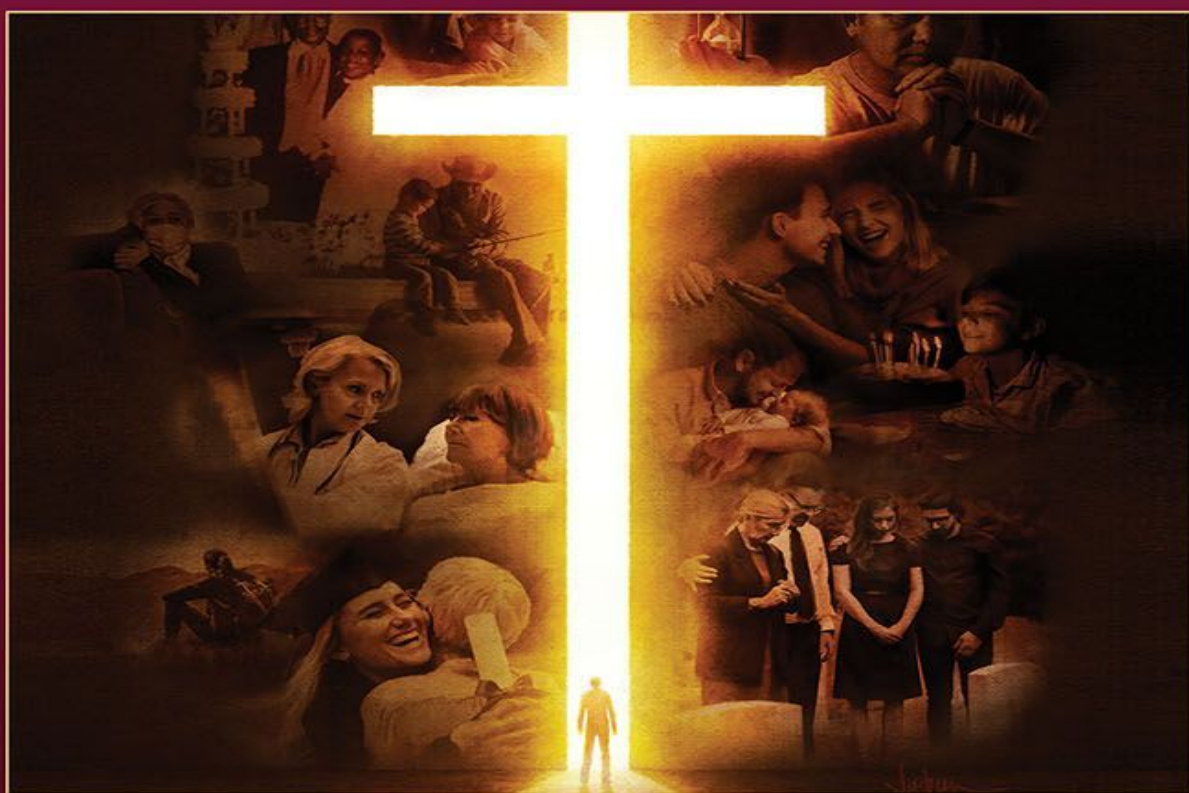
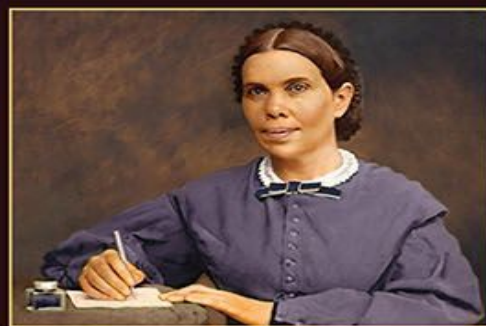


Ellen G. White
NOTES
for the Sabbath School Lessons



On Death, Dying, and the

**FUTURE
HOPE**

Oct | Nov | Dec 2022

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

E. G. White
Notes for the
Adult Bible Study Guide

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On Death and Dying: Our Future Hope

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Lesson 1

Rebellion in a Perfect Universe

Sabbath Afternoon, September 24

We are dependent on the Bible for a knowledge of the early history of our world, of the creation of man, and of his fall. Remove the Word of God, and what can we expect but to be left to fables and conjectures and to that enfeebling of the intellect which is the sure result of entertaining error.

We need the authentic history of the origin of the earth, of the fall of Lucifer, and of the introduction of sin into the world. Without the Bible, we should be bewildered by false theories. The mind would be subjected to the tyranny of superstition and falsehood. But, having in our possession an authentic history of the beginning of the world, we need not hamper ourselves with human conjectures and unreliable theories.—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 742.

Satan is a deceiver. When he sinned in heaven, even the loyal angels did not fully discern his character. This was why God did not at once destroy Satan. Had He done so, the holy angels would not have perceived the justice and love of God. A doubt of God's goodness would have been as evil seed that would yield the bitter fruit of sin and woe. Therefore the author of evil was spared, fully to develop his character. Through long ages God has borne the anguish of beholding the work of evil, He has given the infinite Gift of Calvary, rather than leave any to be deceived by the misrepresentations of the wicked one; for the tares could not be plucked up without danger of uprooting the precious grain. And shall we not be as forbearing toward our fellow men as the Lord of heaven and earth is toward Satan?—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 72.

As Satan had led man to sin, he had hoped that God's abhorrence of sin would forever separate Him from man, and break the connecting link between heaven and earth. The opening heavens, in connection with the voice of God addressing His Son, was like a death knell to Satan. He feared that God was now to unite man more fully to Himself, and give power to overcome his devices. And for this purpose Christ had come from the

royal courts to the earth. Satan was well acquainted with the position of honor Christ had held in heaven as the Son of God, the beloved of the Father. And that He should leave heaven, and come to this world as a man, filled him with apprehension for his safety. He could not comprehend the mystery of this great sacrifice for the benefit of fallen man. . . . The most costly treasures of the world, he knew, would not compare with its worth. As he had lost through his rebellion all the riches and pure glories of heaven, he was determined to be revenged by causing as many as he could to undervalue heaven and to place their affections upon earthly treasures. —*Confrontation*, p. 29.

Sunday, September 25: Creation, an Expression of Love

God's created works testify to His love and power. He has called the world into being, with all that it contains. God is a lover of the beautiful; and in the world which He has fitted up for us He has not only given us everything necessary for our comfort, but He has filled the heavens and the earth with beauty. We see His love and care in the rich fields of autumn, and His smile in the glad sunshine. His hand has made the castle-like rocks and the towering mountains. The lofty trees grow at His command; He has spread earth's green velvet carpet and dotted it with shrubs and flowers.

Why has He clothed the earth and trees with living green, instead of with dark, somber brown? Is it not that they may be more pleasing to the eye? And shall not our hearts be filled with gratitude as we read the evidences of His wisdom and love in the wonders of His creation?—*Lift Him Up*, p. 67.

The whole natural world is designed to be an interpreter of the things of God. To Adam and Eve in their Eden home, nature was full of the knowledge of God, teeming with divine instruction. To their attentive ears it was vocal with the voice of wisdom. Wisdom spoke to the eye and was received into the heart, for they communed with God in His created works. As soon as the holy pair transgressed the law of the Most High, the brightness from the face of God departed from the face of nature. Nature is now marred and defiled by sin. But God's object lessons are not obliterated; even now, rightly studied and interpreted, she speaks of her Creator. . . .

. . . In itself the beauty of nature leads the soul away from sin and worldly attractions, and toward purity, peace, and God.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 186.

Love like that which Christ exemplified is incomparable; it is above gold or silver or precious stones in value. The love that Christ possessed is to be prayed for and sought for. The Christian who possesses it bears a character above all human infirmities.

The reason there are so many hard-hearted men and women in our world is that true affection has been regarded as weakness and has been discouraged and repressed. The better part of the nature of persons of this class was perverted and dwarfed in childhood, and unless rays of divine light can melt away their coldness and hardhearted selfishness, the happiness of such is buried forever. If we would have tender hearts, such as Jesus had when He was upon the earth, and sanctified sympathy, such as the angels have for sinful mortals, we must cultivate the sympathies of childhood, which are simplicity itself.—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, pp. 606, 607.

Monday, September 26: Free Will, the Basis for Love

Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. They are invited by the Saviour, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." Isaiah 27:5. The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion, but angels of God will contend for that soul with prevailing power. . . . "Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children." Isaiah 49:24, 25.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 258.

While we were yet unloving and unlovely in character, "hateful, and hating one another," our heavenly Father had mercy on us. "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." Titus 3:3-5. His love received, will make us, in like manner, kind and tender, not merely toward those who please us, but to the most faulty and erring and sinful.

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

Man's ingenuity, his judgment, his power to execute, all come from God. To God's service all should be devoted. The principles of the Bible are to control the Lord's servants. His workers are ever to do justice and judgment, steadfastly keeping the way of the Lord. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).—*The Upward Look*, p. 74.

Tuesday, September 27: Mysterious Ingratitude

It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin. . . . Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" [1 John 3:4] it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 492, 493.

Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. . . . Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. . . . Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world.

Sin appeared in a perfect universe. . . . The reason of its inception or development was never explained and never can be, even at the last great day when the judgment shall sit and the books be opened. . . . At that day it will be evident to all that there is not, and never was, any cause for sin. At the final condemnation of Satan and his angels and of all men who have finally identified themselves with him as transgressors of God's law, every mouth will be stopped. When the hosts of rebellion, from the first great rebel to the last transgressor, are asked why they have broken the law of God, they will be speechless. There will be no answer to give.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 15.

Open your heart to [the Saviour's] love, and let it flow out to others. Remember that all have trials hard to bear, temptations hard to resist, and you may do something to lighten these burdens. Express gratitude for the

blessings you have; show appreciation of the attentions you receive. Keep the heart full of the precious promises of God, that you may bring forth from this treasure, words that will be a comfort and strength to others. This will surround you with an atmosphere that will be helpful and uplifting. Let it be your aim to bless those around you, and you will find ways of being helpful, both to the members of your own family and to others.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 257.

Wednesday, September 28: The Price of Pride

[The] work of opposition to the law of God had its beginning in the courts of heaven, with Lucifer, the covering cherub. Satan determined to be first in the councils of heaven, and equal with God. He began his work of rebellion with the angels under his command, seeking to diffuse among them the spirit of discontent. And he worked in so deceptive a way that many of the angels were won to his allegiance before his purposes were fully known. Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character, nor see to what his work was leading. When Satan had succeeded in winning many angels to his side, he took his cause to God, representing that it was the desire of the angels that he occupy the position that Christ held.

The evil continued to work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. Then there was war in heaven, and Satan, with all who sympathized with him, was cast out. Satan had warred for the mastery in heaven, and had lost the battle. God could no longer trust him with honor and supremacy, and these, with the part he had taken in the government of heaven, were taken from him.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 222.

Pride, self-love, selfishness, hatred, envy, and jealousy have beclouded the perceptive powers, and the truth, which would make you wise unto salvation, has lost its power to charm and control the mind.

Do not suffer resentment to ripen into malice. Do not allow the wound to fester and break out in poisoned words, which taint the minds of those who hear. 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.—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 529.

The evil that led to Peter's fall and that shut out the Pharisee from communion with God is proving the ruin of thousands today. There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable.

Peter's fall was not instantaneous, but gradual. Self-confidence led him to the belief that he was saved, and step after step was taken in the downward path, until he could deny his Master.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 154, 155.

Thursday, September 29: The Spread of Unbelief

After Satan and those who fell with him were shut out of heaven, and he realized that he had forever lost all its purity and glory, he repented, and wished to be reinstated in heaven. He was willing to take his proper place, or any position that might be assigned him. But no; heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. All heaven might be marred should he be taken back; for sin originated with him, and the seeds of rebellion were within him. Both he and his followers wept, and implored to be taken back into the favor of God. But their sin—their hatred, their envy and jealousy—had been so great that God could not blot it out. It must remain to receive its final punishment.

When Satan became fully conscious that there was no possibility of his being brought again into favor with God, his malice and hatred began to be manifest. He consulted with his angels, and a plan was laid to still work against God's government. When Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden, Satan was laying plans to destroy them. . . . It was decided that [he] should assume another form and manifest an interest for man. He must insinuate against God's truthfulness and create doubt whether God did mean just what He said; next, he must excite their curiosity, and lead them to pry into the unsearchable plans of God—the very sin of which Satan had been guilty.—*Early Writings*, p. 146.

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its

dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

Friday, September 30: For Further Reading

My Life Today, “Through Christ There Is Victory,” p. 317;
The Great Controversy, “The Origin of Evil,” pp. 492–504.

Lesson 2

Death in a Sinful World

Sabbath Afternoon, October 1

When all the angels bowed to Jesus to acknowledge His supremacy and high authority and rightful rule, [Lucifer] bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and hatred. Christ had been taken into the special counsel of God in regard to His plans, while Lucifer was unacquainted with them. He did not understand, neither was he permitted to know, the purposes of God. But Christ was acknowledged sovereign of heaven, His power and authority to be the same as that of God Himself. Lucifer thought that he was himself a favorite in heaven among the angels. He had been highly exalted, but this did not call forth from him gratitude and praise to his Creator. He aspired to the height of God Himself. He gloried in his loftiness. . . . He had been near the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glorious light enshrouding the eternal God had shone especially upon him. He thought how angels had obeyed his command with pleasurable alacrity. Were not his garments light and beautiful? Why should Christ thus be honored before himself?—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 14.

In the midst of the garden, near the tree of life, stood the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This tree was especially designed of God to be the pledge of their obedience, faith, and love to Him. Of this tree the Lord commanded our first parents not to eat, neither to touch it, lest they die. He told them that they might freely eat of all the trees in the garden except one, but if they ate of that tree they should surely die.

When Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden they had everything for their happiness which they could desire. But God chose, in His all-wise arrangements, to test their loyalty before they could be rendered eternally secure. They were to have His favor, and He was to converse with them and they with Him. Yet He did not place evil out of their reach. Satan was permitted to tempt them. If they endured the trial

they were to be in perpetual favor with God and the heavenly angels.—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 24.

Sunday, October 2: Statements in Tension

The angels warned [Adam and Eve] to be on their guard against the devices of Satan, for his efforts to ensnare them would be unwearied. While they were obedient to God the evil one could not harm them; for, if need be, every angel in heaven would be sent to their help. If they steadfastly repelled his first insinuations, they would be as secure as the heavenly messengers. But should they once yield to temptation, their nature would become so depraved that in themselves they would have no power and no disposition to resist Satan. . . .

The angels had cautioned Eve to beware of separating herself from her husband while occupied in their daily labor in the garden; with him she would be in less danger from temptation than if she were alone. But absorbed in her pleasing task, she unconsciously wandered from his side. On perceiving that she was alone, she felt an apprehension of danger, but dismissed her fears, deciding that she had sufficient wisdom and strength to discern evil and to withstand it.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 53.

Eve's curiosity was aroused. Instead of fleeing from the spot, she listened to hear a serpent talk. It did not occur to her mind that it might be that fallen foe, using the serpent as a medium. It was Satan that spoke, not the serpent. Eve was beguiled, flattered, infatuated. Had she met a commanding personage, possessing a form like the angels and resembling them, she would have been upon her guard. But that strange voice should have driven her to her husband's side to inquire of him why another should thus freely address her. But she entered into a controversy with the serpent.—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 33.

It is expressly stated that Satan works in the children of disobedience, not merely having access to their minds, but working through their influence, conscious and unconscious, to draw others into the same disobedience. If evil angels have such power over the children of men in their disobedience, how much greater power the good angels have over those who are striving to be obedient. When we put our trust in Jesus

Christ, working obedience unto righteousness, angels of God work in our hearts unto righteousness. . . .

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. . . . 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, pp. 94, 95.

Monday, October 3: Deceived by the Serpent

Holy angels often visited the garden, and gave instruction to Adam and Eve concerning their employment and also taught them concerning the rebellion and fall of Satan. The angels warned them of Satan and cautioned them not to separate from each other in their employment, for they might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. The angels also enjoined upon them to follow closely the directions God had given them, for in perfect obedience only were they safe. Then this fallen foe could have no power over them.

Satan commenced his work with Eve, to cause her to disobey. She first erred in wandering from her husband, next in lingering around the forbidden tree, and next in listening to the voice of the tempter, and even daring to doubt what God had said, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” She thought that perhaps the Lord did not mean just what He said, and venturing, she put forth her hand, took of the fruit and ate. It was pleasing to the eye and pleasant to the taste. Then she was jealous that God had withheld from them what was really for their good.—*Early Writings*, p. 147.

Satan would convey the idea that by eating of the forbidden tree [Adam and Eve] would receive a new and more noble kind of knowledge than they had hitherto attained. This has been his special work, with great success, ever since his fall—to lead men to pry into the secrets of the Almighty and not to be satisfied with what God has revealed, and not careful to obey that which He has commanded. He would lead them to disobey God’s commands, and then make them believe that they are entering a wonderful field of knowledge. This is purely supposition, and a miserable deception. They fail to understand what God has revealed, and disregard His explicit commandments and aspire after wisdom, independent of God, and seek to understand that which He has been pleased to withhold from mortals. They are elated with their ideas of progression and charmed with their own vain philosophy, but grope in midnight darkness relative to true knowledge. They are ever learning and

never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 33.

The knowledge which God did not want our first parents to have was a knowledge of guilt. And when they accepted the assertions of Satan, which were false, disobedience and transgression were introduced into our world. This disobedience to God's express command, this belief of Satan's lie, opened the floodgates of woe upon the world.—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 562.

Tuesday, October 4: You Will Not Die

Yielding to Satan's suggestions, our first parents opened the floodgates of evil upon the world. The questionable principles of the father and the mother of the human race influenced some of those with whom they associated. The evil that began in Paradise has extended down through the ages. Although Adam and Eve related with sorrow to their children the sad story of the Fall, their family became a divided family. Cain chose to serve Satan, Abel to serve God. Cain killed his brother Abel, because he would not follow his example.—*The Upward Look*, p. 41.

