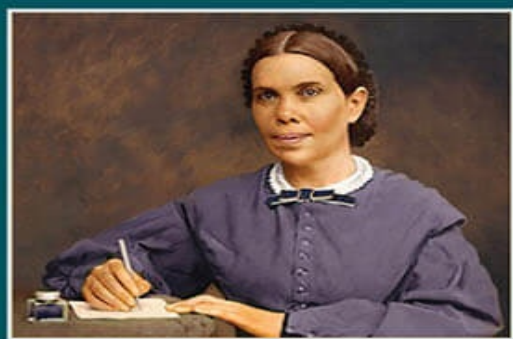


A Companion to the Adult Bible Study Guide

Ellen White Notes on Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

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E. G. White
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Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

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Lesson 1

Some Principles of Prophecy

Sabbath Afternoon, March 29

Those who accepted the advent doctrine were roused to the necessity of repentance and humiliation before God. Many had long been halting between Christ and the world; now they felt that it was time to take a stand. . . . The Spirit of God rested upon them and gave power to their earnest appeals to their brethren, as well as to sinners, to prepare for the day of God. . . .

Why, then, this widespread ignorance concerning an important part of Holy Writ? Why this general reluctance to investigate its teachings? It is the result of a studied effort of the prince of darkness to conceal from men that which reveals his deceptions. For this reason, Christ the Revelator, foreseeing the warfare that would be waged against the study of the Revelation, pronounced a blessing upon all who should read, hear, and observe the words of the prophecy.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 340, 342.

In the past teachers have declared Daniel and the Revelation to be sealed books, and the people have turned from them. The veil whose apparent mystery has kept many from lifting it, God's own hand has withdrawn from these portions of His word. The very name "Revelation" contradicts the statement that it is a sealed book. "Revelation" means that something of importance is revealed. The truths of this book are addressed to those living in these last days. We are standing with the veil removed in the holy place of sacred things. We are not to stand without. We are to enter, not with careless, irreverent thoughts, not with impetuous footsteps, but with reverence and godly fear. We are nearing the time when the prophecies of the book of Revelation are to be fulfilled.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 113.

God has spoken, and his word is reliable, and we must rest our faith

upon a “Thus saith the Lord.” God would have us study the events that are taking place around us, and compare them with the predictions of his word, in order that we may understand that we are living in the last days. We want our Bibles, and we want to know what is written therein. The diligent student of prophecy will be rewarded with clear revelations of truth, for Jesus said, “Thy word is truth.”—“What Manner of Persons Ought Ye to Be?” *Signs of the Times*, October 1, 1894, par. 8.

Sunday, March 30: Whoever Reads, Let Him Understand

The word of God, like the character of its Author, presents mysteries that can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. But God has given in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine authority. His own existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. True, He has not removed the possibility of doubt; faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration; those who wish to doubt have opportunity; but those who desire to know the truth find ample ground for faith.

The Bible unfolds truth with a simplicity and an adaptation to the needs and longings of the human heart that has astonished and charmed the most highly cultivated minds, while to the humble and uncultured also it makes plain the way of life. “The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” Isaiah 35:8. No child need mistake the path. Not one trembling seeker need fail of walking in pure and holy light. . . . The more we search the Bible, the deeper is our conviction that it is the word of the living God, and human reason bows before the majesty of divine revelation.—*Education*, pp. 169, 170.

The Holy Spirit has been given us as an aid in the study of the word. Jesus promises, “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Those who are under the training of the Holy Spirit will be able to teach the word intelligently. And when it is made the study book, with earnest supplication for the Spirit’s guidance, and a full surrender of the heart to be sanctified through the truth, it will accomplish all that Christ has promised. The result of such Bible study will be well-balanced minds; for the physical, mental, and moral

powers will be harmoniously developed. There will be no paralysis in spiritual knowledge. The understanding will be quickened; the sensibilities will be aroused; the conscience will become sensitive; the sympathies and sentiments will be purified; a better moral atmosphere will be created; and a new power to resist temptation will be imparted. And all, both teachers and students, will become active and earnest in the work of God.—*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 26.

The Holy Spirit and the Word are in perfect harmony. The Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures and always leads to the Scriptures. . . .

While searching the Scriptures, the mind that is led by the Holy Spirit sees their Author, and by beholding is constantly brightening while looking at the Word. Thus the intellect aspiring to reach the standard of perfection becomes elevated to comprehend it.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 195.

Monday, March 31: God Wants to Be Understood

To the Waldenses the Scriptures were not merely a record of God's dealings with men in the past, and a revelation of the responsibilities and duties of the present, but an unfolding of the perils and glories of the future. They believed that the end of all things was not far distant; and as they studied the Bible with prayer and tears, they were the more deeply impressed with its precious utterances, and with their duty to make known to others its saving truths. They saw the plan of salvation clearly revealed in the sacred pages, and they found comfort, hope, and peace in believing in Jesus. As the light illuminated their understanding and made glad their hearts, they longed to shed its beams upon those who were in the darkness of papal error.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 72.

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

heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it. Yet as we study the Bible and meditate upon the life of Christ and the plan of redemption, these great themes will open to our understanding more and more.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 740.

