

In the thick darkness, God veiled the last human agony of His Son. All who had seen Christ in His suffering had been convicted of His divinity. That face, once beheld by humanity, was never forgotten. As the face of Cain expressed his guilt as a murderer, so the face of Christ revealed innocence, serenity, benevolence,—the image of God. But His accusers would not give heed to the signet of heaven. Through long hours of agony Christ had been gazed upon by the jeering multitude. Now He was mercifully hidden by the mantle of God.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 753, 754.

With untold love our God has loved us, and our love awakens toward Him as we comprehend something of the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that passeth knowledge. By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith. . . .

God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 76, 77.

Wednesday, September 21: The Crucified God

In yielding up His precious life, Christ was not upheld by triumphant joy. All was oppressive gloom. It was not the dread of death that weighed upon Him. It was not the pain and ignominy of the cross that caused His inexpressible agony. Christ was the prince of sufferers; but His suffering was from a sense of the malignity of sin, a knowledge that through familiarity with evil, man had become blinded to its enormity. Christ saw how deep is the hold of sin upon the human heart, how few would be willing to break from its power. He knew that without help from God, humanity must perish, and He saw multitudes perishing within reach of abundant help.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 752, 753.

As Jesus hung upon the cross and cried, “*It is finished*,” the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, to signify that God would no longer meet with the priests in the temple, to accept their sacrifices and ordinances, and also to show that the partition wall between the Jews and the Gentiles was broken down. Jesus had made an offering of Himself for both, and if saved at all, both must believe in Him as the only offering for sin, the Saviour of the world.

When the soldier pierced the side of Jesus as He hung upon the cross, there came out two distinct streams, one of blood, the other of water. The blood was to wash away the sins of those who should believe in His name, and the water was to represent that living water which is obtained from Jesus to give life to the believer.—*Early Writings*, p. 209.

I saw Christ in the midst of a large company of people. He was seeking to impress their minds with His teachings. But He was despised and rejected by them. Men were heaping upon Him abuse and shame. My distress was very great as I looked upon the scene. . . .

There was presented to me Christ’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, when the mysterious cup trembled in the Redeemer’s hand. “Father, if it be possible,” He prayed, “let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” Matthew 26:39. As He pleaded with the Father, great drops of blood fell from His face to the ground. The

elements of darkness were gathered about the Saviour to discourage His soul. . . .

How few there are who realize that all this was borne for them individually! How few who say: “It was for me, that I might form a character for the future immortal life.”

As these things were presented to me so vividly, I thought, I shall never be able to present this subject before the people as it is;” and I have given you only a faint representation of what was shown me. As I have thought of that cup trembling in the hands of Christ; as I have realized that He might have refused to drink, and left the world to perish in its sin, I have pledged that every energy of my life should be devoted to the work of winning souls to Him.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 101–103.

Thursday, September 22: The Suffering God

All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.

. . . He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 753.

What is our path to heaven? Is it a road with every inviting convenience? No, it is a path that is narrow and apparently inconvenient; it is a path of conflict, of trial, of tribulation and suffering. Our Captain, Jesus Christ, has hid nothing from us in regard to the battles we are to fight. He opens the map before us and shows us the way. "Strive," He says, "to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24). "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matthew 7:13). "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). The apostle echoes the words of Christ, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom" (Acts 14:22). Well, is it the discouraging aspect we are to keep before the mind's eye? . . .

[Jesus is] the life of every grace, the life of every promise, the life of every ordinance, the life of every blessing. Jesus is the substance, the glory and fragrance, the very life itself. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Then the royal path cast up the ransomed to walk in is not discouraging darkness. Our pilgrimage would indeed be lonely and painful were it not for Jesus. "I will not," He says, "leave you comfortless" (John 14:18). Then let us gather

every registered promise. Let us repeat them by day and meditate upon them in the night season, and be happy. . . .

Is not this indeed a royal path we are traveling, cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in? Can there be provided a better path? A safer way? No! No! Then let us practice the instruction given. Let us see our Saviour as our refuge, as our shield on our right hand to defend us from the arrows of Satan.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 243–245.

Friday, September 23: For Further Reading

Lift Him Up, “Conqueror Over the Power of Darkness,” p. 235;
In Heavenly Places, “No Exemption From Sorrow,” p. 268.