Modern spiritualism and the forms of ancient witchcraft and idol worship—all having communion with the dead as their vital principle—are founded upon that first lie by which Satan beguiled Eve in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, . . . ye shall be as gods." Genesis 3:4, 5. Alike based upon falsehood and perpetuating the same, they are alike from the father of lies. . . .

The "familiar spirits" were not the spirits of the dead, but evil angels, the messengers of Satan. Ancient idolatry, which, as we have seen, comprises both worship of the dead and pretended communion with them, is declared by the Bible to have been demon worship. . . .

Modern spiritualism, resting upon the same foundation, is but a revival in a new form of the witchcraft and demon worship that God condemned and prohibited of old. . . .

. . . God has in His word opened before us the great events of the future—all that it is essential for us to know—and He has given us a safe guide for our feet amid all its perils; but it is Satan's purpose to destroy men's confidence in God, to make them dissatisfied with their condition in life, and to lead them to seek a knowledge of what God has wisely veiled from them, and to despise what He has revealed in His Holy Word.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 685, 686.

Those who would stand in the time of peril must understand the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead, for in the near future many will be confronted by the spirits of

devils personating beloved relatives or friends and declaring the most dangerous heresies. These visitants will appeal to our tenderest sympathies and will work miracles to sustain their pretensions. We must be prepared to withstand them with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything, and that they who thus appear are the spirits of devils.

. . . Little by little [Satan] has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of Spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time, and the world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion. They are fast being lulled into a fatal security, to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 398, 399.

Wednesday, October 5: Consequences of Sin

The first great moral lesson given Adam was that of self-denial. The reins of self-government were placed in his hands. Judgment, reason, and conscience were to bear sway. . . .

Adam and Eve were permitted to partake of every tree in the Garden save one. There was only a single prohibition. The forbidden tree was as attractive and lovely as any of the trees in the Garden. It was called the tree of knowledge, because in partaking of that tree, of which God had said, “Thou shalt not eat of it,” (Genesis 2:17) they would have a knowledge of sin, an experience in disobedience.

—*That I May Know Him*, p. 14.

In humility and inexpressible sadness Adam and Eve left the lovely garden wherein they had been so happy until they disobeyed the command of God. The atmosphere was changed, and it was no longer unvarying as before the transgression. God clothed them with coats of skins to protect them from the sense of chilliness and then of heat to which they are exposed.

All Heaven mourned on account of the disobedience and fall of Adam and Eve, which brought the wrath of God upon the whole human race. They were cut off from communing with God, and were plunged in hopeless misery. The law of God could not be changed to meet man’s necessity, for in God’s arrangement it was never to lose its force, or give up the smallest part of its claims.

The Son of God pities fallen man. He knows that the law of his Father is as unchanging as himself. He can only see one way of escape for the transgressor. He offers himself to his Father as a sacrifice for man, to take their guilt and punishment upon himself, and redeem them from death by dying in their place, and thus pay the ransom. . . . For the sake of his dear Son the Father forbears a while the execution of death, and to Christ he commits the fallen race.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 46.

The transgression of God’s law brought woe and death in its train. Through disobedience man’s powers were perverted, and selfishness took

the place of love. His nature became so weakened that it was impossible for him to resist the power of evil; and the tempter saw being fulfilled his purpose to thwart the divine plan of man's creation and fill the earth with misery and desolation. Men had chosen a ruler who chained them to his car as captives.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 33.

Thursday, October 6: The First Gospel Promise

Sorrow filled heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and that world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die. I saw the lovely Jesus and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon His countenance. Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, He is in close converse with His Father. . . . [When] He came from the Father . . . He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that He had been pleading with His Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom, to take the sentence of death upon Himself, that through Him man might find pardon; that through the merits of His blood, and obedience to the law of God, they could have the favor of God, and be brought into the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life.—*Early Writings*, p. 149.

In all the fullness of His divinity, in all the glory of His spotless humanity, Christ gave Himself for us as a full and free sacrifice, and each one who comes to Him should accept Him as if he were the only one for whom the price had been paid. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive, for the obedient will be raised to immortality, and the transgressor will rise from the dead to suffer death, the penalty of the law which he has broken. . . .

Many have taken the position that they cannot sin because they are sanctified, but this is a delusive snare of the evil one. There is constant danger of falling into sin, for Christ has warned us to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. If we are conscious of the weakness of self, we shall not be self-confident and reckless of danger, but we shall feel the necessity of seeking to the Source of our strength, Jesus our righteousness. We shall come in repentance and contrition, with a despairing sense of our own finite weakness, and learn that we must daily apply to the merits of the blood of Christ, that we may become vessels fit for the Master's use. While thus depending upon God, we shall not be found warring against

the truth, but we shall always be enabled to take our stand for the right. We should cling to the teaching of the Bible, and not follow the customs and traditions of the world, the sayings and doings of men.—*This Day With God*, p. 148.

Friday, October 7: For Further Reading

Our High Calling, “How to Maintain Your Integrity!” p. 94;
Education, “The Knowledge of Good and Evil,” pp. 23–27.

Lesson 3

Understanding Human Nature

Sabbath Afternoon, October 8

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

The hand that sustains the worlds in space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for us.

The greatness of God is to us incomprehensible. “The Lord's throne is in heaven” (Psalm 11:4); yet by His Spirit He is everywhere present. He has an intimate knowledge of, and a personal interest in, all the works of His hand.—*Education*, p. 132.

If men had been willing to receive the truth so plainly stated in the Scriptures concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead, they would see in the claims and manifestations of spiritualism the working of Satan with power and signs and lying wonders. But rather than yield the liberty so agreeable to the carnal heart, and renounce the sins which they love, multitudes close their eyes to the light and walk straight on,

regardless of warnings, while Satan weaves his snares about them, and they become his prey. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," therefore "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11.

Those who oppose the teachings of spiritualism are assailing, not men alone, but Satan and his angels. They have entered upon a contest against principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high places. Satan will not yield one inch of ground except as he is driven back by the power of heavenly messengers. The people of God should be able to meet him, as did our Saviour, with the words: "It is written." Satan can quote Scripture now as in the days of Christ, and he will pervert its teachings to sustain his delusions. Those who would stand in this time of peril must understand for themselves the testimony of the Scriptures.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 559.

Sunday, October 9: “A Living Being”

Physical life is something which each individual received. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Lifegiver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. “I lay it down of myself,” He said. In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as his personal Saviour. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3. This is the open fountain of life for the world.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1130.

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 415.

The soul is through the Lifegiver capable of living through eternal ages, and man is to take special care of the soul which Christ has purchased with His own blood. . . . If the preciousness of the soul has not been appreciated, if its temple courts have been defiled with buyers and sellers, and with committing it to the rule and indwelling of Satan in thought or in feeling, I would in deep earnestness beseech you to make no delay, but come before God in sincere prayer without one moment’s speculation or hesitation, and say, “O Lord, I have opened the door of my heart to Thy worst enemy, and the worst enemy of my soul. I have acted as though I could save my own soul. . . . I dare not trust it with any power but Thine. . . . I lay it at Thy feet. Thou Lamb of God, wash my soul in the blood of

the Lamb; clothe it with Thine own garments of purity and righteousness.
—*Lift Him Up*, p. 215.

Monday, October 10: “ ‘The Soul Who Sins Shall Die’ ”

When the voice of God awakes the dead, he will come from the grave with the same appetites and passions, the same likes and dislikes, that he cherished when living. God works no miracle to re-create a man who would not be re-created when he was granted every opportunity and provided with every facility. During his lifetime he took no delight in God, nor found pleasure in His service. His character is not in harmony with God, and he could not be happy in the heavenly family.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 270.

Satan told his angels to make a special effort to spread the lie first repeated to Eve in Eden, “Ye shall not surely die.” And as the error was received by the people, and they were led to believe that man was immortal, Satan led them on to believe that the sinner would live in eternal misery. Then the way was prepared for Satan to work through his representatives and hold up God before the people as a revengeful tyrant—one who plunges all those into hell who do not please Him, and causes them ever to feel His wrath; and while they suffer unutterable anguish, and writhe in the eternal flames, He is represented as looking down upon them with satisfaction. Satan knew that if this error should be received, God would be hated by many, instead of being loved and adored; and that many would be led to believe that the threatenings of God's Word would not be literally fulfilled, for it would be against His character of benevolence and love to plunge into eternal torments the beings whom He had created.—*Early Writings*, p. 218.

The Word of the living God is to be our guide. Each one is to realize his dependence upon Him, whose he is by creation and by redemption. Read and study the statements made in the sixth chapter of John. Pray for an understanding of these truths. I am alarmed as I see the spiritual weakness of those who have had such great light. Had they walked in this light, they would have been strong in the Lord. But they have not, and those who come into the truth through their efforts look to human beings for wisdom, instead of looking to Jesus Christ, “the true Light, which lighteth

every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). When those who claim to believe in Christ receive Him by faith, He will be to them their sanctification, their righteousness, and their exceeding great reward.—*The Upward Look*, p. 181.

Tuesday, October 11: The Spirit Returns to God

God sets before man life and death. He can have his choice. . . . Those who do not choose to accept of the salvation so dearly purchased, must be punished. But I saw that God would not shut them up in hell to endure endless misery, neither will He take them to heaven; for to bring them into the company of the pure and holy would make them exceedingly miserable. But He will destroy them utterly and cause them to be as if they had not been; then His justice will be satisfied. He formed man out of the dust of the earth, and the disobedient and unholy will be consumed by fire and return to dust again. I saw that the benevolence and compassion of God in this matter should lead all to admire His character and to adore His holy name. After the wicked are destroyed from off the earth, all the heavenly host will say, "Amen!"—*Early Writings*, p. 221.

The nobility of earth are but men; they die, and return to dust; and there is no lasting satisfaction in their praise and honor. But the honor that comes from God is lasting. To be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, is to be entitled to unsearchable riches—treasures of such value that in comparison with them the gold and silver, the gems and precious stones of earth, sink into insignificance. Through Christ we are offered joy unspeakable, an eternal weight of glory. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

We are wanting in simple faith; we need to learn the art of trusting our very best friend. Although we see Him not, Jesus is watching over us with tender compassion; and He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. No one in his great need ever looked to Him by faith, and was disappointed. . . . The Christian is . . . the happiest man in the world. He feels secure; for he trusts in Jesus, and enjoys His presence. His defense is "of God, which saveth the upright in heart." Do not defer this matter, but begin . . . to fix your minds more firmly upon Jesus and heavenly things, remembering that by beholding we become changed into the same image. Have courage in God.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 376.

“If death be the last enemy to be destroyed at the resurrection, we may learn how earnestly believers should long and pray for the second coming of Christ, when this full and final conquest shall be made. . . . This is the day that all believers should long, and hope, and wait for, as being the accomplishment of all the work of their redemption, and all the desires and endeavors of their souls.” “Hasten, O Lord, this blessed day!”. . . Such was the hope of the apostolic church, of the “church in the wilderness,” and of the Reformers.—*Maranatha*, p. 14.

Wednesday, October 12: “The Dead Know Nothing”

“But, mother,” said I, “do you really believe that the soul sleeps in the grave until the resurrection? Do you think that the Christian, when he dies, does not go immediately to heaven, nor the sinner to hell?”

She answered: “The Bible gives us no proof that there is an eternally burning hell. If there is such a place, it should be mentioned in the Sacred Book.” . . .

It was some months after this conversation before I heard anything further concerning this doctrine; but during this time my mind had been much exercised upon the subject. When I heard it preached, I believed it to be the truth. From the time that light in regard to the sleep of the dead dawned upon my mind, the mystery that had enshrouded the resurrection vanished, and the great event itself assumed a new and sublime importance. . . . If at death the soul entered upon eternal happiness or misery, where was the need of a resurrection of the poor moldering body?

But this new and beautiful faith taught me the reason why inspired writers had dwelt so much upon the resurrection of the body; it was because the entire being was slumbering in the grave. I could now clearly perceive the fallacy of our former position on this question.—*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, pp. 49, 50.

Christ became one with humanity, that humanity might become one in spirit and life with Him. By virtue of this union in obedience to the Word of God, His life becomes their life. He says to the penitent, “I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25). Death is looked upon by Christ as sleep—silence, darkness, sleep. He speaks of it as if it were of little moment. “Whosoever liveth and believeth in me,” He says, “shall never die” (John 11:26). “If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death” (John 8:52). “He shall never see death” (John 8:51). And to the believing one, death is but a small matter. With him to die is but to sleep. “Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him” (1 Thessalonians 4:14).—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 302.

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed. It was the tempter's purpose to thwart the divine plan in man's creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God's work in creating man.—*Steps to Christ*, p. 17.

Thursday, October 13: Resting With the Forefathers

“This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life.” 1 John 5:11, 12. And Jesus said, “I will raise him up at the last day.” Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave,—not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 388.

It was not given Elisha to follow his master in a fiery chariot. Upon him the Lord permitted to come a lingering illness. During the long hours of human weakness and suffering his faith laid fast hold on the promises of God, and he beheld ever about him heavenly messengers of comfort and peace. As on the heights of Dothan he had seen the encircling hosts of heaven, the fiery chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof, so now he was conscious of the presence of sympathizing angels, and he was sustained. Throughout his life he had exercised strong faith, and as he had advanced in a knowledge of God’s providences and of His merciful kindness, faith had ripened into an abiding trust in his God, and when death called him he was ready to rest from his labors. . . .

. . . With the psalmist, Elisha could say in all confidence, . . . “As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.” Psalm 17:15.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 263, 264.

The Bible clearly teaches that the dead do not go immediately to heaven. They are represented as sleeping until the resurrection. 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Job 14:10-12. In the very day when the silver cord is loosed and the golden bowl broken (Ecclesiastes 12:6), man’s thoughts perish. They that go down to the grave are in silence. They know no more of anything that is done under the sun. Job 14:21. Blessed rest for the weary righteous! Time, be it long or short, is but a moment to them. They

sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious immortality. "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." 1 Corinthians 15:52.

As they are called forth from their deep slumber they begin to think just where they ceased. The last sensation was the pang of death; the last thought, that they were falling beneath the power of the grave. When they arise from the tomb, their first glad thought will be echoed in the triumphal shout: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Verse 55.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 549.

Friday, October 14: For Further Reading

The Great Controversy, “The First Great Deception,” pp. 531–550;
My Life Today, “Man Created in God’s Image,” p. 126.

Lesson 4

The Old Testament Hope

Sabbath Afternoon, October 15

By and by the gates of heaven will be thrown open to admit God's children, and from the lips of the King of glory the benediction will fall on their ears like richest music, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

Then the redeemed will be welcomed to the home that Jesus is preparing for them. There their companions will not be the vile of earth, liars, idolaters, the impure, and unbelieving; but they will associate with those who have overcome Satan and through divine grace have formed perfect characters. Every sinful tendency, every imperfection, that afflicts them here has been removed by the blood of Christ, and the excellence and brightness of His glory, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, is imparted to them.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 54.

Abraham believed that Isaac was the son of promise. He also believed that God meant just what he said when he bid him to go offer him as a burnt-offering. He staggered not at the promise of God; but believed that God, who had in his providence given Sarah a son in her old age, and who had required him to take that son's life, could also give life again, and bring up Isaac from the dead. . . .

. . . [As Abraham's] hand is raised to slay his son, an angel of God who had marked all the faithfulness of Abraham on the way to Moriah, calls to him out of heaven, and says, "Abraham! Abraham! . . . Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 106, 107.

How precious to those who are losing their loved of this world are their faith and hope in the promises of God which open before them the future immortal life! Their hopes may fasten upon unseen realities of the future

world. Christ has risen from the dead the first fruits. Hope and faith strengthen the soul to pass through the dark shadows of the tomb, in full faith of coming forth to immortal life in the morning of the resurrection. The Paradise of God, the home of the blessed! There all tears shall be wiped from off all faces! When Christ shall come the second time, to be “admired in all them that believe” (2 Thessalonians 1:10), death shall be swallowed up in victory, and there shall be no more sickness, no more sorrow, no more death! . . .

The Life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection, and until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 362.

Sunday, October 16: I Shall See God

The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures. From the day when the first pair turned their sorrowing steps from Eden, the children of faith have waited the coming of the Promised One to break the destroyer's power and bring them again to the lost Paradise. Holy men of old looked forward to the advent of the Messiah in glory, as the consummation of their hope. Enoch, only the seventh in descent from them that dwelt in Eden, he who for three centuries on earth walked with his God, was permitted to behold from afar the coming of the Deliverer. "Behold," he declared, "the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all." Jude 14, 15. The patriarch Job in the night of his affliction exclaimed with unshaken trust: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." Job 19:25.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 299.

He calls us to walk with Him in the path of humble, truthful obedience. . . . If we choose to live with Christ through the ceaseless ages of eternity, why not choose Him now as our most loved and trusted friend, our best and wisest counselor.

It is our privilege to have daily a calm, close, happy walk with Jesus. We need not be alarmed if the path lies through conflicts and sufferings. We may have the peace which passeth understanding; but it will cost us battles with the powers of darkness, struggles severe against selfishness and inbred sin. The victories gained daily through persevering, untiring effort in well-doing will be precious through Christ who has loved us, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a "peculiar people, zealous of good works."—*Lift Him Up*, p. 98.

All heaven has the deepest interest in our welfare, that Satan shall not control us and conform us to his character. "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto

you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall” (Malachi 4:1, 2).—*This Day With God*, p. 123.

Monday, October 17: From the Power of the Grave

Christ claims all those as His who have believed in His name. The vitalizing power of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the mortal body binds every believing soul to Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Jesus are sacred to His heart; for their life is hid with Christ in God. The command will come from the Life-giver, “Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead” (Isaiah 26:19).