During these days that Christ spent with His disciples, they gained a new experience. As they heard their beloved Master explaining the Scriptures in the light of all that had happened, their faith in Him was fully established. They reached the place where they could say, “I know whom I have believed.” 2 Timothy 1:12. They began to realize the nature and extent of their work, to see that they were to proclaim to the world the truths entrusted to them. The events of Christ’s life, His death and resurrection, the prophecies pointing to these events, the mysteries of the plan of salvation, the power of Jesus for the remission of sins—to all these things they had been witnesses, and they were to make them known to the world. They were to proclaim the gospel of peace and salvation through repentance and the power of the Saviour.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 27.

Tuesday, April 1: Daniel—Shut Up the Words

As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures. Satan has led many to believe that the prophetic portions of the writings of Daniel and of John the revelator cannot be understood. But the promise is plain that special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies. “The wise shall understand” (verse 10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days; and of the revelation that Christ gave to His servant John for the guidance of God’s people all through the centuries, the promise is, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.” Revelation 1:3. . . .

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*, pp. 547, 548.

The study of the Revelation directs the mind to the prophecies of Daniel, and both present most important instruction, given of God to men, concerning events to take place at the close of this world's history.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 341.

Honored by men with the responsibilities of state and with the secrets of kingdoms bearing universal sway, Daniel was honored by God as His ambassador, and was given many revelations of the mysteries of ages to come. His wonderful prophecies, as recorded by him in chapters 7 to 12 of the book bearing his name, were not fully understood even by the prophet himself; but before his life labors closed, he was given the blessed assurance that “at the end of the days”—in the closing period of this world's history—he would again be permitted to stand in his lot and place. It was not given him to understand all that God had revealed of the divine purpose. “Shut up the words, and seal the book,” he was directed concerning his prophetic writings; these were to be sealed “even to the time of the end.” “Go thy way, Daniel,” the angel once more directed the faithful messenger of Jehovah; “for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. . . . Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” Daniel 12:4, 9, 13.

As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures. Satan has led many to believe that the prophetic portions of the writings of Daniel and of John the revelator cannot be understood. But the promise is plain that special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies. “The wise shall understand” (verse 10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days; and of the revelation that Christ gave to His servant John for

the guidance of God's people all through the centuries, the promise is, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." Revelation 1:3.

—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 547.

Wednesday, April 2: Studying the Word

Endeavoring to lay aside all preconceived opinions, and dispensing with commentaries, [William Miller] compared scripture with scripture by the aid of the marginal references and the concordance. He pursued his study in a regular and methodical manner. . . . As he studied with earnest prayer for divine enlightenment, that which had before appeared dark to his understanding was made clear. . . .

With intense interest he studied the books of Daniel and the Revelation, employing the same principles of interpretation as in the other scriptures, and found, to his great joy, that the prophetic symbols could be understood. He saw that the prophecies, so far as they had been fulfilled, had been fulfilled literally; that all the various figures, metaphors, parables, similitudes, etc., were either explained in their immediate connection, or the terms in which they were expressed were defined in other scriptures, and when thus explained, were to be literally understood.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 320.

Jesus, the greatest teacher the world has ever seen, recognized the value of the Holy Scriptures, and expounded them to his disciples. After his resurrection, he drew near to two of them as they were on the way to Emmaus, talking, as they went, of the disappointed hopes occasioned by the death of the beloved Master. . . . Jesus said to them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And beginning at Moses and the prophets, "he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Jesus reproved the disciples for not being acquainted with the scriptures that testified of the Messiah. Had they been familiar with the Scriptures, their faith would have been sustained in the hour of trial, and their hope would have remained unshaken; for the treatment Christ would receive at the hands of those he came to save was plainly stated in the prophecies.

—“Value of Bible Study,” *Signs of the Times*, June 10, 1886, par. 9, 10.

Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel’s message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted. In the little book entitled “Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology,” Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation:

“1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible; 2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study; 3. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering; 4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error; 5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, and not the Bible.”—“Notes of Travel,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, November 25, 1884, par. 23, 24.

Thursday, April 3: Figurative or Literal?

Early in His ministry Christ had said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” In the figurative language of prophecy, He had thus foretold His own death and resurrection. “He spake of the temple of His body.” John 2:19, 21. These words the Jews had understood in a literal sense, as referring to the temple at Jerusalem. Of all that Christ had said, the priests could find nothing to use against Him save this. By misstating these words they hoped to gain an advantage. The Romans had engaged in rebuilding and embellishing the temple, and they took great pride in it; any contempt shown to it would be sure to excite their indignation. Here Romans and Jews, Pharisees and Sadducees, could meet; for all held the temple in great veneration. On this point two witnesses were found whose testimony was not so contradictory as that of the others had been. One of them, who had been bribed to accuse Jesus, declared, “This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.” Thus Christ’s words were misstated. If they had been reported exactly as He

spoke them, they would not have secured His condemnation even by the Sanhedrin. Had Jesus been a mere man, as the Jews claimed, His declaration would only have indicated an unreasonable, boastful spirit, but could not have been construed into blasphemy. Even as misrepresented by the false witnesses, His words contained nothing which would be regarded by the Romans as a crime worthy of death.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 705.

Let the heart be softened and subdued by the spirit of prayer before the Bible is read. Truth will triumph when the spirit of truth cooperates with the humble Bible student. How precious the thought that the Author of truth still lives and reigns. Ask Him to impress your minds with the truth. Your searching of the Scriptures will then be profitable. Christ is the great Teacher of His followers, and He will not leave you to walk in darkness.