. . . By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 271.

Those who closely connect with God may not be prosperous in the things of this life; they may often be sorely tried and afflicted. Joseph was maligned and persecuted because he preserved his virtue and integrity. David, that chosen messenger of God, was hunted like a beast of prey by his wicked enemies. Daniel was cast into a den of lions because he was true and unyielding in his allegiance to God. Job was deprived of his worldly possessions and so afflicted in body that he was abhorred by his relatives and friends, yet he preserved his integrity and faithfulness to God. . . .

These examples of human steadfastness, in the might of divine power, are a witness to the world of the faithfulness of God’s promises—of His abiding presence and sustaining grace.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 525.

The sacrifice for man was infinite, beyond the comprehension of the strongest intellect, yet men who claim to be partakers of these heavenly benefits, which were brought to them at so great a cost, are too thoroughly selfish to make any real sacrifice for God. Their minds are upon the world, the world, the world. In the forty-ninth psalm we read: “They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and

it ceaseth forever).” If all would bear in mind, and could in a small degree appreciate, the immense sacrifice made by Christ, they would feel rebuked for their fearfulness and their supreme selfishness.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 197.

Tuesday, October 18: “From the Depths of the Earth”

David entreated the Lord not to forsake him in old age. And why did he thus pray? He saw that most of the aged around him were unhappy, because of the unfortunate traits of their character being increased with their age. If they had been naturally close and covetous, they were most disagreeably so in mature years. . . .

. . . He looked forward to the time when he should be aged, and feared that God would leave him and he would be as unhappy as other aged persons whose course he had noticed, and that he should be left to the reproach of the enemies of the Lord. With this burden upon him he earnestly prays [Psalm 71:9, 17, 19 quoted]. . . .

If [all] would take the position God would have them, their last days might be their best, their happiest. . . . They should lay aside anxiety and burdens, and occupy their time as happily as they can, in [readying] for heaven.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1148.

Since the days of David there had reigned no king who had wrought so mightily for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God in a time of apostasy and discouragement as had Hezekiah. The dying ruler had served his God faithfully, and had strengthened the confidence of the people in Jehovah as their Supreme Ruler. And, like David, he could now plead: . . .

“Thou art my hope, O Lord God: Thou art my trust from my youth. By Thee have I been holden up.” “Forsake me not when my strength faileth.” “O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.” “O God, forsake me not; until I have showed Thy strength unto this generation, and Thy power to everyone that is to come.” Psalm 71:5, 6, 9, 12, 18.

He whose “compassions fail not,” heard the prayer of His servant. Lamentations 3:22. . . .

Restored to his wonted strength, the king of Judah acknowledged in words of song the mercies of Jehovah, and vowed to spend his remaining days in willing service to the King of kings. His grateful recognition of God’s compassionate dealing with him is an inspiration to all who desire

to spend their years to the glory of their Maker.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 340–342.

When depression settles upon the soul, it is no evidence that God has changed. He is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” You are sure of the favor of God when you are sensible of the beams of the Sun of righteousness; but if the clouds sweep over your soul, you must not feel that you are forsaken. . . . Treasure up the lessons that His love provides. Let your faith be like Job’s, that you may declare, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Lay hold on the promises of your heavenly Father, and remember His former dealing with you and with His servants; for “all things work together for good to them that love God.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 496.

Wednesday, October 19: “Your Dead Shall Live”

In consequence of Adam’s sin, death passed upon the whole human race. All alike go down into the grave. And through the provisions of the plan of salvation, all are to be brought forth from their graves. “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust;” “for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:22. But a distinction is made between the two classes that are brought forth. “All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:28, 29. They who have been “accounted worthy” of the resurrection of life are “blessed and holy.” “On such the second death hath no power.” Revelation 20:6. But those who have not, through repentance and faith, secured pardon, must receive the penalty of transgression—“the wages of sin.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 544.

Jesus loves you and He wants your love. He would have you remember that He gave His precious life that you should not perish; and He will be unto you a present help in every time of need. Only look to Jesus and tell Him every perplexity and trial. . . . Ask Him to help and strengthen and bless you, and believe that He hears your prayers.

All heaven is looking upon you with deep interest. One soul for whom Christ has died is worth more than the whole world. I wish every young man and woman could appreciate the value of the human soul. If they would give themselves to Jesus just as they are, though sinful and polluted, He will accept them the very moment that they give themselves to Him, and Jesus will put His Spirit in the humble seeker’s heart. Whosoever cometh unto Him, He will in no wise cast out. You may love Jesus with your whole heart, and He will never disappoint that love and confidence.—*Our High Calling*, p. 98.

The great military commander conquers nations and shakes the armies of half the world, but he dies of disappointment and in exile. The philosopher who ranges through the universe, everywhere tracing the

manifestations of God's power and delighting in their harmony, often fails to behold in these marvelous wonders the Hand that formed them all. "Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." No hope of glorious immortality lights up the future of the enemies of God. But those heroes of faith have the promise of an inheritance of greater value than any earthly riches—an inheritance that will satisfy the longings of the soul. They may be unknown and unacknowledged of the world, but they are enrolled as citizens in the record books of heaven.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 526.

Thursday, October 20: Those Who Sleep in the Dust

From the rise and fall of nations as made plain in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, we need to learn how worthless is mere outward and worldly glory. Babylon, with all its power and magnificence . . . how completely has it passed away! As “the flower of the grass,” it has perished. James 1:10. . . . Only that which is bound up with His purpose, and expresses His character, can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows.

A careful study of the working out of God’s purpose in the history of nations and in the revelation of things to come, will help us to estimate at their true value things seen and things unseen, and to learn what is the true aim of life. Thus, viewing the things of time in the light of eternity, we may, like Daniel and his fellows, live for that which is true and noble and enduring. And learning in this life the principles of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, that blessed kingdom which is to endure for ever and ever, we may be prepared at His coming to enter with Him into its possession.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 548.

From garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains and deserts, from the caves of the earth and the caverns of the sea, Christ will gather His children to Himself. On earth they have been destitute, afflicted, and tormented. Millions have gone down to the grave loaded with infamy because they refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals the children of God have been adjudged the vilest criminals. But the day is near when “God is judge Himself.” (Psalm 50:6). Then the decisions of earth shall be reversed. “The rebuke of His people shall He take away.” Isaiah 25:8. White robes will be given to every one of them. (Revelation 6:11.) And “they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord.” Isaiah 62:12.—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 179.

Christ would have everyone possess in abundance the grace of heaven. He desires that His joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. . . . The hand of God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power

and His wrath are against those who forsake Him, and who trust in the help and friendship of the world. . . .

The children of God will know who is their helper. They will know in whom they can trust implicitly, and with Christ's help, they may, without presumption, have a holy confidence. Yes, His servants may safely trust in Him alone, without fear, looking unto Jesus, pressing on in obedience to His requirements, leaving everything that is joined to the world, whether the world opposes or favors. Their success comes from God, and they will not fail because they have not the wealth and influence of wicked men.—*This Day With God*, p. 354.

Friday, October 21: For Further Reading

Maranatha, “Mysteries of the Resurrection,” p. 301;
The Upward Look, “God and His Creation,” p. 340.

Lesson 5

Resurrections Before the Cross

Sabbath Afternoon, October 22

Abraham's unquestioning obedience was one of the most striking instances of faith and reliance upon God to be found in the Sacred Record. With only the naked promise that his descendants should possess Canaan, without the least outward evidence, he followed on where God should lead, fully and sincerely complying with the conditions on his part, and confident that the Lord would faithfully perform His word. The patriarch went wherever God indicated his duty; he passed through wildernesses without terror; he went among idolatrous nations, with the one thought: "God has spoken; I am obeying His voice; He will guide, He will protect me."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 524.

All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are recipients of the life of the Son of God. However able and talented, however large their capacities, they are replenished with life from the Source of all life. He is the spring, the fountain, of life. Only He who alone hath immortality, dwelling in light and life, could say, "I have power to lay it [my life] down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18).—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 301.

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. 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. . . .

Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

Sunday, October 23: The Resurrection of Moses

A wilderness grave was the goal of [Moses'] years of toil and heart-burdening care. But He who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20), had in this measure answered His servant's prayer. Moses passed under the dominion of death, but he was not to remain in the tomb. Christ Himself called him forth to life. Satan the tempter had claimed the body of Moses because of his sin; but Christ the Saviour brought him forth from the grave. Jude 9.

Moses upon the mount of transfiguration was a witness to Christ's victory over sin and death. He represented those who shall come forth from the grave at the resurrection of the just. Elijah, who had been translated to heaven without seeing death, represented those who will be living upon the earth at Christ's second coming, and who will be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" when "this mortal must put on immortality," and "this corruptible must put on incorruption." 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 421.

The Father chose Moses and Elijah to be His messengers to Christ, and glorify Him with the light of heaven, and commune with Him concerning His coming agony, because they had lived upon earth as men; they had experienced human sorrow and suffering, and could sympathize with the trial of Jesus, in His earthly life. Elijah, in his position as a prophet to Israel, had represented Christ, and his work had been, in a degree, similar to that of the Saviour. And Moses, as the leader of Israel, had stood in the place of Christ, communing with Him and following His directions; therefore, these two, of all the hosts that gathered around the throne of God were fittest to minister to the Son of God.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1096.

Christ came to this world for no other purpose than to manifest the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. All power and grace were given to Him. His heart was a wellspring of living water, a never-failing fountain, ever ready to flow forth in a rich, clear stream to

those around Him. His whole life was spent in pure disinterested benevolence. His purposes were full of love and sympathy. He rejoiced that He could do more for His followers than they could ask or think. His constant prayer for them was that they might be sanctified through the truth, and He prayed with assurance, knowing that an almighty decree had been given before the world was made. He knew that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached in all the world; that truth, armed with the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit, would conquer in the contest with evil; and that the bloodstained banner would one day wave triumphantly over His followers.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 37.

Monday, October 24: Two Old Testament Cases

In this poverty-stricken home the famine pressed sore, and the pitifully meager fare seemed about to fail. The coming of Elijah on the very day when the widow feared that she must give up the struggle to sustain life tested to the utmost her faith in the power of the living God to provide for her necessities. But even in her dire extremity she bore witness to her faith by a compliance with the request of the stranger who was asking her to share her last morsel with him. . . .

The widow of Zarephath shared her morsel with Elijah, and in return her life and that of her son were preserved. And to all who, in time of trial and want, give sympathy and assistance to others more needy, God has promised great blessing.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 206.

The mother would not be satisfied till Elisha himself came with her. “As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee,” she declared. “And he arose, and followed her.” . . .

When they reached the house, Elisha went into the room where the dead child lay, “and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.” . . .

So was the faith of this woman rewarded. Christ, the great Life-giver, restored her son to her. In like manner will His faithful ones be rewarded, when, at His coming, death loses its sting and the grave is robbed of the victory it has claimed. Then will He restore to His servants the children that have been taken from them by death. “Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, . . . and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord,

that thy children shall come again to their own border.” Jeremiah 31:15-17.
—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 238, 239.

Tuesday, October 25: The Son of the Widow of Nain

Your compassionate Redeemer is watching you with love and sympathy, ready to hear your prayers and to render you the assistance which you need. He knows the burdens of every mother's heart and is her best friend in every emergency. His everlasting arms support the God-fearing, faithful mother. When upon earth, He had a mother that struggled with poverty, having many anxious cares and perplexities, and He sympathizes with every Christian mother in her cares and anxieties. That Saviour who took a long journey for the purpose of relieving the anxious heart of a woman whose daughter was possessed by an evil spirit will hear the mother's prayers and will bless her children.

He who gave back to the widow her only son as he was carried to the burial is touched today by the woe of the bereaved mother. . . . He is woman's best friend today and is ready to aid her in all the relations of life.—*The Adventist Home*, p. 204.

He who stood beside the sorrowing mother at the gate of Nain, watches with every mourning one beside the bier. He is touched with sympathy for our grief. His heart, that loved and pitied, is a heart of unchangeable tenderness. His word, that called the dead to life, is no less efficacious now than when spoken to the young man of Nain. He says, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18. That power is not diminished by the lapse of years, nor exhausted by the ceaseless activity of His overflowing grace. To all who believe on Him He is still a living Saviour.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 319.

When our noble Henry died, at the age of sixteen,—when our sweet singer was borne to the grave, and we no more heard his early song,—ours was a lonely home. Both parents and the two remaining sons felt the blow most keenly. But God comforted us in our bereavements, and with faith and courage we pressed forward in the work He had given us, in bright hope of meeting our children who had been torn from us by death, in that world where sickness and death will never come.—*Life Sketches*, p. 165.

We should anticipate the sorrows, the difficulties, the troubles of others. We should enter into the joys and cares of both high and low, rich and poor. “Freely ye have received,” Christ says, “freely give.” Matthew 10:8. All around us are poor, tried souls that need sympathizing words and helpful deeds. There are widows who need sympathy and assistance. There are orphans whom Christ has bidden His followers receive as a trust from God. Too often these are passed by with neglect. They may be ragged, uncouth, and seemingly in every way unattractive; yet they are God’s property. They have been bought with a price, and they are as precious in His sight as we are. They are members of God’s great household, and Christians as His stewards are responsible for them.—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 386.

Wednesday, October 26: Jairus's Daughter

While they were still on the way, a messenger pressed through the crowd, bearing to Jairus the news that his daughter was dead, and it was useless to trouble the Master further. The word caught the ear of Jesus. "Fear not," He said; "believe only, and she shall be made whole."

Jairus pressed closer to the Saviour, and together they hurried to the ruler's home. Already the hired mourners and flute players were there, filling the air with their clamor. The presence of the crowd, and the tumult jarred upon the spirit of Jesus. He tried to silence them, saying, "Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." They were indignant at the words of the Stranger. They had seen the child in the embrace of death, and they laughed Him to scorn. . . .

Jesus approached the bedside, and, taking the child's hand in His own, He pronounced softly, in the familiar language of her home, the words, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise."

Instantly a tremor passed through the unconscious form. The pulses of life beat again. The lips unclosed with a smile. The eyes opened widely as if from sleep, and the maiden gazed with wonder on the group beside her. She arose, and her parents clasped her in their arms, and wept for joy.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 342, 343.

It is the privilege of Christians to know indeed that Christ is in them of a truth. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." All things are possible to him that believeth; and whatsoever things we desire when we pray, if we believe that we receive them we shall have them. This faith will penetrate the darkest cloud and bring rays of light and hope to the drooping, desponding soul. It is the absence of this faith and trust which brings perplexity, distressing fears, and surmisings of evil. God will do great things for His people when they put their entire trust in Him. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Pure and undefiled religion will be exemplified in the life. Christ will prove a never-failing source of strength, a present help in every time of trouble.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 139.

[God's] voice is heard, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3). "With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee" (Isaiah 54:8). How amazing is this love, that God condescends to remove all cause for doubt and questioning from human fears and weakness and takes hold of the trembling hand reached up to Him in faith; and He helps us to trust Him by multiplied assurances and securities. . . . What more could our Lord do to strengthen our faith in His promises?—*That I May Know Him*, p. 262.

Thursday, October 27: Lazarus

Christ had not only the loved ones at Bethany to think of; He had the training of His disciples to consider. They were to be His representatives to the world, that the Father's blessing might include all. For their sake He permitted Lazarus to die. Had He restored him from illness to health, the miracle that is the most positive evidence of His divine character would not have been performed.

Had Christ been in the sick-room, Lazarus would not have died; for Satan would have had no power over him. In the presence of the Lifegiver, death could not have aimed his dart at Lazarus. . . . He permitted Lazarus to pass under the dominion of death, and the suffering sisters saw their brother laid in the grave. Christ knew that as they looked on the face of their dead brother, their faith in their Redeemer would be severely tried. Thus He was pruning the branches, that they might bring forth more fruit. He knew that because of the struggle through which they were now passing, their faith would shine forth with far greater power.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 92.

“Take ye away the stone,” Christ said. Thinking that He only wished to look upon the dead, Martha objected, saying that the body had been buried four days, and corruption had already begun its work. This statement, made before the raising of Lazarus, left no room for Christ's enemies to say that a deception had been practiced. In the past the Pharisees had circulated false statements regarding the most wonderful manifestations of the power of God. When Christ raised to life the daughter of Jairus, He had said, “The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.” Mark 5:39. As she had been sick only a short time, and was raised immediately after death, the Pharisees declared that the child had not been dead; that Christ Himself had said she was only asleep. They had tried to make it appear that Christ could not cure disease, that there was foul play about His miracles. But in this case, none could deny that Lazarus was dead.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 534.

Because Christ was one with the Father, equal with Him, He could make an atonement for transgression, and save man—not in his sins, but from his sins. . . .

[In] the words spoken to God's faithful ones, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," Christ says, "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then from the host of the redeemed there rises the triumphant chorus, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" O that our minds could comprehend the greatness of the theme and the wonderful importance of the occasion.

"Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." God's chosen ones may fall at their post of duty, but they have only fallen asleep, to rest till Jesus awakes them to share with Him an eternal weight of glory.—*The Upward Look*, p. 272.

Friday, October 28: For Further Reading

Our High Calling, “Come Unto Me,” p. 97;

The Desire of Ages, “Lazarus, Come Forth,” pp. 524–536.

Lesson 6

He Died for Us

Sabbath Afternoon, October 29

When, in answer to his prayer, Hezekiah's life was prolonged fifteen years, the grateful king rendered to God a tribute of praise for His great mercy. In this song he tells the reason why he thus rejoices: "The grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day." Isaiah 38:18, 19. Popular theology represents the righteous dead as in heaven, entered into bliss and praising God with an immortal tongue; but Hezekiah could see no such glorious prospect in death. With his words agrees the testimony of the psalmist: "In death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?" "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." Psalm 6:5; 115:17.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 546.

The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The risen body of the Saviour, His deportment, the accents of His speech, were all familiar to His followers. In like manner will those who sleep in Jesus rise again. We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love.

At His second coming all the precious dead shall hear His voice, and shall come forth to glorious, immortal life. 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 Faith I Live By*, p. 180.

Our only hope is perfect trust in the blood of Him who can save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. The death of Christ on the cross

of Calvary is our only hope in this world, and it will be our theme in the world to come. Oh, we do not comprehend the value of the atonement! If we did, we would talk more about it. The gift of God in His beloved Son was the expression of an incomprehensible love. It was the utmost that God could do to preserve the honor of His law, and still save the transgressor. Why should man not study the theme of redemption? It is the greatest subject that can engage the human mind. If men would contemplate the love of Christ, displayed in the cross, their faith would be strengthened to appropriate the merits of His shed blood, and they would be cleansed and saved from sin.—*Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1889.

Sunday, October 30: “From the Foundation of the World”

Plain and specific prophecies had been given regarding the appearance of the Promised One. To Adam was given an assurance of the coming of the Redeemer. The sentence pronounced on Satan, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15), was to our first parents a promise of the redemption to be wrought out through Christ.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 222.

The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8); yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. . . . Oh, the mystery of redemption! the love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love which “passeth knowledge”? Through endless ages immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore.

God was to be manifest in Christ, “reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. Man had become so degraded by sin that it was impossible for him, in himself, to come into harmony with Him whose nature is purity and goodness. But Christ, after having redeemed man from the condemnation of the law, could impart divine power to unite with human effort. Thus by repentance toward God and faith in Christ the fallen children of Adam might once more become “sons of God.” 1 John 3:2.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 63, 64.

Paul showed how closely God had linked the sacrificial service with the prophecies relating to the One who was to be “brought as a lamb to the slaughter.” The Messiah was to give His life as “an offering for sin.” Looking down through the centuries to the scenes of the Saviour’s atonement, the prophet Isaiah had testified that the Lamb of God “poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Isaiah 53:7, 10, 12.

The Saviour of prophecy was to come, not as a temporal king, to deliver the Jewish nation from earthly oppressors, but as a man among men, to live a life of poverty and humility, and at last to be despised, rejected, and slain. The Saviour foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures was to offer Himself as a sacrifice in behalf of the fallen race, thus fulfilling every requirement of the broken law. In Him the sacrificial types were to meet their antitype, and His death on the cross was to lend significance to the entire Jewish economy.

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 227.

Monday, October 31: A Preface to the Cross

When Jesus told [the disciples] that He was to be put to death and to rise again, He was trying to draw them into conversation in regard to the great test of their faith. Had they been ready to receive what He desired to make known to them, they would have been saved bitter anguish and despair. His words would have brought consolation in the hour of bereavement and disappointment. But although He had spoken so plainly of what awaited Him, His mention of the fact that He was soon to go to Jerusalem again kindled their hope that the kingdom was about to be set up. This had led to questioning as to who should fill the highest offices. . . .

The Saviour gathered His disciples about Him, and said to them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." There was in these words a solemnity and impressiveness which the disciples were far from comprehending. That which Christ discerned they could not see. They did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom, and this ignorance was the apparent cause of their contention. . . .

Very tenderly, yet with solemn emphasis, Jesus tried to correct the evil. He showed what is the principle that bears sway in the kingdom of heaven, and in what true greatness consists, as estimated by the standard of the courts above. Those who were actuated by pride and love of distinction were thinking of themselves, and of the rewards they were to have, rather than how they were to render back to God the gifts they had received. They would have no place in the kingdom of heaven, for they were identified with the ranks of Satan.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 435, 436.

The apostle [Paul] carried the minds of the Corinthian brethren forward to the triumphs of the resurrection morn, when all the sleeping saints are to be raised, henceforth to live forever with their Lord. "Behold," the apostle declared, "I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. . . . Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . .

Thus the apostle, in the most decided and impressive manner, endeavored to correct the false and dangerous ideas and practices that were prevailing in the Corinthian church. He spoke plainly, yet in love for their souls. In his warnings and reproofs, light from the throne of God was shining upon them, to reveal the hidden sins that were defiling their lives. —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 320, 321.

Tuesday, November 1: “ ‘It Is Finished!’ ”

The angels had viewed the agony of their loved Commander until they could behold no longer, and they veiled their faces from the sight. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Jesus cried with a loud voice, which struck terror to the hearts of His murderers, “It is finished.” Then the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, the earth shook, and the rocks rent. Great darkness was upon the face of the earth. The last hope of the disciples seemed swept away as Jesus died. Many of His followers witnessed the scene of His sufferings and death, and their cup of sorrow was full.

Satan did not then exult as he had done. He 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.

—*Early Writings*, pp. 177, 178.

Moses and Aaron must die without entering Canaan, subjected to the same punishment that fell upon those in a more lowly position. They bowed in submission, though with anguish of heart that was inexpressible; but their love for and confidence in God was unshaken. Their example is a lesson that many pass over without learning from it as they should. Sin does not appear sinful. Self-exaltation does not appear to them grievous.

But few realize the sinfulness of sin; they flatter themselves that God is too good to punish the offender. The cases of Moses and Aaron, of David, and numerous others, show that it is not a safe thing to sin in word or thought or deed. God is a Being of infinite love and compassion. In the

parting address which Moses gave to the children of Israel he said: "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." The touching plea made by Moses that he might be privileged to enter Canaan was steadfastly refused. The transgression at Kadesh had been open and marked; and the more exalted the position of the offender, the more distinguished the man, the firmer was the decree and the more certain the punishment.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 369, 370.

Wednesday, November 2: He Died for Us

Christ on the cross, not only draws men to repentance toward God for the transgression of His law—for whom God pardons He first makes penitent—but Christ has satisfied justice; He has proffered Himself as an atonement. His gushing blood, His broken body, satisfy the claims of the broken law, and thus He bridges the gulf which sin has made. He suffered in the flesh that with His bruised and broken body He might cover the defenseless sinner. The victory gained at His death on Calvary broke forever the accusing power of Satan over the universe, and silenced his charges that self-denial was impossible with God and therefore not essential in the human family.

All who will can be overcomers. Let us strive earnestly to reach the standard set before us. Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 974.

It was to redeem us that Jesus lived and suffered and died. He became “a Man of Sorrows,” that we might be made partakers of everlasting joy. 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. . . . The spotless Son of God took upon Himself the burden of sin. He who had been one with God, felt in His soul the awful separation that sin makes between God and man. This wrung from His lips the anguished cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Matthew 27:46. It was the burden of sin, the sense of its terrible enormity, of its separation of the soul from God—it was this that broke the heart of the Son of God.

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*, p. 13.

Thursday, November 3: The Meaning of the Cross

By bearing the penalty of sin, by going down into the grave, Christ has brightened the tomb for all who die in faith. God in human form has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. In dying, Christ secured eternal life for all who believe in Him. In dying, He condemned the originator of sin and disloyalty to suffer the penalty of sin—eternal death.

The possessor and giver of eternal life, Christ was the only one who could conquer death. He is our Redeemer.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 230, 231.

In his first display of disaffection Satan was very cunning. All he claimed was that he wanted to bring in a better order of things, to make great improvements. He led the holy pair away from God, away from their allegiance to His commandments, on the same point where thousands are tempted today and where thousands fall; that is, by their vain imaginings. True knowledge is divine. Satan insinuated into the minds of our first parents a desire for a speculative knowledge, whereby he declared they would greatly improve their condition; but in order to gain this, they must take a course contrary to God's holy will; for God would not lead them to the greatest heights. It was not God's purpose that they should obtain knowledge that had its foundation in disobedience. This was a broad field into which Satan was seeking to lead Adam and Eve, and it is the same field that he opens for the world today by his temptations.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 502.

“If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Mark 9:23. It is faith that connects us with heaven and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every evil trait and resisting every temptation, however strong. But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Saviour. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when

He walked among men is still the same mighty Redeemer. Then grasp His promises as leaves from the tree of life: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. As you come to Him, believe that He accepts you, because He has promised. You can never perish while you do this—never.

"God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8.

And "if God be for us, who can be against us? 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 8:31, 32.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 65, 66.

Friday, November 4: For Further Reading

Lift Him Up, “Faith in the Atonement,” p. 331;
Steps to Christ, “Repentance,” p. 27.

Lesson 7

Christ's Victory Over Death

Sabbath Afternoon, November 5

Think of how much it cost Christ to leave the heavenly courts, and take His position at the head of humanity. Why did He do this? Because He was the only one who could redeem the fallen race. There was not a human being in the world who was without sin. The Son of God stepped down from His heavenly throne, laid off His royal robe and kingly crown, and clothed His divinity with humanity. He came to die for us, to lie in the tomb as human beings must, and to be raised for our justification. He came to become acquainted with all the temptations wherewith man is beset. He rose from the grave and proclaimed over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, "I am the resurrection, and the life." One equal with God passed through death in our behalf. He tasted death for every man, that through Him every man might be a partaker of eternal life.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 13.

Through the cross we learn that our heavenly Father loves us with an infinite and everlasting love, and draws us to Him with more than a mother's yearning sympathy for a wayward child. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"? It is our privilege also to glory in the cross of Calvary, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then with the light of love that shines from His face on ours, we shall go forth to reflect it to those in darkness.

—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1133.

Jesus placed the cross in line with the light coming from heaven, for it is there that it shall catch the eye of man. The cross is in direct line with the shining of the divine countenances, so that by beholding the cross men may see and know God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. In beholding God we behold the One who poured out His soul unto death. In beholding the cross the view is extended to God, and His hatred of sin is

discerned. But while we behold in the cross God's hatred of sin, we also behold His love for sinners, which is stronger than death. To the world the cross is the incontrovertible argument that God is truth and light and love.
—*Signs of the Times*, March 7, 1895.

Sunday, November 6: A Sealed Tomb

The priests gave directions for securing the sepulcher. A great stone had been placed before the opening. Across this stone they placed cords, securing the ends to the solid rock, and sealing them with the Roman seal. The stone could not be moved without breaking the seal. A guard of one hundred soldiers was then stationed around the sepulcher to prevent it from being tampered with. The priests did all they could to keep Christ's body where it had been laid. He was sealed as securely in His tomb as if He were to remain there through all time.

So weak men counseled and planned. Little did these murderers realize the uselessness of their efforts. But by their action God was glorified. The very efforts made to prevent Christ's resurrection are the most convincing arguments in its proof. The greater the number of soldiers placed around the tomb, the stronger would be the testimony that He had risen. . . . Roman guards and Roman arms were powerless to confine the Lord of life within the tomb. The hour of His release was near.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 778.

Although the Jewish rulers had carried out their fiendish purpose in putting to death the Son of God, their apprehensions were not quieted, nor was their jealousy of Christ dead. Mingled with the joy of gratified revenge, there was an ever-present fear that His dead body, lying in Joseph's tomb, would come forth to life. Therefore "the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." Matthew 27:63, 64. Pilate was as unwilling as were the Jews that Jesus should rise with power to punish the guilt of those who had destroyed Him, and he placed a band of Roman soldiers at the command of the priests. Said he, "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." Matthew 27:65, 66.

The Jews realized the advantage of having such a guard about the tomb of Jesus. They placed a seal upon the stone that closed the sepulcher, that it might not be disturbed without the fact being known, and took every precaution against the disciples' practicing any deception in regard to the body of Jesus. But all their plans and precautions only served to make the triumph of the resurrection more complete and to more fully establish its truth.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 228, 229.

Monday, November 7: “ ‘He Is Risen!’ ”

By raising Christ from the dead, the Father glorified His Son before the Roman guard, before the satanic host, and before the heavenly universe. A mighty angel, clothed with the panoply of heaven, descended, scattering the darkness from his track, and, breaking the Roman seal, rolled back the stone from the sepulcher as if it had been a pebble, undoing in a moment the work that the enemy had done. The voice of God was heard, calling Christ from His prison house. The Roman guard saw heavenly angels falling in reverence before Him whom they had crucified, and He proclaimed above the rent sepulcher of Joseph, “I am the resurrection, and the life.” Can we be surprised that the soldiers fell as dead men to the earth?—*Lift Him Up*, p. 102.

Christ was the medium through which [the Father] 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.

Jesus said, “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.” John 10:17. That is, “My Father has so loved you that He even loves Me more for giving My life to redeem you. In becoming your Substitute and Surety, by surrendering My life, by taking your liabilities, your transgressions, I am endeared to My Father; for by My sacrifice, God can be just, and yet the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.”

None but the Son of God could accomplish our redemption; for only He who was in the bosom of the Father could declare Him. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it manifest. Nothing less than the infinite sacrifice made by Christ in behalf of fallen man could express the Father’s love to lost humanity.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 13, 14.

[The Roman guard] were filled with amazement as they saw that the great stone had been rolled from the door of the sepulcher and that the

body of Jesus was gone. They hastened to the city to make known to the priests and elders what they had seen. As those murderers listened to the marvelous report, paleness sat upon every face. Horror seized them at the thought of what they had done. If the report was correct, they were lost. For a time they sat in silence, looking upon one another's faces, not knowing what to do or what to say. To accept the report would be to condemn themselves. They went aside to consult as to what should be done. They reasoned that if the report brought by the guard should be circulated among the people, those who put Christ to death would be slain as His murderers. It was decided to hire the soldiers to keep the matter secret. . . . For the sake of money, the Roman guard sold their honor, and agreed to follow the counsel of the priests and elders.—*Early Writings*, p. 183.

Tuesday, November 8: Many Arose With Him

When Jesus, as He hung upon the cross, cried out, “It is finished,” the rocks rent, the earth shook, and some of the graves were opened. When He arose a victor over death and the grave, while the earth was reeling and the glory of heaven shone around the sacred spot, many of the righteous dead, obedient to His call, came forth as witnesses that He had risen. **Those favored, risen saints came forth glorified. They were chosen and holy ones of every age, from creation down even to the days of Christ.** Thus while the Jewish leaders were seeking to conceal the fact of Christ’s resurrection, God chose to bring up a company from their graves to testify that Jesus had risen, and to declare His glory. . . .

Those who came forth after the resurrection of Jesus appeared to many, telling them that the sacrifice for man was completed, that Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, had risen from the dead; and in proof of their words they declared, “We be risen with Him.” They bore testimony that it was by His mighty power that they had been called forth from their graves.—*Early Writings*, p. 184.

Let us not mourn and grieve because in this life we are not free from disappointments and afflictions. If in the providence of God we are called upon to endure trials, let us accept the cross and drink the bitter cup, remembering that it is a Father’s hand that holds it to our lips. Let us trust Him in the darkness as well as in the day. Can we not believe that He will give us everything that is for our good? “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?” . . .

What a theme for meditation is the sacrifice that Jesus made for lost sinners! “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” How shall we estimate the blessings thus brought within our reach? Could Jesus have suffered more? Could He have purchased for us richer blessings? . . . In our present state, favored and blessed as we are, we cannot realize from what depths we have been

rescued. We cannot measure how much deeper our afflictions would have been, how much greater our woes, had not Jesus encircled us with His human arm of sympathy and love, and lifted us up.

We may rejoice in hope. . . . 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.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 315, 316.

Wednesday, November 9: Witnesses of the Risen Christ

The two travelers [from Emmaus], panting with the haste with which they have made their journey, tell the wondrous story of how Jesus has appeared to them. They have just ended, and some are saying that they cannot believe it, for it is too good to be true, when behold, another Person stands before them. Every eye is fastened upon the stranger. No one has knocked for entrance. No footstep has been heard. The disciples are startled, and wonder what it means. Then they hear a voice which is no other than the voice of their Master. Clear and distinct the words fall from His lips, "Peace be unto you."

"But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet."

They beheld the hands and feet marred by the cruel nails. They recognized His voice, like no other they had ever heard. "And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them." "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." Faith and joy took the place of unbelief, and with feelings which no words could express they acknowledged their risen Saviour.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 802, 803.

Jesus, in His treatment of Thomas, gave His followers a lesson regarding the manner in which they should treat those who have doubts upon religious truth, and who make those doubts prominent. He did not overwhelm Thomas with words of reproach, nor did He enter into a controversy with him; but, with marked condescension and tenderness, He revealed Himself unto the doubting one. Thomas had taken a most unreasonable position, in dictating the only conditions of his faith; but Jesus, by His generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers he had raised. Persistent controversy will seldom weaken unbelief, but

rather put it upon self-defense, where it will find new support and excuse. Jesus, revealed in His love and mercy as the crucified Saviour, will bring from many once unwilling lips the acknowledgment of Thomas, “My Lord, and my God.”—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1151.

Thursday, November 10: “The First Fruits of Those Who Have Died”

Christ arose from the dead as the first fruits of those that slept. He was the antitype of the wave sheaf, and His resurrection took place on the very day when the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord. For more than a thousand years this symbolic ceremony had been performed. From the harvest fields the first heads of ripened grain were gathered, and when the people went up to Jerusalem to the Passover, the sheaf of first fruits was waved as a thank offering before the Lord. Not until this was presented could the sickle be put to the grain, and it be gathered into sheaves. The sheaf dedicated to God represented the harvest. So Christ the first fruits represented the great spiritual harvest to be gathered for the kingdom of God. His resurrection is the type and pledge of the resurrection of all the righteous dead.—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 180.

The value that God places on the work of His hands, the love He has for His children, is revealed by the gift He made to redeem men. Adam fell under the dominion of Satan. He brought sin into the world, and death by sin. God gave His only-begotten Son to save man. This He did that He might be just, and yet the justifier of all who accept Christ. Man sold himself to Satan, but Jesus bought back the race.