The Bible is its own interpreter. With beautiful simplicity, one portion connects itself with the truth of another portion, until the whole Bible is blended in one harmonious whole. Light flashes forth from one text to illuminate some portion of the Word that has seemed more obscure.—“How to Study the Bible,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 13, 1959, par. 4, 5.

And when you search the Scriptures with an earnest desire to know the truth, God will breathe his Spirit into your heart, and impress your mind with the light of his word. The Bible is its own interpreter, one passage explaining another. By comparing scriptures referring to the same subject, you will see harmony and beauty of which you have never dreamed. There is no other book whose perusal strengthens and enlarges, elevates and ennoble, the mind as does the perusal of this Book of books.—“God’s Word Our Study-Book,” *Youth’s Instructor*, June 30, 1898, par. 4.

Friday, April 4: For Further Reading

“Jesus at Emmaus,” in *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 208, 209.

“William Miller,” in *Early Writings*, pp. 229–232.

Lesson 2

The Genesis Foundation

Sabbath Afternoon, April 5

All who join the ranks of Sabbathkeepers should become diligent Bible students, that they may know the pillars and groundwork of the truth. They should study prophetic history, which has brought us down point by point to where we are at the present time. This is God's plan for our school. Young men should attend who desire to become educated for any line of work, who have capabilities, and see the necessity of learning more and still more where we stand today in prophetic history, uniting link after link in the prophetic chain, even from Genesis to Revelation. Christ is the Alpha, the first link, and the Omega, the last link, of the gospel chain, which is welded in Revelation.— “Ellen White's Confidence in Her Calling,” in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 171.

The Son of God, heaven's glorious Commander, was touched with pity for the fallen race. His heart was moved with infinite compassion as the woes of the lost world rose up before Him. But divine love had conceived a plan whereby man might be redeemed. The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner. In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, satisfy its claims. Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression. None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven. . . . Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race.

Before the Father He pleaded in the sinner's behalf, while the host of heaven awaited the result with an intensity of interest that words cannot express. . . . 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. But “God so loved the world,

that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. 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.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 63, 64.

The Old Testament, containing the prophecies of the coming of Christ, is now made of small account. The cry now is, “The Christ, the Christ! The gospel, the gospel!” But the gospel is taught all the way through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. The gospel is revealed in all the prophecies of the first advent of Christ as the Saviour of humanity. Every act of the old dispensation to turn men and women away from sin or to bring them forgiveness was done with reference to the Saviour who was to come. He was the Steppingstone by which humanity was to be exalted.—“Steppingstone,” in *Jesus, Name Above All Names*, p. 362.

Sunday, April 6: The Principle of “First Mention”

“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. The divine sentence pronounced against Satan after the fall of man was also a prophecy, embracing all the ages to the close of time and foreshadowing the great conflict to engage all the races of men who should live upon the earth.

God declares: “I will put enmity.” This enmity is not naturally entertained. When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil, and he was in harmony, and not at variance, with Satan. There exists naturally no enmity between sinful man and the originator of sin. Both became evil through apostasy. . . . Had not God specially interposed, Satan and man would have entered into an alliance against Heaven; and instead of cherishing enmity against Satan, the whole human family would have been united in opposition to God. . . .

It is the grace that Christ implants in the soul which creates in man enmity against Satan. Without this converting grace and renewing power, man would continue the captive of Satan, a servant ever ready to do his

bidding. But the new principle in the soul creates conflict where hitherto had been peace. The power which Christ imparts enables man to resist the tyrant and usurper. Whoever is seen to abhor sin instead of loving it, whoever resists and conquers those passions that have held sway within, displays the operation of a principle wholly from above.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 505, 506.

The plan by which alone man's salvation could be secured, involved all heaven in its infinite sacrifice. . . . He was to stand between the sinner and the penalty of sin. . . . He would leave His high position as the Majesty of heaven, appear upon earth and humble Himself as a man, and by His own experience become acquainted with the sorrows and temptations which man would have to endure. All this would be necessary in order that He might be able to succor them that should be tempted. Hebrews 2:18. When His mission as a teacher should be ended, He must be delivered into the hands of wicked men and be subjected to every insult and torture that Satan could inspire them to inflict. He must die the cruelest of deaths, lifted up between the heavens and the earth as a guilty sinner. He must pass long hours of agony so terrible that angels could not look upon it, but would veil their faces from the sight. He must endure anguish of soul, the hiding of His Father's face, while the guilt of transgression—the weight of the sins of the whole world—should be upon Him.

Christ assured the angels that by His death He would ransom many, and would destroy him who had the power of death. He would recover the kingdom which man had lost by transgression, and the redeemed were to inherit it with Him, and dwell therein forever. Sin and sinners would be blotted out, nevermore to disturb the peace of heaven or earth.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 64, 65.

Monday, April 7: Understanding God's Love

Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love. Our Father in heaven is the source of life, of wisdom, and of joy. Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of nature. Think of their marvelous adaptation to the needs and happiness, not only of man, but of all living creatures. The sunshine and the rain, that gladden and refresh the earth, the hills and seas and plains, all speak to us of the Creator's love. It is God who supplies the daily

needs of all His creatures. . . .