You are not your own. Jesus has purchased you with His blood. Do not bury your talents in the earth. Use them for Him. In whatever business you may be engaged, bring Jesus into it. If you find that you are losing your love for your Saviour, give up your business, and say, “Here I am, Saviour; what wilt Thou have me to do?” He will receive you graciously, and love you freely. He will abundantly pardon; for He is merciful and long-suffering, not willing that any should perish.

We, and all that we have, belong to God. We should not regard it as a sacrifice to give Him the affection of our hearts. The heart itself should be given to Him as a willing offering.—*Messages to Young People*, pp. 69, 70.

Jesus Christ has given Himself as a complete offering in behalf of every fallen son and daughter of Adam. O what humiliation He bore! How He

descended, step after step, lower and lower in the path of humiliation, yet He never degraded His soul with one foul blot of sin! All this He suffered, that He might lift you up, cleanse, refine, and ennoble you, and place you as a joint heir with Himself upon His throne. How shall you make your calling and election sure? What is the way of salvation? Christ says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." However sinful, however guilty you may be, you are called, you are chosen. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." . . . The blood of Jesus is a never-failing passport, by which all your petitions may find access to the throne of God.—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 251.

Friday, November 11: For Further Reading

The Desire of Ages, “Why Weepest Thou?” pp. 788–794;
The Desire of Ages, “Peace Be Unto You,” pp. 802–808.

Lesson 8

The New Testament Hope

Sabbath Afternoon, November 12

“This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son,” (1 John 5:11). . . .

He [the Christian] may die; but the life of Christ is in him, and at the resurrection of the just he will rise to newness of life.

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

. . . We derive immortality from God by receiving the life of Christ, for in Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. This life is the mystical union and cooperation of the divine with the human.—*Maranatha*, p. 302.

The coming of the Lord has been in all ages the hope of His true followers. The Saviour’s parting promise upon Olivet, that He would come again, lighted up the future for His disciples, filling their hearts with joy and hope that sorrow could not quench nor trials dim. Amid suffering and persecution, the “appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” was the “blessed hope.” When the Thessalonian Christians were filled with grief as they buried their loved ones, who had hoped to live to witness the coming of the Lord, Paul, their teacher, pointed them to the resurrection, to take place at the Saviour’s advent. Then the dead in Christ should rise, and together with the living be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. “And so,” he said, “shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one

another with these words.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 302.

These are the things we are never to forget. The love of Jesus, with its constraining power, is to be kept fresh in our memory. Christ has instituted this service, [communion], that it may speak to our senses of the love of God that has been expressed in our behalf. There can be no union between our souls and God except through Christ. The union and love between brother and brother must be cemented and rendered eternal by the love of Jesus. And nothing less than the death of Christ could make His love efficacious for us. It is only because of His death that we can look with joy to His second coming. His sacrifice is the center of our hope. Upon this we must fix our faith.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

Sunday, November 13: Hope Beyond This Life

[Esau] represents those who lightly value the redemption purchased for them by Christ, and are ready to sacrifice their heirship to heaven for the perishable things of earth. Multitudes live for the present, with no thought or care for the future. Like Esau they cry, "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." 1 Corinthians 15:32. They are controlled by inclination; and rather than practice self-denial, they will forgo the most valuable considerations. . . . How many, even of professed Christians, cling to indulgences that are injurious to health and that benumb the sensibilities of the soul. When the duty is presented of cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, they are offended. . . . They conclude that since the way to eternal life is so strait, they will no longer walk therein.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 181.

He who repents of his sin and accepts the gift of the life of the Son of God, can not be overcome. Laying hold by faith of the divine nature, he becomes a child of God. He prays, he believes. When tempted and tried, he claims the power that Christ died to give, and overcomes through His grace. This every sinner needs to understand. He must repent of his sins, he must believe in the power of Christ, and accept that power to save and to keep him from sin. . . .

Heaven is worth everything to us, and if we lose heaven we lose all.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 349.

In the courts above, Christ is pleading for His church—pleading for those for whom He has paid the redemption price of His blood. Centuries, ages, can never lessen the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice. Neither life nor death, height nor depth, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; not because we hold Him so firmly, but because He holds us so fast. If our salvation depended on our own efforts, we could not be saved; but it depends on the One who is behind all the promises. Our grasp on Him may seem feeble, but His love is that of an elder brother; so

long as we maintain our union with Him, no one can pluck us out of His hand.

. . . O how privileged we are that we may come to Jesus just as we are and cast ourselves upon His love! We have no hope but in Jesus. He alone can reach us with His hand to lift us up out of the depths of discouragement and hopelessness and place our feet upon the Rock. Although the human soul may cling to Jesus with all the desperate sense of his great need, Jesus will cling to the souls bought by His own blood with a firmer grasp than the sinner clings to Him.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 80.

Monday, November 14: “I Will Come Again”

Our danger is presented before us by Christ Himself. He knew the perils we should meet in these last days, and would have us prepare for them. “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.” They were eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the Flood came and swept them all away. The day of God will find men absorbed in like manner in the business and pleasures of the world. . . .

Belief in the near coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven will not cause the true Christian to become neglectful and careless of the ordinary business of life. The waiting ones who look for the soon appearing of Christ will not be idle, but diligent in business. Their work will not be done carelessly and dishonestly, but with fidelity, promptness, and thoroughness.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 309.

The reason why the Bridegroom delays is because He is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. O the precious longsuffering of our merciful Saviour! O that each [one] would appreciate the value of the soul that has been purchased at infinite cost on Calvary! O that each one would place a proper estimate upon the capabilities that have been given him of God! . . .

We are living in altogether too solemn a period of the world’s history to be careless and negligent. . . . You must pray, believe, and obey. In your own strength you can do nothing; but in the grace of Jesus Christ, you can employ your powers in such a way as to bring the greatest good to your own soul, and the greatest blessing to the souls of others. Lay hold of Jesus, and you will diligently work the works of Christ, and will finally receive the eternal reward.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 118.

Peter kept alive in his heart the hope of Christ’s return, and he assured the church of the certain fulfillment of the Saviour’s promise, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.” John 14:3. To the tried and faithful ones the coming might seem long

delayed, but the apostle assured them: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 536.

Tuesday, November 15: “ ‘I Will Raise Him Up’ ”

Many suppose that in following Christ they will be obliged to be gloomy and disconsolate, because they are required to deny themselves the pleasures and follies that the world indulge in. The living Christian will be filled with cheerfulness and peace, because he lives as seeing Him who is invisible; and those who seek Christ in His true character have within them the elements of everlasting life, because they are partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Jesus said, “This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:39, 40).—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 136.

Those who will permit God to work in them will grow up unto the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Every power of the mind and body will be used in the service of God. . . . He has wonderful blessings to give to those who will receive Him. He is mighty in strength and wonderful in counsel. By the ministration of the Holy Spirit, He seeks to impress His image upon our characters. If we will feed upon Him we shall become new creatures in Christ Jesus. The virtues of a true Christian character, the excellences that are revealed in the character of Christ, will be seen in the life born of the Spirit. Man, with his human nature, will become a partaker of divinity. The power of Christ will work to sanctify every part of the being, diffusing life, activity, and soundness through the whole, and developing spiritual efficiency.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 106.

Wednesday, November 16: At the Sound of the Trumpet

When about to leave His disciples, Jesus did not tell them that they would soon come to Him. “I go to prepare a place for you,” He said. “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.” John 14:2, 3. And Paul tells us, further, that “the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” And he adds: “Comfort one another with these words.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. . . . Paul points his brethren to the future coming of the Lord, when the fetters of the tomb shall be broken, and the “dead in Christ” shall be raised to eternal life.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 548.

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.

When Christ comes to gather to Himself those who have been faithful, the last trump will sound, and the whole earth, from the summits of the loftiest mountains to the lowest recesses of the deepest mines, will hear. The righteous dead will hear the sound of the last trump, and will come forth from their graves. . . .

. . . All [the righteous dead] arise with the freshness and vigor of eternal youth. . . . The mortal, corruptible form, devoid of comeliness, once polluted with sin, becomes perfect, beautiful, and immortal. . . . Restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will “grow up” to the full stature of the race in its primeval glory. . . .

The living righteous are changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” 1 Corinthians 15:52. At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal, and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. . . . Little children are borne by holy angels to their

mothers' arms. Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the city of God.

All the precious dead, from righteous Abel to the last saint that dies, shall awake to glorious, immortal life.—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 183.

Thursday, November 17: The Everlasting Encounter

The Lifegiver is coming to break the fetters of the tomb. He is to bring forth the captives and proclaim, “I am the resurrection and the life.” There stands the risen host. The last thought was of death and its pangs. The last thoughts they had were of the grave and the tomb, but now they proclaim, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory” (1 Corinthians 15:55). The pangs of death were the last things they felt. . . .

When they awake the pain is all gone. “O grave, where is thy victory?” here they stand and the finishing touch of immortality is put upon them and they go up to meet their Lord in the air. The gates of the city of God swing back upon their hinges, and the nations that have kept the truth enter in.—*Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 430, 431.

When Christ shall come to the earth again, not as a prisoner surrounded by a rabble will men see Him. They will see Him then as heaven’s King. Christ will come in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, the beautiful and triumphant sons of God, possessing surpassing loveliness and glory, will escort Him on His way. Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations. Then every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him. In the place of a crown of thorns, He will wear a crown of glory,—a crown within a crown. In place of that old purple kingly robe, He will be clothed in raiment of whitest white, “so as no fuller on earth can white them.” Mark 9:3. And on His vesture and on His thigh a name will be written, “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Revelation 19:16.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 739.

Christ is coming with clouds and with great glory. A multitude of shining angels will attend Him. He will come to raise the dead, and to change the living saints from glory to glory. He will come to honor those who have loved Him, and kept His commandments, and to take them to Himself. He has not forgotten them nor His promise. There will be a relinking of the family chain. When we look upon our dead, we may think

of the morning when the trump of God shall sound, when “the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” 1 Corinthians 15:52. A little longer, and we shall see the King in His beauty. A little longer, and He will wipe all tears from our eyes. A little longer, and He will present us “faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” Jude 1:24. Wherefore, when He gave the signs of His coming He said, “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 632.

Friday, November 18: For Further Reading

This Day With God, “Christ, the Bread of Life,” p. 112;

The Acts of the Apostles, “Called to Reach a Higher Standard,” pp. 319–321.

Lesson 9

Contrary Passages?

Sabbath Afternoon, November 19

A correct understanding of “what saith the Scriptures” in regard to the state of the dead is essential for this time. God’s Word declares that the dead know not anything, their hatred and love have alike perished. We must come to the sure word of prophecy for our authority. Unless we are intelligent in the Scriptures, may we not, when this mighty miracle-working power of Satan is manifested in our world, be deceived and call it the workings of God; for the Word of God declares that, if it were possible, the very elect should be deceived. Unless we are rooted and grounded in the truth, we shall be swept away by Satan’s delusive snares. We must cling to our Bibles. If Satan can make you believe that there are things in the Word of God that are not inspired, he will then be prepared to ensnare your soul. We shall have no assurance, no certainty, at the very time we need to know what is truth.—*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 18, 1888.

Every species of delusion is now being brought in. The plainest truths of God’s Word are covered with a mass of man-made theories. Deadly errors are presented as the truth to which all must bow. The simplicity of true godliness is buried beneath tradition.

The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul is one error with which the enemy is deceiving man. This error is well-nigh universal.

This is one of the lies forged in the synagogue of the enemy, one of the poisonous drafts of Babylon. “All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”—*Evangelism*, p. 247.

The question of the non-immortality of the soul also needs to be treated with great care, lest in introducing the subject there be started a deep and exciting controversy, which will close the door to further investigation of the truth.

Great wisdom is required in dealing with human minds, even in giving a reason of the hope that is within us. . . . What is the hope of which we are to give a reason?—the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ. . . .

. . . You dwell too much upon special ideas and doctrines, and the heart of the unbeliever is not softened. To try to impress him is like striking upon cold iron. . . .

. . . We are in constant need of wisdom to know when to speak and when to keep silent. But there is always perfect safety in talking of the hope of eternal life. And when the heart is all melted and subdued by the love of Jesus, the inquiry will be, “Lord, what must I do to be saved?”—Letter 12, 1890.

Sunday, November 20: The Rich Man and Lazarus

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Christ shows that in this life men decide their eternal destiny. During probationary time the grace of God is offered to every soul. But if men waste their opportunities in self-pleasing, they cut themselves off from everlasting life. No after-probation will be granted them. By their own choice they have fixed an impassable gulf between them and their God.

This parable draws a contrast between the rich who have not made God their dependence, and the poor who have made God their dependence. Christ shows that the time is coming when the position of the two classes will be reversed. Those who are poor in this world's goods, yet who trust in God and are patient in suffering, will one day be exalted above those who now hold the highest positions the world can give but who have not surrendered their life to God.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 260.

In this parable Christ was meeting the people on their own ground. The doctrine of a conscious state of existence between death and the resurrection was held by many of those who were listening to Christ's words. The Saviour knew of their ideas, and He framed His parable so as to inculcate important truths through these preconceived opinions. He held up before His hearers a mirror wherein they might see themselves in their true relation to God. He used the prevailing opinion to convey the idea He wished to make prominent to all—that no man is valued for his possessions; for all he has belongs to him only as lent by the Lord. A misuse of these gifts will place him below the poorest and most afflicted man who loves God and trusts in Him.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 263.

The closing scenes of this earth's history are portrayed in the closing of the rich man's history. The rich man claimed to be a son of Abraham, but he was separated from Abraham by an impassable gulf—a character wrongly developed. Abraham served God, following His word in faith and obedience. But the rich man was unmindful of God and of the needs of suffering humanity. The great gulf fixed between him and Abraham was the gulf of disobedience. . . .

When the voice of God awakes the dead, he will come from the grave with the same appetites and passions, the same likes and dislikes, that he cherished when living. God works no miracle to re-create a man who would not be re-created when he was granted every opportunity and provided with every facility. . . .

To learn of Christ means to receive His grace, which is His character. But those who do not appreciate and utilize the precious opportunities and sacred influences granted them on earth, are not fitted to take part in the pure devotion of heaven.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 269–271.

Monday, November 21: “ ‘Today . . . With Me in Paradise’ ”

As He hangs upon the cross, there floats up to Him still the sound of jeers and curses. With longing heart He has listened for some expression of faith from His disciples. He has heard only the mournful words, “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.” How grateful then to the Saviour was the utterance of faith and love from the dying thief! While the leading Jews deny Him, and even the disciples doubt His divinity, the poor thief, upon the brink of eternity, calls Jesus Lord. Many were ready to call Him Lord when He wrought miracles, and after He had risen from the grave; but none acknowledged Him as He hung dying upon the cross save the penitent thief who was saved at the eleventh hour. . . .

I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise. Christ did not promise that the thief should be with Him in Paradise that day. He Himself did not go that day to Paradise. He slept in the tomb, and on the morning of the resurrection He said, “I am not yet ascended to My Father.” John 20:17. But on the day of the crucifixion, the day of apparent defeat and darkness, the promise was given. “Today” while dying upon the cross as a malefactor, Christ assures the poor sinner, Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 750, 751.

Jesus said to Mary, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.” When He closed His eyes in death upon the cross, the soul of Christ did not go at once to heaven, as many believe, or how could His words be true—“I am not yet ascended to my Father”? The spirit of Jesus slept in the tomb with His body, and did not wing its way to heaven, there to maintain a separate existence, and to look down upon the mourning disciples embalming the body from which it had taken flight. All that comprised the life and intelligence of Jesus remained with His body in the sepulcher; and when He came forth it was as a whole being; He did not have to summon His spirit from heaven. He had power to lay down His life and to take it up again.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1150.

The pitying Saviour stands right by your side to help you. He would send every angel out of glory while you are struggling to overcome sin, so that Satan cannot have the victory over you. Christ . . . took man's human nature upon Him that He might come right down to man in the temptation wherewith man is beset. The pitiful Redeemer knows just how to help us in every one of our strivings.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 263.

Tuesday, November 22: “To Depart and Be With Christ”

When the apostle Paul, through the revelation of Christ, was converted from a persecutor to a Christian, he declared that he was as one born out of due time. Henceforward Christ was all and in all to him. “For to me to live is Christ,” he declared. This is the most perfect interpretation in a few words, in all the Scriptures, of what it means to be a Christian. This is the whole truth of the gospel. Paul understood what many seem unable to comprehend. How intensely in earnest he was! His words show that his mind was centered in Christ, that his whole life was bound up with his Lord. Christ was the author, the support, and the source of his life.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 903.

There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Timothy 4:8.

Paul kept ever in view the crown of life which was to be given to him, and not to him only, but also to all those who love Christ’s appearing. But it was victory through Jesus Christ that made the crown of life so desirable to him. **Jesus would not have us ambitious to obtain reward, but ambitious to do God’s will because it is His will, irrespective of the reward we are to receive.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 343.**

All along the path that leads to death there are pains and penalties, there are sorrows and disappointments, there are warnings from God’s messengers not to go on, and God will make it hard for the heedless and the headstrong to destroy themselves. All the way up the steep path leading to eternal life are wellsprings of joy to refresh the weary. The true, strong joy of the soul begins when Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. If you now choose the path where God leads, and go forward where the voice of duty calls, the difficulties which Satan has magnified before you will disappear.

No path is safe, save that which grows clearer and firmer the farther it is pursued. The foot may sometimes slip upon the safest path. In order to

walk without fear, you must know that your hand is firmly held by the hand of Christ. . . .

. . . Look at Paul; listen to his words sounding along the line to our time: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7, 8). Here is the battle shout of victory from Paul. What will be yours?—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 169.

Wednesday, November 23: Preaching to the Spirits in Prison

God granted [the antediluvians] one hundred and twenty years of probation, and during that time preached to them through Methuselah, Noah, and many others of His servants. Had they listened to the testimony of these faithful witnesses, had they repented and returned to their loyalty, God would not have destroyed them. . . .