God made man perfectly holy and happy; and the fair earth, as it came from the Creator's hand, bore no blight of decay or shadow of the curse. It is transgression of God's law—the law of love—that has brought woe and death. Yet even amid the suffering that results from sin, God's love is revealed. It is written that God cursed the ground for man's sake. Genesis 3:17. The thorn and the thistle—the difficulties and trials that make his life one of toil and care—were appointed for his good as a part of the training needful in God's plan for his uplifting from the ruin and degradation that sin has wrought. The world, though fallen, is not all sorrow and misery. In nature itself are messages of hope and comfort. There are flowers upon the thistles, and the thorns are covered with roses.

“God is love” is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green—all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 9, 10.

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 761, 762.

As we study the sufferings of Christ, the results of sin are so distressing to us that we cry out to the Lord to take away our sins. As we continue to look, we become more capable of enduring the sight of what Christ suffered, and we realize more and more clearly His love for us. The cross of Christ is invested with a wonderful attraction and unlimited power; for in the suffering connected with the crucifixion scene, God's love becomes to us more and more impressive.—“The Measure of God's Love,” *Signs of the Times*, February 22, 1899, par. 2.

Tuesday, April 8: Isaac's Question: Where Is the Lamb?

Heavenly beings were witnesses of the scene as the faith of Abraham and the submission of Isaac were tested. . . . All heaven beheld with wonder and admiration Abraham's unfaltering obedience. All heaven applauded his fidelity. Satan's accusations were shown to be false. God declared to His servant, "Now I know that thou fearest God [notwithstanding Satan's charges], seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." God's covenant, confirmed to Abraham by an oath before the intelligences of other worlds, testified that obedience will be rewarded.

It had been difficult even for the angels to grasp the mystery of redemption—to comprehend that the Commander of heaven, the Son of God, must die for guilty man. When the command was given to Abraham to offer up his son, the interest of all heavenly beings was enlisted. With intense earnestness they watched each step in the fulfillment of this command. When to Isaac's question, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham made answer, "God will provide Himself a lamb;" and when the father's hand was stayed as he was about to slay his son, and the ram which God had provided was offered in the place of Isaac—then light was shed upon the mystery of redemption, and even the angels understood more clearly the wonderful provision that God had made for man's salvation. 1 Peter 1:12.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 151.

None among the hearers, and not even the speaker himself, discerned the import of these words, "the Lamb of God." Upon Mount Moriah, Abraham had heard the question of his son, "My father, . . . where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" The father answered, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Genesis 22:7, 8. And in the ram divinely provided in the place of Isaac, Abraham saw a symbol of Him who was to die for the sins of men. The Holy Spirit through Isaiah, taking up the illustration, prophesied of the Saviour, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," "and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:7, 6); but the people of Israel had not understood the lesson. . . . God desired to teach them that from His own love comes the gift which reconciles them to Himself.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 112, 113.

Our Heavenly Father surrendered his beloved Son to the agonies of the

crucifixion. Legions of angels witnessed the humiliation and soul-anguish of the Son of God, but were not permitted to interpose as in the case of Isaac. No voice was heard to stay the sacrifice. God's dear Son, the world's Redeemer, was insulted, mocked at, derided, and tortured, until he bowed his head in death. What greater proof can the Infinite One give us of his divine love and pity.—“The Faith of Abraham,” *Signs of the Times*, April 1, 1875, par. 23.

Wednesday, April 9: Dealing With Death

The murder of Abel was the first example of the enmity that God had declared would exist between the serpent and the seed of the woman—between Satan and his subjects and Christ and His followers. Through man's sin, Satan had gained control of the human race, but Christ would enable them to cast off his yoke. Whenever, through faith in the Lamb of God, a soul renounces the service of sin, Satan's wrath is kindled. The holy life of Abel testified against Satan's claim that it is impossible for man to keep God's law. When Cain, moved by the spirit of the wicked one, saw that he could not control Abel, he was so enraged that he destroyed his life. And wherever there are any who will stand in vindication of the righteousness of the law of God, the same spirit will be manifested against them. It is the spirit that through all the ages has set up the stake and kindled the burning pile for the disciples of Christ. But the cruelties heaped upon the follower of Jesus are instigated by Satan and his hosts because they cannot force him to submit to their control. It is the rage of a vanquished foe. Every martyr of Jesus has died a conqueror. Says the prophet, “They overcame him [“that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan”] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Revelation 12:11, 9.
—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 77.

In the midst of Eden grew the tree of life, whose fruit had the power of perpetuating life. Had Adam remained obedient to God, he would have continued to enjoy free access to this tree, and would have lived forever. But when he sinned, he was cut off from partaking of the tree of life, and he became subject to death. The divine sentence, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,” points to the utter extinction of life.

Immortality, promised to man on condition of obedience, had been forfeited by transgression. Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the fallen race, had not God, by the sacrifice of his Son, brought immortality within their reach. While “death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,” Christ “hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” [Romans 5:12; 2 Timothy 1:10.] And only through Christ can immortality be obtained. Said Jesus, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.” [John 3:36.] Every man may come in possession of this priceless blessing if he will comply with the conditions. All “who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality,” will receive eternal life. [Romans 2:7.]—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 532, 533.

Thursday, April 10: The Serpent

The serpent plucked the fruit of the forbidden tree and placed it in the hands of the half-reluctant Eve. Then he reminded her of her own words, that God had forbidden them to touch it, lest they die. She would receive no more harm from eating the fruit, he declared, than from touching it. Perceiving no evil results from what she had done, Eve grew bolder. When she “saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.” It was grateful to the taste, and as she ate, she seemed to feel a vivifying power, and imagined herself entering upon a higher state of existence. Without a fear she plucked and ate. And now, having herself transgressed, she became the agent of Satan in working the ruin of her husband. In a state of strange, unnatural excitement, with her hands filled with the forbidden fruit, she sought his presence, and related all that had occurred. . . .

Adam understood that his companion had transgressed the command of God, disregarded the only prohibition laid upon them as a test of their fidelity and love. There was a terrible struggle in his mind. He mourned that he had permitted Eve to wander from his side. But now the deed was done; he must be separated from her whose society had been his joy. How could he have it thus? Adam had enjoyed the companionship of God and of holy angels. He had looked upon the glory of the Creator. He understood the

high destiny opened to the human race should they remain faithful to God. Yet all these blessings were lost sight of in the fear of losing that one gift which in his eyes outvalued every other. Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator—all were overborne by love to Eve. She was a part of himself, and he could not endure the thought of separation. He did not realize that the same Infinite Power who had from the dust of the earth created him, a living, beautiful form, and had in love given him a companion, could supply her place. He resolved to share her fate; if she must die, he would die with her. After all, he reasoned, might not the words of the wise serpent be true? Eve was before him, as beautiful and apparently as innocent as before this act of disobedience. She expressed greater love for him than before. No sign of death appeared in her, and he decided to brave the consequences. He seized the fruit and quickly ate.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 55, 56.

The character of Satan, through his efforts to overcome and destroy the Son of God, was developing before the universe, and was being made manifest in its true malignity before the unfallen worlds that had been created by Christ. Every time he stung the heel of Christ with his murderous fang, the serpent was making more sure his own discomfiture and ruin.—“Christ’s Victory Gained Through Pain and Death,” *Signs of the Times*, March 26, 1894, par. 2.

Friday, April 11: For Further Reading

“God’s Love for Man,” in *Steps to Christ*, pp. 9–15.

“The Plan of Redemption,” in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 69, 70.

Lesson 3

Images From Marriage

Sabbath Afternoon, April 12

True love is a high and holy principle, altogether different in character from that love which is awakened by impulse and which suddenly dies when severely tested. It is by faithfulness to duty in the parental home that the youth are to prepare themselves for homes of their own. Let them here practice self-denial and manifest kindness, courtesy, and Christian sympathy. Thus love will be kept warm in the heart, and he who goes out from such a household to stand at the head of a family of his own will know how to promote the happiness of her whom he has chosen as a companion for life. Marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be only its - beginning.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 176.

Love is a precious gift, which we receive from Jesus. Pure and holy affection is not a feeling, but a principle. Those who are actuated by true love are neither unreasonable nor blind. Taught by the Holy Spirit, they love God supremely, and their neighbor as themselves.

Let those who are contemplating marriage weigh every sentiment and watch every development of character in the one with whom they think to unite their life destiny. Let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please and honor God. Marriage affects the afterlife both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will make no plans that God cannot approve.

If you are blessed with God-fearing parents, seek counsel of them. Open to them your hopes and plans, learn the lessons which their life experiences have taught, and you will be saved many a heartache. Above all, make Christ your counselor. Study His word with prayer.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 358, 359.

Christ came to our world to cause heavenly light to shine amid the moral darkness. He came to make men and women understand that the marriage institution is sacred. His presence at Cana gave high endorsement to this ordinance. The wife is to respect her husband. The husband is to love and cherish his wife; and as their marriage vow unites them as one, so their belief in Christ should make them one in Him. What can be more pleasing to God than to see those who enter into the marriage relation seek together to learn of Jesus and to become more and more imbued with His Spirit?—“The Marriage at Cana,” in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, par. 6.

Sunday, April 13: One Flesh

They two shall be one flesh, and if Christ is abiding in the heart, they are one mind. The Lord [created] man, then the woman, that they should blend in the love and fear of God as one to glorify God in their mind, heart, soul, and strength—consulting together, praying together, searching the Scriptures together. The Lord knew how to carry forward His work in our world.

Man was [to] crave the love of woman and woman to feel that she is, in the Lord’s plan, to have the affections of the man she has chosen and thus to bring into the life the beauty of a compact, wholly-conscious affection for each other.—“Marriage a Sacred Ordinance,” in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, par. 2, 3.

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided “an help meet for him”—a helper corresponding to him—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it.” Ephesians 5:29. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one.”

God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. “Marriage is honorable” (Hebrews

13:4); it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46.

God made from the man a woman, to be a companion and helpmeet for him, to be one with him, to cheer, encourage, and bless him, and he in turn to be her strong helper. All who enter into matrimonial relations with a holy purpose, the husband to obtain the pure affections of a woman's heart, the wife to soften and improve her husband's character and give it completeness—fulfill God's purpose for them.

Christ came not to destroy this institution, but to restore it to its original sanctity and elevation. He came to restore the moral image of God in man, and He began His work by sanctioning the marriage relation. He who made the first holy pair, and who created for them a paradise, has put His seal upon the marriage institution, first celebrated in Eden, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.—*The Adventist Home*, p. 99.

Monday, April 14: The Beautiful Bride

In both the Old and the New Testament, the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people. To the mind of Jesus the gladness of the wedding festivities pointed forward to the rejoicing of that day when He shall bring home His bride to the Father's house, and the redeemed with the Redeemer shall sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb. He says, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; . . . but thou shalt be called My Delight; . . . for the Lord delighteth in thee." "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." Isaiah 62:5, 4, margin; Zephaniah 3:17. When the vision of heavenly things was granted to John the apostle, he wrote: "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us

be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Revelation 19:6, 7, 9.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 151.