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” Christ was engaged in this warfare in Noah’s day. It was His voice that spoke to the inhabitants of the old world in messages of warning, reproof, and invitation. He gave the people a probation of one hundred and twenty years, in which they might have repented. But they chose the deceptions of Satan, and perished in the waters of the Flood.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1088.

Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God. He may have committed his evil deeds in the light of day or in the darkness of night; but they were open and manifest before Him with whom we have to do. Angels of God witnessed each sin and registered it in the unerring records. Sin may be concealed, denied, covered up from father, mother, wife, children, and associates; no one but the guilty actors may cherish the least suspicion of the wrong; but it is laid bare before the intelligences of heaven. The darkness of the darkest night, the secrecy of all deceptive arts, is not sufficient to veil one thought from the knowledge of the Eternal. God has an exact record of every unjust account and every unfair dealing. He is not deceived by appearances of piety. He makes no mistakes in His estimation of character. Men may be deceived by those who are corrupt in heart, but God pierces all disguises and reads the inner life. . . .

As the features of the countenance are reproduced with unerring accuracy on the polished plate of the artist, so the character is faithfully delineated in the books above. Yet how little solicitude is felt concerning that record which is to meet the gaze of heavenly beings. Could the veil

which separates the visible from the invisible world be swept back, and the children of men behold an angel recording every word and deed, which they must meet again in the judgment, how many words that are daily uttered would remain unspoken, how many deeds would remain undone.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 486, 487.

Thursday, November 24: The Souls Under the Altar

When the fifth seal was opened, John the Revelator in vision saw beneath the altar the company that were slain for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. After this came the scenes described in the eighteenth of Revelation, when those who are faithful and true are called out from Babylon [Revelation 18:1-5 quoted]. —Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 968.

God has always wrought for His people in their greatest extremity, when there seemed the least hope that ruin could be averted. The designs of wicked men, the enemies of the church, are subject to His power and overruling providence. He can move upon the hearts of statesmen; the wrath of the turbulent and disaffected, the haters of God, His truth, and His people can be turned aside, even as the rivers of water are turned, if He orders it thus. Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. He who marshals the stars in order in the heavens, whose word controls the waves of the great deep, the same infinite Creator will work in behalf of His people if they call upon Him in faith. He will restrain the forces of darkness until the warning is given to the world and all who will heed it are prepared for the conflict.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 452.

The whole system of religious principles and doctrines, which should form the foundation and framework of social life, seems to be a tottering mass, ready to fall to ruin. The vilest of criminals, when thrown into prison for their offenses, are often made the recipients of gifts and attentions as if they had attained an enviable distinction. Great publicity is given to their character and crimes. The press publishes the revolting details of vice, thus initiating others into the practice of fraud, robbery, and murder; and Satan exults in the success of his hellish schemes. . . .

Courts of justice are corrupt. Rulers are actuated by desire for gain and love of sensual pleasure. Intemperance has beclouded the faculties of many so that Satan has almost complete control of them. Jurists are perverted, bribed, deluded. Drunkenness and revelry, passion, envy, dishonesty of every sort, are represented among those who administer the

laws. “Justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.” Isaiah 59:14.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 585, 586.

There are limits even to the forbearance of God. The boundary of His long-suffering may be reached, and then He will surely punish. And when He does take up the case of the presumptuous sinner, He will not cease till He has made a full end.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1166.

Friday, November 25: For Further Reading

Lift Him Up, “In the Father’s Arms,” p. 103;
Fundamentals of Christian Education, “Teachers as Examples of
Christian Integrity,” p. 504.

Lesson 10

The Fires of Hell

Sabbath Afternoon, November 26

How shall we search the Scriptures? Shall we drive our stakes of doctrine one after another, and then try to make all Scripture meet our established opinions? or shall we take our ideas and views to the Scriptures, and measure our theories on every side by the Scriptures of truth? Many who read and even teach the Bible, do not comprehend the precious truth they are teaching or studying.

Men entertain errors, when the truth is clearly marked out; and if they would but bring their doctrines to the word of God, and not read the word of God in the light of their doctrines, to prove their ideas right, they would not walk in darkness and blindness, or cherish error. Many give the words of Scripture a meaning that suits their own opinions, and they mislead themselves and deceive others by their misinterpretations of God's word. —*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 36.

Oh, how deceptive is the human heart! How easy it is to harmonize with that which is evil! There is nothing more detrimental to the soul's interest, its purity, its true and holy conceptions of God, and of sacred and eternal things, than constantly giving heed to and exalting that which is not from God. It poisons the heart, and degrades the understanding. Pure truth can be traced to its divine Source, by its elevating, refining, sanctifying influence upon the character of the receiver. . . .

"Take heed, therefore, how ye hear" (Luke 8:18), is an admonition of Christ. We are to hear for the sake of learning the truth, that we may walk in it. And again: "Take heed what ye hear" (Mark 4:24). Examine closely, "prove all things" (1 Thessalonians 5:21), "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). This is the counsel of God; shall we heed it?—*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 78, 79.

Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error. Without sincerity there is no true religion, but sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach. The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action.

—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 56.

Sunday, November 27: Immortal Worms?

With Satan at their head, the multitude move on. Kings and warriors follow close after Satan, and the multitude follow after in companies. Each company has its leader, and order is observed as they march over the broken surface of the earth to the Holy City. Jesus closes the gates of the city, and this vast army surround it, and place themselves in battle array, expecting a fierce conflict. . . .

Satan rushes into the midst of his followers and tries to stir up the multitude to action. But fire from God out of heaven is rained upon them, and the great men, and mighty men, the noble, the poor and miserable, are all consumed together. I saw that some were quickly destroyed, while others suffered longer. They were punished according to the deeds done in the body. Some were many days consuming, and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, all the sense of suffering remained. Said the angel, "The worm of life shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched as long as there is the least particle for it to prey upon."—*Early Writings*, pp. 293, 294.

"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." "The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." "In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people."—*Maranatha*, p. 371.

To every nation and to every individual of today God has assigned a place in His great plan. Today men and nations are being measured by the plummet in the hand of Him who makes no mistake. All are by their own choice deciding their destiny, and God is overruling all for the accomplishment of His purposes.

The history which the great I AM has marked out in His word, uniting link after link in the prophetic chain, from eternity in the past to eternity in the future, tells us where we are today in the procession of the ages,

and what may be expected in the time to come. All that prophecy has foretold as coming to pass, until the present time, has been traced on the pages of history, and we may be assured that all which is yet to come will be fulfilled in its order.—*Education*, p. 178.

Monday, November 28: The Fires of Hell

The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.

Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch, (Malachi 4:1),—Satan the root, and his followers the branches. . . .

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. . . . By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 763, 764.

God does not desire the destruction of any. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel 33:11. Throughout the period of probationary time His Spirit is entreating men to accept the gift of life. It is only those who reject His pleading that will be left to perish. God has declared that sin must be destroyed as an evil ruinous to the universe. Those who cling to sin will perish in its destruction.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 123.

God is full of love and plenteous in mercy; but He will by no means acquit those who neglect the great salvation He has provided. The long-lived antediluvians were swept from the earth because they made void the divine law. God will not again bring from the heavens above and the earth beneath waters as His weapons to use in the destruction of the world; but

when next His vengeance shall be poured out against those who despise His authority, they will be destroyed by fire concealed in the bowels of the earth, awakened into intense activity by fires from heaven above. Then from the purified earth shall arise a song of praise: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Revelation 5:13. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." And every one who has made the heavenly treasure the first consideration, . . . will join in the glad triumphant strain.

—*Our High Calling*, p. 252.

Tuesday, November 29: The Saints in Purgatory

The advancing centuries witnessed a constant increase of error in the doctrines put forth from Rome. Even before the establishment of the Papacy, the teachings of heathen philosophers had received attention and exerted an influence in the church. Many who professed conversion still clung to the tenets of their pagan philosophy, and not only continued its study themselves but urged it upon others as a means of extending their influence among the heathen. Thus were serious errors introduced into the Christian faith. Prominent among these was the belief in man's natural immortality and his consciousness in death. This doctrine laid the foundation upon which Rome established the invocation of saints and the adoration of the virgin Mary. From this sprung also the heresy of eternal torment for the finally impenitent, which was early incorporated into the papal faith.

Then the way was prepared for the introduction of still another invention of paganism, which Rome named purgatory, and employed to terrify the credulous and superstitious multitudes. By this heresy is affirmed the existence of a place of torment, in which the souls of such as have not merited eternal damnation are to suffer punishment for their sins, and from which, when freed from impurity, they are admitted to heaven.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 332, 333.

God is approached through Jesus Christ, the Mediator, the only way through which He forgives sins. God cannot forgive sins at the expense of His justice, His holiness, and His truth. But He does forgive sins and that fully. There are no sins He will not forgive in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the sinner's only hope, and if he rests here in sincere faith, he is sure of pardon and that full and free. There is only one channel and that is accessible to all, and through that channel a rich and abundant forgiveness awaits the penitent, contrite soul and the darkest sins are forgiven. . . .

The incense that is offered now by men, the masses that are said for the deliverance of souls from purgatory, are not of the least avail with God. All the altars and sacrifices, the traditions and inventions whereby men

hope to earn salvation are fallacies. No sacrifices are to be offered without; for the great High Priest is performing His work in the holy place. No prince or monarch dare venture within the holy enclosure.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 912, 913.

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.—*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 35.

Wednesday, November 30: A Paradise With Disembodied Souls

Upon the fundamental error of natural immortality rests the doctrine of consciousness in death—a doctrine, like eternal torment, opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures, to the dictates of reason, and to our feelings of humanity. According to the popular belief, the redeemed in heaven are acquainted with all that takes place on the earth and especially with the lives of the friends whom they have left behind. But how could it be a source of happiness to the dead to know the troubles of the living, to witness the sins committed by their own loved ones, and to see them enduring all the sorrows, disappointments, and anguish of life? How much of heaven's bliss would be enjoyed by those who were hovering over their friends on earth? And how utterly revolting is the belief that as soon as the breath leaves the body the soul of the impenitent is consigned to the flames of hell! To what depths of anguish must those be plunged who see their friends passing to the grave unprepared, to enter upon an eternity of woe and sin! Many have been driven to insanity by this harrowing thought.

What say the Scriptures concerning these things? David declares that man is not conscious in death. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Psalm 146:4. Solomon bears the same testimony: "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything." "Their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun." "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 545.

"For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." [Acts 2:25-27](#)

Peter here shows that David could not have spoken in reference to himself, but definitely of Jesus Christ. . . . David, as king of Israel, and also

as a prophet, had been specially honored by God. In prophetic vision he was shown the future life and ministry of Christ. He saw His rejection, His trial, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

David testified that the soul of Christ was not to be left in hell (the grave), nor was His flesh to see corruption. Peter shows the fulfillment of this prophecy in Jesus of Nazareth. God had actually raised Him up from the tomb before His body saw corruption. He was now the exalted One in the heaven of heavens.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 244, 245.

Thursday, December 1: The Biblical View

Jesus has loved men, and has made every provision that the blood-bought soul shall have a new birth, a new life derived from His own life. . . . “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” Those who believe in Christ derive their motive power and the texture of their characters from Him in whom they believe.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 299.

Jesus declared, “I am the resurrection, and the life.” In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. . . . The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life. “He that believeth in me,” said Jesus, “though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” John 11:25, 26.

To the believer, death is but a small matter. Christ speaks of it as if it were of little moment. “If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death,” “he shall never taste of death.” John 8:51, 52. To the Christian, death is but a sleep, a moment of silence and darkness. The life is hid with Christ in God, and “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Colossians 3:4.—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 187.

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

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

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

into symmetry and abundant fruitfulness.

—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 103.

Friday, December 2: For Further Reading

This Day With God, “Securing Our Inheritance,” p. 152;

The Great Controversy, “Can Our Dead Speak to Us?” pp. 51–562.

Lesson 11

End-Time Deceptions

Sabbath Afternoon, December 3

The more we learn in reference to the early days of the Christian church, and see with what subtlety Satan worked to weaken and destroy, the better we shall be prepared to resist his devices and meet coming perils. We are in the time when tribulations such as the world has never yet seen will prevail. “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” But God has set bounds that Satan cannot pass. Our most holy faith is this barrier; and if we build ourselves up in the faith, we shall be safe in the keeping of the Mighty One. “Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 297.

The experience of the past will be repeated. In the future, Satan’s superstitions will assume new forms. Errors will be presented in a pleasing and flattering manner. False theories, clothed with garments of light, will be presented to God’s people. Thus Satan will try to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Most seducing influences will be exerted; minds will be hypnotized.

Corruptions of every type, similar to those existing among the antediluvians, will be brought in to take minds captive. The exaltation of nature as God, the unrestrained license of the human will, the counsel of the ungodly—these Satan uses as agencies to bring about certain ends. He will employ the power of mind over mind to carry out his designs.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 293.

Christ was tempted in all points as man is tempted, but at no time did He bring against the tempter a railing accusation. To every temptation He presented the word of the Lord. “It is written” was His never-failing weapon. We, as the representatives of Christ, are to meet every thrust of

the enemy with the word of the living God. Never should we allow ourselves to follow the trail of the serpent by using his scientific arguments. Satan can never gain advantage of the child of God who relies on the word of God as his defense.

Our Counselor impressed deeply on our minds that God's commandment-keeping people must be sanctified through the truth and that truth must ever be given the foremost place. We must not forget that Satan still lives to exercise his deceptive power through false science.

Christ was the Majesty of heaven, the Prince of life; yet He humbled Himself as a man and became obedient to every law of God. He passed over the ground that every man must tread who takes His name, and came forth from His trial pure and untainted by sin. He was our example in all things.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 68, 69.

Sunday, December 4: Mysticism

There is a spurious experience that is prevailing now everywhere in regard to the love of Jesus—that we must dwell on the love of Jesus, that faith in Jesus is all we need—but these souls must be instructed that the love of Jesus in the heart will lead to humility of life and obedience to all His commandments. “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4). The love of Jesus that goes no farther than the lips will not save any soul, but be a great delusion. . . .

Those who reject the truth of the Bible do it under a pretense of loving Jesus. Those who love Jesus will reveal that love by being obedient children. They will be doers of the Word and not hearers only. They will not be continually pleading, “All that we have to do is to believe in Jesus.” This is true in the fullest sense, but they do not comprehend, they do not take it in its fullest sense. To believe in Jesus is to take Him as your Redeemer, as your Pattern. All who love Jesus must follow His example. They must connect themselves with Jesus as closely as the branch is connected with the living vine.—*This Day With God*, p. 299.

Human nature is vacillating. Men grasp the truth with their perceptive powers, but they refuse to separate themselves from the world. Men will not consent to be God’s peculiar people. They know the truth of the Bible, but they do not want to obey, and they turn from the truth. They act out their unbelief, and darkness comes upon their souls. Choosing their own way they are left to be filled with their own devices. Truth is insulted, Christ ignored, and perdition will be their portion unless they turn and repent.—*The Upward Look*, p. 18.

Feeling and faith are as distinct from each other as the east is from the west. Faith is not dependent on feeling. Daily we should dedicate ourselves to God and believe that Christ understands and accepts the sacrifice, without examining ourselves to see if we have that degree of feeling that we think should correspond with our faith. Have we not the assurance that our heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit

to them that ask Him in faith than parents are to give good gifts to their children? We should go forward as if to every prayer that we send to the throne of God we heard the response from the One whose promises never fail. Even when depressed by sadness, it is our privilege to make melody in our hearts to God. When we do this, the mists and clouds will be rolled back, and we will pass from the shadow and darkness into the clear sunshine of His presence.—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 537.

Monday, December 5: Near-Death Experiences

The prince of darkness, who has so long bent the powers of his mastermind to the work of deception, skillfully adapts his temptations to men of all classes and conditions. To persons of culture and refinement he presents spiritualism in its more refined and intellectual aspects, and thus succeeds in drawing many into his snare. The wisdom which spiritualism imparts is that described by the apostle James, which “descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.” James 3:15. This, however, the great deceiver conceals when concealment will best suit his purpose. He who could appear clothed with the brightness of the heavenly seraphs before Christ in the wilderness of temptation, comes to men in the most attractive manner as an angel of light. He appeals to the reason by the presentation of elevating themes; he delights the fancy with enrapturing scenes; and he enlists the affections by his eloquent portrayals of love and charity. He excites the imagination to lofty flights, leading men to take so great pride in their own wisdom that in their hearts they despise the Eternal One. That mighty being who could take the world’s Redeemer to an exceedingly high mountain and bring before Him all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, will present his temptations to men in a manner to pervert the senses of all who are not shielded by divine power. —*The Great Controversy*, p. 553.

The very name of witchcraft is now held in contempt. The claim that men can [communicate] with evil spirits is regarded as a fable of the Dark Ages. But Spiritualism, which numbers its converts by hundreds of thousands, yea, by millions, which has made its way into scientific circles, which has invaded churches and has found favor in legislative bodies, and even in the courts of kings—this mammoth deception is but a revival in a new disguise of the witchcraft condemned and prohibited of old.—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 395.

Bible reading, the critical examination of Bible subjects, essays written upon topics which would improve the mind and impart knowledge, the study of the prophecies or the precious lessons of Christ—these will have

an influence to strengthen the mental powers and increase spirituality. A familiar acquaintance with the Scriptures sharpens the discerning powers and fortifies the soul against the attacks of Satan. . . .

The intellect, as well as the heart, must be consecrated to the service of God. He has claims upon all there is of us. The follower of Christ should not indulge in any gratification, or engage in any enterprise, however innocent or laudable it may appear, which an enlightened conscience tells him would abate his ardor or lessen his spirituality. Every Christian should labor to press back the tide of evil.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 543, 544.