He who gave Eve to Adam as a helpmeet, performed His first miracle at a marriage festival. In the festal hall where friends and kindred rejoiced together, Christ began His public ministry. Thus He sanctioned marriage, recognizing it as an institution that He Himself had established. He ordained that men and women should be united in holy wedlock, to rear families whose members, crowned with honor, should be recognized as members of the family above.

Christ honored the marriage relation by making it also a symbol of the union between Him and His redeemed ones. He Himself is the Bridegroom; the bride is the church, of which, as His chosen one, He says, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." Song of Solomon 4:7. . . .

The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 356.

By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom's home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 414.

Tuesday, April 15: Hosea's Harlot Wife

In symbolic language Hosea set before the ten tribes God's plan of restoring to every penitent soul who would unite with His church on earth, the blessings granted Israel in the days of their loyalty to Him in the Promised Land. Referring to Israel as one to whom He longed to show mercy, the Lord declared, "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she

shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me Ishi ["My husband," margin]; and shalt call Me no more Baali ["My lord," margin]. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name." Hosea 2:14-17.

In the last days of this earth's history, God's covenant with His commandment-keeping people is to be renewed. "In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto Me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." Verses 18-23.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 298, 299.

Here is shown the Lord's reluctance to give up His sinning people. And lest Israel had so far neglected His reproofs and warnings as to let them pass from their memory, He delays His judgments upon them and gives them a full rehearsal of their disobedience and aggravating sins from the days of Josiah down to their own time, and of the judgments He had pronounced in consequence of their transgressions. Thus they had another opportunity to see their iniquity and repent. In this we see that God does not delight in afflicting His people; but with a care that surpasses that of a pitying father for a wayward child, He entreats His wandering people to return to their allegiance.— "The Warnings of God Rejected," in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 176.

Wednesday, April 16: Isaac and Rebekah

Isaac, trusting to his father's wisdom and affection, was satisfied to

commit the matter to him, believing also that God Himself would direct in the choice made. The patriarch's thoughts turned to his father's kindred in the land of Mesopotamia. Though not free from idolatry, they cherished the knowledge and the worship of the true God. Isaac must not leave Canaan to go to them, but it might be that among them could be found one who would leave her home and unite with him in maintaining the pure worship of the living God. Abraham committed the important matter to "his eldest servant," a man of piety, experience, and sound judgment, who had rendered him long and faithful service. He required this servant to make a solemn oath before the Lord, that he would not take a wife for Isaac of the Canaanites, but would choose a maiden from the family of Nahor in Mesopotamia. He charged him not to take Isaac thither. If a damsel could not be found who would leave her kindred, then the messenger would be released from his oath. The patriarch encouraged him in his difficult and delicate undertaking with the assurance that God would crown his mission with success. "The Lord God of heaven," he said, "which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, . . . He shall send His angel before thee."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 171.

Isaac was highly honored by God in being made inheritor of the promises through which the world was to be blessed; yet when he was forty years of age he submitted to his father's judgment in appointing his experienced, God-fearing servant to choose a wife for him. And the result of that marriage, as presented in the Scriptures, is a tender and beautiful picture of domestic happiness: "Isaac brought her unto his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

—*Messages to Young People*, p. 464.

The Canaanites were idolaters, and the Lord had commanded that His people should not intermarry with them, lest they should be led into idolatry. Abraham was old, and he expected soon to die. Isaac was yet unmarried. Abraham was afraid of the corrupting influence surrounding his son, and was anxious to have a wife selected for him who would not lead him from God. He committed this matter to his faithful, experienced servant who ruled over all that he had. Abraham required his servant to make a solemn oath to him before the Lord, that he would not take a wife for Isaac of the Canaanites, but that he would go to Abraham's kindred, who believed

in the true God, and select a wife for the young man. He charged him not to take Isaac to the country from which he came; for they were nearly all affected with idolatry. If he could not find a wife for Isaac who would leave her kindred and come where he was, then he should be clear of the oath which he had made.—*Daughters of God*, p. 29.

Thursday, April 17: The Harlot Is Judged

All who value their eternal interests should be on their guard against the inroads of skepticism. The very pillars of truth will be assailed. It is impossible to keep beyond the reach of the sarcasms and sophisms, the insidious and pestilent teachings, of modern infidelity. Satan adapts his temptations to all classes. He assails the illiterate with a jest or sneer, while he meets the educated with scientific objections and philosophical reasoning, alike calculated to excite distrust or contempt of the Scriptures. Even youth of little experience presume to insinuate doubts concerning the fundamental principles of Christianity. And this youthful infidelity, shallow as it is, has its influence. Many are thus led to jest at the faith of their fathers, and to do despite to the Spirit of grace. [Hebrews 10:29.] Many a life that promised to be an honor to God and a blessing to the world, has been blighted by the foul breath of infidelity. All who trust to the boastful decisions of human reason, and imagine that they can explain divine mysteries, and arrive at truth unaided by the wisdom of God, are entangled in the snare of Satan. . . .

When the testing time shall come, those who have made God's Word their rule of life will be revealed. In summer there is no noticeable difference between evergreens and other trees; but when the blasts of winter come, the evergreens remain unchanged, while other trees are stripped of their foliage. So the false-hearted professor may not now be distinguished from the real Christian, but the time is just upon us when the difference will be apparent. Let opposition arise, let bigotry and intolerance again bear sway, let persecution be kindled, and the half-hearted and hypocritical will waver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, than in days of prosperity.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 600, 602.

In the day of final judgment, every lost soul will understand the nature of

his own rejection of truth. The cross will be presented, and its real bearing will be seen by every mind that has been blinded by transgression. Before the vision of Calvary with its mysterious Victim, sinners will stand condemned. Every lying excuse will be swept away. Human apostasy will appear in its heinous character. Men will see what their choice has been. Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy will then have been made plain. In the judgment of the universe, God will stand clear of blame for the existence or continuance of evil. It will be demonstrated that the divine decrees are not accessory to sin. There was no defect in God's government, no cause for disaffection. When the thoughts of all hearts shall be revealed, both the loyal and the rebellious will unite in declaring, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? . . . for Thy judgments are made manifest." Revelation 15:3, 4.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 58.

Friday, April 18: For Further Reading

Radiant Religion, June 23, "Marriage Only the Beginning of Love," p. 176.
"God's People Delivered," in *The Great Controversy*, pp. 651, 652.

Lesson 4

The Nations: Part 1

Sabbath Afternoon, April 19

When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel and accepting heathen rites and customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God; and in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of “heresy.” In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends.

Whenever the church has obtained secular power, she has employed it to punish dissent from her doctrines. Protestant churches that have followed in the steps of Rome by forming alliance with worldly powers have manifested a similar desire to restrict liberty of conscience. . . .

It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government, and this prepared the way for the development of the papacy—the beast. Said Paul: “There” shall “come a falling away, . . . and that man of sin be revealed.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3. So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast.—*The Great Controversy*, 443.

In the twelfth chapter of Revelation we have as a symbol a great red dragon. In the ninth verse of that chapter this symbol is explained as follows: “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Undoubtedly the dragon primarily represents Satan. But Satan does not appear upon the earth in person; he works through agents. It was in the person of wicked men that he sought to destroy Jesus as soon as he was born. Wherever Satan has been able to control a government so fully that it would carry out his designs, that nation became, for the time, Satan’s representative. This was the case with all the great heathen nations. For instance, see Ezekiel 28, where Satan is represented as actual king of Tyre. This was because he fully controlled that government. In the first centuries of the Christian era, Rome, of all the

pagan nations, was Satan's chief agent in opposing the gospel, and was therefore represented by the dragon.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 679.

Sunday, April 20: Nimrod and Nineveh

The lesson is for God's messengers today, when the cities of the nations are as verily in need of a knowledge of the attributes and purposes of the true God as were the Ninevites of old. Christ's ambassadors are to point men to the nobler world, which has largely been lost sight of. According to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, the only city that will endure is the city whose builder and maker is God. With the eye of faith man may behold the threshold of heaven, flushed with God's living glory. Through His ministering servants the Lord Jesus is calling upon men to strive with sanctified ambition to secure the immortal inheritance. He urges them to lay up treasure beside the throne of God. . . .

The forbearance of God has been very great—so great that when we consider the continuous insult to His holy commandments, we marvel. The Omnipotent One has been exerting a restraining power over His own attributes. But He will certainly arise to punish the wicked, who so boldly defy the just claims of the Decalogue.

God allows men a period of probation; but there is a point beyond which divine patience is exhausted, and the judgments of God are sure to follow. The Lord bears long with men, and with cities, mercifully giving warnings to save them from divine wrath; but a time will come when pleadings for mercy will no longer be heard, and the rebellious element that continues to reject the light of truth will be blotted out, in mercy to themselves and to those who would otherwise be influenced by their example.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 274, 276.

Rebellion originated with Satan, and all rebellion against God is directly due to satanic influence. Those who set themselves against the government of God have entered into an alliance with the archapostate, and he will exercise his power and cunning to captivate the senses and mislead the understanding. He will cause everything to appear in a false light. Like our first parents, those who are under his bewitching spell see only the great benefits to be received by transgression.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 635.

Yet Nineveh, wicked though it had become, was not wholly given over to evil. He who “beholdeth all the sons of men” (Psalm 33:13) and “seeth every precious thing” (Job 28:10) perceived in that city many who were reaching out after something better and higher, and who, if granted opportunity to learn of the living God, would put away their evil deeds and worship Him. And so in His wisdom God revealed Himself to them in an unmistakable manner, to lead them, if possible, to repentance.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 265.

Monday, April 21: Abraham’s Call

This hope of redemption through the advent of the Son of God as Saviour and King, has never become extinct in the hearts of men. From the beginning there have been some whose faith has reached out beyond the shadows of the present to the realities of the future. Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—through these and other worthies the Lord has preserved the precious revealings of His will. And it was thus that to the children of Israel, the chosen people through whom was to be given to the world the promised Messiah, God imparted a knowledge of the requirements of His law, and of the salvation to be accomplished through the atoning sacrifice of His beloved Son.

The hope of Israel was embodied in the promise made at the time of the call of Abraham, and afterward repeated again and again to his posterity, “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 12:3. As the purpose of God for the redemption of the race was unfolded to Abraham, the Sun of Righteousness shone upon his heart, and his darkness was scattered. And when, at last, the Saviour Himself walked and talked among the sons of men, He bore witness to the Jews of the patriarch’s bright hope of deliverance through the coming of a Redeemer. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day,” Christ declared; “and he saw it, and was glad.” John 8:56.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 682, 683.