Tuesday, December 6: Reincarnation

Satan beguiles men now as he beguiled Eve in Eden by flattery, by kindling a desire to obtain forbidden knowledge, by exciting ambition for self-exaltation. It was cherishing these evils that caused his fall, and through them he aims to compass the ruin of men. "Ye shall be as gods," he declares, "knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:5. Spiritualism teaches "that man is the creature of progression; that it is his destiny from his birth to progress, even to eternity, toward the Godhead." And again: "Each mind will judge itself and not another." "The judgment will be right, because it is the judgment of self. . . . The throne is within you." Said a spiritualistic teacher, as the "spiritual consciousness" awoke within him: "My fellow men, all were unfallen demigods." And another declares: "Any just and perfect being is Christ."

Thus, in place of the righteousness and perfection of the infinite God, the true object of adoration; in place of the perfect righteousness of His law, the true standard of human attainment, Satan has substituted the sinful, erring nature of man himself as the only object of adoration, the only rule of judgment, or standard of character. This is progress, not upward, but downward.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 554.

Satan was seeking to shut out from men a knowledge of God, to turn their attention from the temple of God, and to establish his own kingdom. His strife for supremacy had seemed to be almost wholly successful. It is true that in every generation God had His agencies. Even among the heathen there were men through whom Christ was working to uplift the people from their sin and degradation. But these men were despised and hated. Many of them suffered a violent death. The dark shadow that Satan had cast over the world grew deeper and deeper.

Through heathenism, Satan had for ages turned men away from God; but he won his great triumph in perverting the faith of Israel. By contemplating and worshiping their own conceptions, the heathen had lost a knowledge of God, and had become more and more corrupt. So it was with Israel. The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion; it had now become the

principle of the Jewish religion. Satan had implanted this principle. Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 35.

Wednesday, December 7: Necromancy and Ancestor Worship

The most sorrowful thought of all is that under [Satan's] deceptive influence men will have a form of godliness, without having a real connection with God. Like Adam and Eve, who ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, many are even now feeding upon the deceptive morsels of error.

Satanic agencies are clothing false theories in an attractive garb, even as Satan in the Garden of Eden concealed his identity from our first parents by speaking through the serpent. These agencies are instilling into human minds that which in reality is deadly error. The hypnotic influence of Satan will rest upon those who turn from the plain word of God to pleasing fables.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 293, 294.

In this degenerate age, Satan holds control over those who depart from the right and venture upon his ground. He exercises his power upon such in an alarming manner. I was directed to these words: "Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." Some, I was shown, gratify their curiosity and tamper with the devil. They have no real faith in spiritualism and would start back with horror at the idea of being mediums. Yet they venture and place themselves in a position where Satan can exercise his power upon them. Such do not mean to enter deep into this work, but they know not what they are doing. They are venturing on the devil's ground and are tempting him to control them. This powerful destroyer considers them his lawful prey and exercises his power upon them, and that against their will. When they wish to control themselves they cannot. They yielded their minds to Satan, and he will not release his claims, but holds them captive. No power can deliver the ensnared soul but the power of God in answer to the earnest prayers of His faithful followers.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 299.

By the prediction of Saul's doom, given through the woman of Endor, Satan planned to ensnare the people of Israel. He hoped that they would be inspired with confidence in the sorceress, and would be led to consult

her. Thus they would turn from God as their counselor and would place themselves under the guidance of Satan. The lure by which spiritualism attracts the multitudes is its pretended power to draw aside the veil from the future and reveal to men what God has hidden. God has in His word opened before us the great events of the future—all that it is essential for us to know—and He has given us a safe guide for our feet amid all its perils; but it is Satan's purpose to destroy men's confidence in God, to make them dissatisfied with their condition in life, and to lead them to seek a knowledge of what God has wisely veiled from them, and to despise what He has revealed in His Holy Word.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 686.

Thursday, December 8: Personations and Other Appearances

Deceived mortals are worshiping evil angels, believing them to be the spirits of their dead friends. The word of God expressly declares that the dead have no more a portion in anything done under the sun. Spiritualists say that the dead know everything that is done under the sun, that they communicate to their friends on earth, give valuable information, and perform wonders. Psalm 115:17: “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.” Satan, transformed into an angel of light, works with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. He who could take up the Son of God, who was made a little lower than the angels, and place Him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and take Him up into an exceeding high mountain to present before Him the kingdoms of the world, can exercise his power upon the human family, who are far inferior in strength and wisdom to the Son of God, even after He had taken upon Himself man’s nature.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 298.

“We wrestle not against flesh and blood,” declares Paul, “but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.” Ephesians 6:12. Till the close of time there will be a conflict between the church of God and those who are under the control of evil angels.

The early Christians were often called to meet the powers of darkness face to face. By sophistry and by persecution the enemy endeavored to turn them from the true faith. At the present time, when the end of all things earthly is rapidly approaching, Satan is putting forth desperate efforts to ensnare the world. He is devising many plans to occupy minds and to divert attention from the truths essential to salvation. In every city his agencies are busily organizing into parties those who are opposed to the law of God. The archdeceiver is at work to introduce elements of confusion and rebellion, and men are being fired with a zeal that is not according to knowledge.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 219.

Determined to efface the image of God in man, Satan works with an intensity of effort to hide God from view. Not openly does he work, but

secretly, mingling the human and the divine, the spurious and the genuine, so seeking to bring confusion and distress. But in proportionate power divine mercy is revealed to counteract this wicked working, and bring to light the enemy's hidden purposes.

God's people are to bear a bold, decided testimony for the truth, unfolding the purposes of God by the witness of pen and voice. In place after place they are to proclaim the message of God's Word, arousing men and women to comprehend the truth. . . .

There is a reality in sound doctrine. It is not as a vapor, which passes away. Light is to shine forth from the Word of God. God calls upon His people to draw near to Him. Let no one interpose between Him and His people. Christ is knocking at the door of the heart, seeking for entrance. Will you let Him in?—*This Day With God*, p. 308.

Friday, December 9: For Further Reading

The Ministry of Healing, “Pantheistic Theories,” pp. 428, 429;
Evangelism, “Dealing With False Science, Cults, Isms, and Secret Societies,” pp. 602–609.

Lesson 12

The Biblical Worldview

Sabbath Afternoon, December 10

If we are fighting in the strength of the Mighty One, we are on the side that will win at last. In the end we shall conquer. The greatest work, the most perilous scenes are before us. The deadly conflict we must meet. Are we prepared for it? God is still speaking to the children of men. He is speaking in many different ways. Will they hear His voice? Will we place our hands confidingly in His and say, “Lead me, guide me”?

There is cheap religion in abundance, but there is no such thing as cheap Christianity. Self may figure largely in a false religion, but it cannot appear in Christian experience. You are workers together with God. “Without Me,” said Christ, “ye can do nothing.” We cannot be shepherds of the flock unless we are divested of our own peculiar habits, manners, and customs, and come into Christ’s likeness.

—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 339.

It is positively necessary for those who believe the truth, to be making continual advancement, growing up into the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. There is no time for backsliding and indifference. Each one must have a living experience in the things of God. Have root in yourselves. Become grounded in the faith, so that having done all you may stand, with unwavering confidence in God, through the time that will try every man’s work and character. Exercise your powers in spiritual things, till you can appreciate the deep things of God’s Word, and go on from strength to strength.

There are thousands who claim to have the light of truth who take no steps in advance. They have no living experience, notwithstanding they have had every advantage. . . . The Word of God offers spiritual liberty and enlightenment to those who seek for it earnestly. Those who accept the promises of God, and act on them with living faith, will have the light of heaven in their lives. They will drink of the fountain of life, and lead

others to the waters that have refreshed their own souls.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 332.

“The time will come,” Paul wrote to Timothy, “when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” [2 Timothy 4:3-5.]

“Sound doctrine” is Bible truth—truth that will promote piety and devotion, confirming God’s people in the faith. Sound doctrine means much to the receiver; and it means much, too, to the teacher, the minister of righteousness; for wherever the gospel is preached, every laborer, whatever his line of service, is either true or untrue to his responsibility as the Lord’s messenger.—*Gospel Workers*, p. 311.

Sunday, December 11: The Model of Jesus

The wonderful example of the life of Christ, the matchless tenderness with which He entered into the feelings of the oppressed soul, weeping with those that wept, rejoicing with all that rejoiced in His love, must have a deep influence upon the character of all who love God and keep His commandments.

They will give sympathy, not grudgingly but liberally; by kindly words and acts they will try to make the path just as easy for weary feet as they desire the path to be made for their feet. As we receive daily and hourly the blessing of God, we can do no less to show our gratitude than to have a kindly, unselfish interest in those for whom Christ has died.—*Our High Calling*, p. 183.

If we have become the disciples of Christ we shall be learning of Him—every day learning how to overcome some unlovely trait of character, every day copying His example and coming a little nearer the Pattern. If we are ever to inherit those mansions that He has gone to prepare for us we must here be forming such characters as the dwellers there are to possess.

The requirements of God are made in wisdom and goodness. In obeying them, the mind enlarges, the character improves, and the soul finds a peace and rest that the world can neither give nor take away.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 121.

Christ gave His disciples their commission. He made full provision for the prosecution of the work, and took upon Himself the responsibility for 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, but know that My presence will be there. Labor in faith and confidence, for the time will never come when I will forsake you.

The Saviour's commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. It is a fatal mistake to

suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister. All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. . . .

. . . Whatever one's calling in life, his first interest should be to win souls for Christ. He may not be able to speak to congregations, but he can work for individuals. To them he can communicate the instruction received from his Lord. Ministry does not consist alone in preaching. Those minister who relieve the sick and suffering, helping the needy, speaking words of comfort to the desponding and those of little faith. . . . Christ would have His servants minister to sin-sick souls.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 822.

Monday, December 12: The Body as a Temple

The greatest praise that men can bring to God is to become consecrated channels through whom He can work. Time is rapidly passing into eternity. Let us not keep back from God that which is His own. Let us not refuse Him that which, though it cannot be given with merit, cannot be denied without ruin. He asks for a whole heart; give it to Him; it is His, both by creation and by redemption. He asks for your intellect; give it to Him; it is His. He asks for your money; give it to Him; it is His. “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. God requires the homage of a sanctified soul, which has prepared itself, by the exercise of the faith that works by love, to serve Him. He holds up before us the highest ideal, even perfection. He asks us to be absolutely and completely for Him in this world as He is for us in the presence of God.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 566.

Men will never be truly temperate until the grace of Christ is an abiding principle in the heart. . . .

Circumstances cannot work reforms. Christianity proposes a reformation in the heart. What Christ works within, will be worked out under the dictation of a converted intellect. The plan of beginning outside and trying to work inward has always failed, and always will fail. God’s plan . . . is to begin at the very seat of all difficulties, the heart, and then from out of the heart will issue the principles of righteousness; the reformation will be outward as well as inward.—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 35.

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. 3 John 1:2.

The right use of one’s self is the most valuable lesson that can be learned. We are not to do brain work, and stop there, or make physical exertion, and stop there; we are to make the best use of the various parts that compose the human machinery,—brain, bone, muscle, head, and heart.

The right use of one’s self includes the whole circle of obligations to one’s self, to the world, and to God. Then use the physical powers

proportionately with the mental powers. . . .

You are the Lord's; for He created you. You are His by redemption; for He gave His life for you. . . . Preserve every portion of the living machinery, that you may use it for God. Preserve it for Him. Your health depends upon the right use of your physical organism. Do not misuse any portion of your God-given powers, physical, mental, or moral. All your habits are to be brought under the control of a mind that is itself under the control of God.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 171.

Tuesday, December 13: The Mind of Christ

Many are sensible of their great deficiency, and they read, and pray, and resolve, and yet make no progress. They seem to be powerless to resist temptation. The reason is, they do not go deep enough. They do not seek for a thorough conversion of the soul, that the streams which issue from it may be pure, and the deportment may testify that Christ reigns within. All defects of character originate in the heart. Pride, vanity, evil temper, and covetousness proceed from the carnal heart unrenewed by the grace of Christ. If the heart is refined, softened, and ennobled, the words and actions will testify to the fact. When the soul has been entirely surrendered to God, there will be a firm reliance upon His promises, and earnest prayer and determined effort to control the words and actions.—*Our High Calling*, p. 336.

We have a work to do to resist temptation. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind should not be left to wander at random upon every subject that the adversary of souls may suggest. . . . Says Paul, "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. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word." "Thy word," says the psalmist, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Psalm 119:9, 11.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 460.

Let your soul be absorbed in meditating upon the glorious truths contained in the Word of God, and you will have no constant craving for something which you have not. You will despise cheap, vain thoughts. You

will be ever trying to meet the elevated standard of virtue and holiness which is kept before you in the gospel. You will seek for higher attainments in the divine life. Converse with God through the medium of His Word.

By contemplating the lofty ideal He has placed before you, you will be uplifted into a pure and holy atmosphere, even the presence of God. When you abide here, there goes forth from you a light which irradiates all who are connected with you.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 161.

Wednesday, December 14: The Guidance of the Spirit

“When He, the Spirit of truth, is come,” said Jesus, “He will guide you into all truth.”

The Comforter is called “the Spirit of truth.” His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. . . . Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. . . .

. . . The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 670, 671.

We must individually seek God. This is a personal work. Let us draw near to God, allowing nothing to come into our efforts that would misrepresent the truth for this time. Let everyone confess, not his brother’s sin, but his own sin. Let him humble his heart before God and become so filled with the Holy Spirit that his life will show that he has been born again. We read: “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:12.

The gospel of Christ is to be lived, practiced in the daily life. The servants of God are to be cleansed from all coldness, all selfishness. Simplicity, meekness, lowliness are of great value in the work of God. Try

to unite the workers in confidence and love. If you cannot do this, be right yourselves, and leave the rest with God. Labor in faith and prayer. Select Christian youth, and train them to be, not workers with hearts like iron, but workers who are willing to harmonize.

I pray that the Lord will change the hearts of those who, unless they receive more grace, will enter into temptation. I pray that He will soften and subdue every heart. We need to live in close fellowship with God, that we may love one another as Christ has loved us. It is by this that the world is to know that we are His disciples. Let there be no self-exaltation. If the workers will humble their hearts before God, the blessing will come.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 218, 219.

Thursday, December 15: Ready for His Appearing

Everything in the world is in agitation. The signs of the times are ominous. Coming events cast their shadows before. The Spirit of God is withdrawing from the earth, and calamity follows calamity by sea and by land. There are tempests, earthquakes, fires, floods, murders of every grade. Who can read the future? Where is security? There is assurance in nothing that is human or earthly. Rapidly are men ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen. Restlessly are they waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. There are those who are waiting and watching and working for our Lord's appearing. Another class are falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win.

The crisis is stealing gradually upon us. The sun shines in the heavens, passing over its usual round, and the heavens still declare the glory of God. Men are still eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying, and giving in marriage. . . . Satan sees that his time is short. He has set all his agencies at work that men may be deceived, deluded, occupied and entranced, until the day of probation shall be ended, and the door of mercy be forever shut.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 636.

The fact that a man is not a hypocrite does not make him any the less really a sinner. When the appeals of the Holy Spirit come to the heart, our only safety lies in responding to them without delay. When the call comes, "Go work today in My vineyard," do not refuse the invitation. "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Hebrews 4:7. It is unsafe to delay obedience. You may never hear the invitation again. . . .

If you cultivate faithfully the vineyard of your soul, God is making you a laborer together with Himself. And you will have a work to do not only for yourself, but for others. In representing the church as the vineyard, Christ does not teach that we are to restrict our sympathies and labors to our own numbers. The Lord's vineyard is to be enlarged. In all parts of the earth He desires it to be extended. As we receive the instruction and grace of God, we should impart to others a knowledge of how to care for the

precious plants. Thus we may extend the vineyard of the Lord. God is watching for evidence of our faith, love, and patience. He looks to see if we are using every spiritual advantage to become skillful workers in His vineyard on earth, that we may enter the Paradise of God, that Eden home from which Adam and Eve were excluded by transgression.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 280, 282.

Friday, December 16: For Further Reading

The Upward Look, “As a Thief in the Night,” p. 365;

The Sanctified Life, “True and False Theories Contrasted,” pp. 7–16.

Lesson 13

The Judging Process

Sabbath Afternoon, December 17

“Hereafter,” said Jesus, “shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” In these words Christ presented the reverse of the scene then taking place. He, the Lord of life and glory, would be seated at God’s right hand. He would be the judge of all the earth, and from His decision there could be no appeal. Then every secret thing would be set in the light of God’s countenance, and judgment be passed upon every man according to his deeds.

The words of Christ startled the high priest. The thought that there was to be a resurrection of the dead, when all would stand at the bar of God, to be rewarded according to their works, was a thought of terror to Caiaphas. He did not wish to believe that in future he would receive sentence according to his works. There rushed before his mind as a panorama the scenes of the final judgment. For a moment he saw the fearful spectacle of the graves giving up their dead, with the secrets he had hoped were forever hidden. For a moment he felt as if standing before the eternal Judge, whose eye, which sees all things, was reading his soul, bringing to light mysteries supposed to be hidden with the dead.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 707, 708.

Every man’s work passes in review before God. . . . Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered, with terrible exactness, every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel.

If your name is registered in the Lamb’s book of life, then all will be well with you. Be ready and anxious to confess your faults and forsake them, that your mistakes and sins may go beforehand to judgment and be blotted out.—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 210.

All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are to be judged “out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Revelation 20:12.

Said the Judge: “All will be justified by their faith and judged by their works.” . . .

The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour’s admonition, “Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.” Mark 13:33.

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 211.

Sunday, December 18: The Final Judgment

Christ is a risen Saviour; for, though He was dead, He has risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. We are to believe with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation. Those who are justified by faith will make confession of Christ. “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of justification. By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord imputes unto the believer the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe. He transfers his sins to Jesus, the sinner’s representative, substitute, and surety. Upon Christ He lays the iniquity of every soul that believeth. “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Christ made satisfaction for the guilt of the whole world, and all who will come to God in faith, will receive the righteousness of Christ, “who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:24). Our sin has been expiated, put away, cast into the depths of the sea. Through repentance and faith we are rid of sin, and look unto the Lord our righteousness. Jesus suffered, the just for the unjust.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 392.

Paul endeavored to direct the minds of his hearers to the one great Sacrifice for sin. He pointed to the sacrifices that were shadows of good things to come, and then presented Christ as the antitype of all those ceremonies—the object to which they pointed as the only source of life and hope for fallen man. Holy men of old were saved by faith in the blood of Christ. As they saw the dying agonies of the sacrificial victims they looked across the gulf of ages to the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world.

God justly claims the love and obedience of all His creatures. He has given them in His law a perfect standard of right. But many forget their

Maker and choose to follow their own way in opposition to His will. They return enmity for love that is as high as heaven and as broad as the universe. God cannot lower the requirements of His law to meet the standard of wicked men; neither can man in his own power meet the demands of the law. Only by faith in Christ can the sinner be cleansed from guilt and be enabled to render obedience to the law of his Maker.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 424, 425.

Monday, December 19: The Pre-Advent Judgment

We are each deciding our eternal destiny, and it rests wholly with us whether we shall gain eternal life. Will we live the lessons given in the Word of God, Christ's great lesson book? It is the grandest, and yet the most simply arranged and easily understood book ever prepared for giving an education in proper behaviour, in speech, in manners, in affection. It is the only book that will prepare human beings for the life that measures with the life of God. And those who make this Word their daily study are the only ones who are worthy of receiving a diploma entitling them to educate and train the children for entrance into the higher school, to be crowned as victorious overcomers.

Christ Jesus is the only judge of the fitness of human agents to receive eternal life. The gates of the holy city will open to those who have been humble, meek, lowly followers of His, having learned their lessons from Him, and received from Him their life insurance policy, forming characters after the divine similitude.—*My Life Today*, p. 339.

In the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment, the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. . . . The books of record in heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the judgment. . . .

The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. Jesus bade His disciples, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20. Paul speaks of his faithful fellow workers, "Whose names are in the book of life." Philippians 4:3. . . .

"A book of remembrance" is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of "them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." Malachi 3:16. Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven.—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 210.

As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those

who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance. The Lord declared to Moses: "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." Exodus 32:33.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

Tuesday, December 20: The Millennial Judgment

At the coming of Christ the wicked are blotted from the face of the whole earth—consumed with the spirit of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His glory. Christ takes His people to the City of God, and the earth is emptied of its inhabitants. “Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.” “The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word.” “Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned.” Isaiah 24:1, 3, 5, 6.

The whole earth appears like a desolate wilderness. The ruins of cities and villages destroyed by the earthquake, uprooted trees, ragged rocks thrown out by the sea or torn out of the earth itself, are scattered over its surface, while vast caverns mark the spot where the mountains have been rent from their foundations.—*Maranatha*, p. 306.

After the saints are changed to immortality and caught up together with Jesus, after they receive their harps, their robes, and their crowns, and enter the city, Jesus and the saints sit in judgment. The books are opened—the book of life and the book of death. The book of life contains the good deeds of the saints; and the book of death contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books are compared with the statute book, the Bible, and according to that men are judged. The saints, in unison with Jesus, pass their judgment upon the wicked dead. “Behold ye,” said the angel, “the saints, in unison with Jesus, sit in judgment, and mete out to the wicked according to the deeds done in the body, and that which they must receive at the execution of the judgment is set off against their names.” This, I saw, was the work of the saints with Jesus through the one thousand years in the Holy City before it descends to the earth.—*Early Writings*, p. 52.

The abundant evidence given by God that He desires the salvation of all, will be the condemnation of those who refuse the gift of heaven. At the last great day, when all will be rewarded or punished according to their obedience or disobedience, the cross of Calvary will appear plainly before those standing before the Judge of all the earth to receive sentence for eternity. They are made capable of comprehending something of the love that God has expressed for fallen human beings. They see how greatly He has been dishonored by those who have continued in transgression, choosing sides with Satan and showing contempt for the law of Jehovah. . . .

God's law is the transcript of His character, and those only who obey this law will be accepted by Him.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 361.

Wednesday, December 21: The Executive Judgment

Has God, in showing mercy to the sinner, ceased to be just? Has He dishonored His holy law, and will He henceforth pass over the violation of it? God is true. He changes not. The conditions of salvation are ever the same. Life, eternal life, is for all who will obey God's law. Perfect obedience, revealed in thought, word, and deed, is as essential now as when the lawyer asked Christ, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? how readest thou? . . . this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:25-28).

Under the new covenant the conditions by which eternal life may be gained are the same as under the old—perfect obedience. Under the old covenant there were many offences of a daring, presumptuous character for which there was no atonement specified by law. In the new and better covenant Christ has fulfilled the law for the transgressors of law if they receive Him by faith as a personal Saviour. . . . Mercy and forgiveness are the reward of all who come to Christ trusting in His merits to take away their sins. In the better covenant we are cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ. . . . The sinner is helpless to atone for one sin. The power is in Christ's free gift, a promise appreciated by those only who are sensible of their sins and who forsake their sins and cast their helpless souls upon Christ, the sin-pardoning Saviour. He will put into their hearts His perfect law, which is "holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12), the law of God's own nature.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 299.

The flames that consumed the cities of the plain shed their warning light down even to our time. We are taught the fearful and solemn lesson that while God's mercy bears long with the transgressor, there is a limit beyond which men may not go on in sin. When that limit is reached, then the offers of mercy are withdrawn, and the ministration of judgment begins. . . .

The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. "Escape for thy life" is the warning from the angels of God. Other voices are heard saying: "Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm." Those who are at ease in Zion cry "Peace and safety," while heaven

declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. . . . Thus it was at the destruction of the old world and when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire. On the night prior to their destruction the cities of the plain rioted in pleasure. Lot was derided for his fears and warnings. But it was these scoffers that perished in the flames. That very night the door of mercy was forever closed to the wicked, careless inhabitants of Sodom.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 53.

Thursday, December 22: The Second Death

The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them.

It is now evident to all that the wages of sin is not noble independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, and death. The wicked see what they have forfeited by their life of rebellion. The far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory was despised when offered them; but how desirable it now appears. "All this," cries the lost soul, "I might have had; but I chose to put these things far from me. Oh, strange infatuation! I have exchanged peace, happiness, and honor for wretchedness, infamy, and despair." All see that their exclusion from heaven is just.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 668.

The wicked saw what they had lost; and fire was breathed from God upon them and consumed them. This was the execution of the judgment. The wicked then received according as the saints, in unison with Jesus, had meted out to them during the one thousand years. The same fire from God that consumed the wicked purified the whole earth. The broken, ragged mountains melted with fervent heat, the atmosphere also, and all the stubble was consumed. Then our inheritance opened before us, glorious and beautiful, and we inherited the whole earth made new. We all shouted with a loud voice, "Glory; Alleluia!"—*Early Writings*, p. 54.

The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God's people to commit. His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived. After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are at last destroyed, root and branch—Satan the root, his followers the branches. The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah.

Satan's work of ruin is forever ended. For six thousand years he has wrought his will, filling the earth with woe and causing grief throughout the universe. The whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain. Now God's creatures are forever delivered from his presence and temptations. "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they [the righteous] break forth into singing." Isaiah 14:7. And a shout of praise and triumph ascends from the whole loyal universe. "The voice of a great multitude," "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings," is heard, saying: "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Revelation 19:6.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 673.

Friday, December 23: For Further Reading

Early Writings, “The Earth Desolated,” pp. 289–291;

The Great Controversy, “The Controversy Ended,” pp. 662–673.

Lesson 14

All Things New

Sabbath Afternoon, December 24

Christ's plan is the only safe one. He declares, "Behold, I make all things new." Revelation 21:5. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Corinthians 5:17. The Saviour gives no encouragement to any to think that He will accept a patchwork religion. Such a religion is of no value in His sight. There may at first seem to be some of self and some of Christ; but it is soon seen that there is none of Christ. The patches of selfishness increase till the entire garment is covered with them. . . .

A religion formed after the divine pattern is the only one that will endure. Only by striving to live the life of Christ here can we prepare ourselves to live with Him through the eternal ages.—*Our High Calling*, p. 342.

It was through the desire for self-exaltation that sin entered into the world, and our first parents lost the dominion over this fair earth, their kingdom. It is through self-abnegation that Christ redeems what was lost. And He says we are to overcome as He did. Revelation 3:21. Through humility and self-surrender we may become heirs with Him when "the meek shall inherit the earth." Psalm 37:11.

The earth promised to the meek will not be like this, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. "We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. . . .

There is no disappointment, no sorrow, no sin, no one who shall say, I am sick; there are no burial trains, no mourning, no death, no partings, no broken hearts; but Jesus is there, peace is there.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 17.

Before the destruction of the old world by a flood, there were talented men, men who possessed skill and knowledge. But they became corrupt in their imagination, because they left God out of their plans and councils.

They were wise to do what God had never told them to do, wise to do evil. The Lord saw that this example would be deleterious to those who should afterwards be born, and He took the matter in hand. For one hundred twenty years He sent them warnings through His servant Noah. But they used the probation so graciously granted them in ridiculing Noah. They caricatured him and criticized him. They laughed at him for his peculiar earnestness and intense feeling in regard to the judgments which he declared God would surely fulfill. They talked of science and of the laws controlling nature. Then they held a carnival over the words of Noah, calling him a crazy fanatic. God's patience was exhausted. He said to Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them, and, behold, I will destroy them from the earth."—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1090.

Sunday, December 25: A New Heaven and a New Earth

A fear of making the saints' inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon the new earth as our home. Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them. Those who accept the teachings of God's Word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. And yet the apostle Paul declares, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9. Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God. —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 430.

The life on earth is the beginning of the life in heaven; education on earth is an initiation into the principles of heaven; the lifework here is a training for the lifework there. What we now are, in character and holy service, is the sure foreshadowing of what we shall be. . . .

In our life here, earthly, sin-restricted though it is, the greatest joy and the highest education are in service. And in the future state, untrammelled by the limitations of sinful humanity, it is in service that our greatest joy and our highest education will be found—witnessing, and ever as we witness learning anew "the riches of the glory of this mystery;" "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 362.

Before ascending to heaven, Christ gave His disciples their commission. He told them that they were to be the executors of the will in which He bequeathed to the world the treasures of eternal life. You have been witnesses of My life of sacrifice in behalf of the world, He said to them. . . . And although My people would not come to Me that they might have life, although priests and rulers have done unto Me as they listed, although they have rejected Me, they shall have still another opportunity of accepting the Son of God. You have seen that all who come to Me confessing their sins, I freely receive. Him that cometh to Me I will in no

wise cast out. To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given to both Jews and Gentiles—to Israel, first, and then to all nations, tongues, and peoples. All who believe are to be gathered into one church.

The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for the people to come to them; they were to go to the people with their message.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 27, 28.

Monday, December 26: In the Temple of God

[This vision describes events to take place at the close of the one thousand years after Christ's second advent.]

With Jesus at our head, we all descended from the city down to this earth, on a great and mighty mountain. . . .

. . . Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lilies. And I saw the little ones climb, or, if they chose, use their little wings and fly to the top of the mountains, and pluck the never-fading flowers. There were all kinds of trees around the temple to beautify the place—the box, the pine, the fir, the oil, the myrtle, the pomegranate, and the fig tree bowed down with the weight of its timely figs; these made the place all over glorious. And as we were about to enter the temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, “Only the 144,000 enter this place,” and we shouted, “Alleluia!”

This temple was supported by seven pillars, all of transparent gold, set with pearls most glorious. The wonderful things I there saw, I cannot describe. Oh, that I could talk in the language of Canaan, then could I tell a little of the glory of the better world.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 67–69.

Those who enter the city of God will have the golden crown placed upon their heads. That will be a joyful scene, which none of us can afford to miss. We shall cast our crowns at the feet of Jesus, and again and again we will give Him the glory, and praise His holy name. Angels will unite in the songs of triumph. Touching their golden harps, they will fill all heaven with rich music and songs to the Lamb.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 216.

The day is coming when the battle will have been fought, the victory won. The will of God is to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. The nations of the saved will know no other law than the law of heaven. All will be a happy, united family, clothed with the garments of praise and thanksgiving—the robe of Christ's righteousness. All nature, in its surpassing loveliness, will offer to God a tribute of praise and adoration.

The world will be bathed in the light of heaven. The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold greater than it is now. The years will move on in gladness. Over the scene the morning stars will sing together, the sons of God will shout for joy, while God and Christ will unite in proclaiming, "There shall be no more sin, neither shall there be any more death."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 504.

Tuesday, December 27: In the Presence of God

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God’s thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, “I have declared unto them Thy name,”—“merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” . . . But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God’s wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which “angels desire to look,” and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which “seeketh not her own” has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 19.

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8. Yes, as did Moses, they shall endure the seeing of Him who is invisible. . . .

. . . If you will watch and pray, and make earnest efforts in the right direction, you will be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christ. “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” Romans 13:14. . . . If you will heed the instruction given in the word of God you may go forth with a development of intellectual and moral power that will cause even angels to rejoice, and God will joy over you with singing. Under such discipline you will secure the fullest development of your faculties. . . . Day by day put on Christ, and in the brief season of your test and trial here below maintain your dignity in the strength of God, as co-workers with the highest agencies of heaven.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 103.

The Lord purifies the heart very much as we air a room. . . . We open the doors and throw wide the windows and let heaven’s purifying

atmosphere flow in. The Lord says, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light." [John 3:21.] The windows of impulse, of feeling, must be opened up toward heaven, and the dust of selfishness and earthliness must be expelled. The grace of God must sweep through the chambers of the mind, the imagination must have heavenly themes for contemplation, and every element of the nature must be purified and vitalized by the Spirit of God.—Manuscript 8c, July 26, 1891.

Wednesday, December 28: No More Death and Tears

After his expulsion from Eden Adam's life on earth was filled with sorrow. Every dying leaf, every victim of sacrifice, every blight upon the fair face of nature, every stain upon man's purity, were fresh reminders of his sin. Terrible was the agony of remorse as he beheld iniquity abounding and, in answer to his warnings, met the reproaches cast upon himself as the cause of sin. . . . Faithfully did he repent of his sin and trust in the merits of the promised Saviour, and he died in the hope of a resurrection. The Son of God redeemed man's failure and fall; and now, through the work of the atonement, Adam is reinstated in his first dominion.

Transported with joy, he beholds the trees that were once his delight—the very trees whose fruit he himself had gathered in the days of his innocence and joy. . . . His mind grasps the reality of the scene; he comprehends that this is indeed Eden restored, more lovely now than when he was banished from it. The Saviour leads him to the tree of life and plucks the glorious fruit and bids him eat. He looks about him and beholds a multitude of his family redeemed, standing in the Paradise of God. Then he casts his glittering crown at the feet of Jesus and, falling upon His breast, embraces the Redeemer. . . .

This reunion is witnessed by the angels who wept at the fall of Adam and rejoiced when Jesus, after His resurrection, ascended to heaven, having opened the grave for all who should believe on His name. Now they behold the work of redemption accomplished, and they unite their voices in the song of praise.—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 540, 541.

Then I saw a very great number of angels bring from the city glorious crowns—a crown for every saint, with his name written thereon. As Jesus called for the crowns, angels presented them to Him, and with His own right hand, the lovely Jesus placed the crowns on the heads of the saints. . . . Then I saw Jesus lead the redeemed company to the gate of the city. . . . [He] looked upon His redeemed saints; their countenances were radiant with glory; and as He fixed His loving eyes upon them, He said, with His rich, musical voice, "I behold the travail of My soul, and am satisfied. This rich glory is yours to enjoy eternally. Your sorrows are ended. There shall

be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” I saw the redeemed host bow and cast their glittering crowns at the feet of Jesus, and then, as His lovely hand raised them up, they touched their golden harps and filled all heaven with their rich music and songs to the Lamb.—*Early Writings*, p. 288.

Thursday, December 29: His Name on Their Foreheads

To enter heaven, a man must have Christ formed within, the hope of glory, and take heaven with him. The Lord Jesus alone can fashion and change the character. For want of patience, kindness, forbearance, unselfishness, and love, the revealings of the traits [of Satan] flash forth involuntarily when off guard, and unchristian words, unchristlikeness of character burst forth sometimes to the ruin of the soul. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity." Mark it. The apostle meant where there is a cultivation of genuine love for precious souls, it will be exhibited for those most in need of that patience which suffereth long and is kind, and will not be ready to magnify a small indiscretion or direct wrong into large unpardonable offenses, and will not make capital of others' misdoings.—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 279.

Our time here is short at best, and we want every move we shall make to tell in the strengthening and the advancement of the cause of God. . . . Let your cry be to God, Convert my inmost soul. Plead with God for the transforming power of His grace. Hold fast to your Saviour as did Jacob, until God shall not only reveal to you yourself, but shall reveal to you Himself, and you shall see in Jesus a strength and support, a brightness and power you have never sensed and realized. . . . If your faith perseveringly grasps the promises, you will prevail. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.—*This Day With God*, p. 334.

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

The reward is not of works, lest any man should boast; but it is all of grace. "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture?

Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:1-5. Therefore there is no occasion for one to glory over another or to grudge against another. No one is privileged above another, nor can anyone claim the reward as a right.—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 401.

Friday, December 30: For Further Reading

In Heavenly Places, “Kingdom of Holy Love,” p. 372;
Heaven, “A Call for Us to Be There,” pp. 185–191.