The message of God came to Abraham, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee.” In order that God might qualify him for his great work as the keeper of the sacred oracles, Abraham must be separated from the associations of his early life. The influence of kindred and friends would interfere with the training which the Lord purposed to give His servant. Now that Abraham

was, in a special sense, connected with heaven, he must dwell among strangers. His character must be peculiar, differing from all the world. He could not even explain his course of action so as to be understood by his friends. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and his motives and actions were not comprehended by his idolatrous kindred. . . .

It was no light test that was thus brought upon Abraham, no small sacrifice that was required of him. There were strong ties to bind him to his country, his kindred, and his home. But he did not hesitate to obey the call. He had no question to ask concerning the land of promise—whether the soil was fertile and the climate healthful; whether the country afforded agreeable surroundings and would afford opportunities for amassing wealth. God has spoken, and His servant must obey; the happiest place on earth for him was the place where God would have him to be.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 126.

Tuesday, April 22: Given What You Asked For

The Lord had, through His prophets, foretold that Israel would be governed by a king; but it does not follow that this form of government was best for them or according to His will. He permitted the people to follow their own choice, because they refused to be guided by His counsel. Hosea declares that God gave them a king in His anger. Hosea 13:11. When men choose to have their own way, without seeking counsel from God, or in opposition to His revealed will, He often grants their desires, in order that, through the bitter experience that follows, they may be led to realize their folly and to repent of their sin. Human pride and wisdom will prove a dangerous guide. That which the heart desires contrary to the will of God will in the end be found a curse rather than a blessing.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 605.

When Saul was proclaimed as king, Samuel had assured the people that the danger of the future would be that of forgetting the covenant of the Lord, and of failing to acknowledge God as the supreme Ruler of their nation. Israel had sought and obtained a monarchy after their own heart, yet Samuel had told them that the Lord in his infinite mercy was willing to forgive them, and to help them, if they would only fear him, and serve him in truth. The question of the conversion of Israel into the royalty of the

kingdom of God, was to be decided. Would the Israel of God, with their king at their head, obey God explicitly, or would they not? Either Israel must cease to be the people of God, or the principles upon which the monarchy was founded must become spiritual, and the nation must be governed by a divine power. If Israel would be wholly the Lord's, then the Lord would constitute a kingdom in which the will of the human and earthly would be in subjection to the will of God, and, by this means, the covenant relationship that constituted God the Ruler of Israel, would be preserved. The question may seem of little consequence to our finite minds; but it was far from this. Would the king whom Israel had chosen listen to the Ruler of all kings? Would he surrender his will, and do the will of the Father which is in Heaven? No monarchy in Israel that did not acknowledge in all its ways the supreme authority of God, could prosper. As long as the people of Israel would conduct themselves as subordinate to God, so long would he be their protection and defense.—“The Rejection of Saul,” *Signs of the Times*, June 1, 1888, par. 2.

Yet God had chosen Israel. He had called them to preserve among men the knowledge of His law, and of the symbols and prophecies that pointed to the Saviour. He desired them to be as wells of salvation to the world. What Abraham was in the land of his sojourn, what Joseph was in Egypt, and Daniel in the courts of Babylon, the Hebrew people were to be among the nations. They were to reveal God to men. . . .

But the Israelites fixed their hopes upon worldly greatness. From the time of their entrance to the land of Canaan, they departed from the commandments of God, and followed the ways of the heathen. It was in vain that God sent them warning by His prophets. In vain they suffered the chastisement of heathen oppression. Every reformation was followed by deeper apostasy.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 27, 28.

Wednesday, April 23: The Rulers of the Gentiles

Again the strife as to which should be greatest seemed about to be renewed, when Jesus, calling them to Him, said to the indignant disciples, “Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you.” . . .

Christ was establishing a kingdom on different principles. He called men, not to authority, but to service, the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak. Power, position, talent, education, placed their possessor under the greater obligation to serve his fellows. To even the lowliest of Christ's disciples it is said, "All things are for your sakes." 2 Corinthians 4:15.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 550.

The accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the Dark Ages. As her power increased, the darkness deepened. Faith was transferred from Christ, the true foundation, to the pope of Rome. Instead of trusting in the Son of God for forgiveness of sins and for eternal salvation, the people looked to the pope, and to the priests and prelates to whom he delegated authority. They were taught that the pope was their earthly mediator and that none could approach God except through him; and, further, that he stood in the place of God to them and was therefore to be implicitly obeyed. . . . Sin was disguised in a garb of sanctity. When the Scriptures are suppressed, and man comes to regard himself as supreme, we need look only for fraud, deception, and debasing iniquity. With the elevation of human laws and traditions was manifest the corruption that ever results from setting aside the law of God.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 55.

The lessons given to the disciples of Christ, are full of significance, and present most profitable instruction for us who believe. We are not to act after the manner, precept, or example of men who are in authority in earthly positions, but to minister to others, to be servants to all, "even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The kingdom of God is established on different principles than are the kingdoms of this world. There is to be no rank among the servants of Christ. . . . The rich, the poor, the learned, the unlearned, the bond, and the free are equally God's heritage, and he who is most exalted in the sight of God is he who has most genuine humility, the deepest sense of his unworthiness, the greatest realization of his dependence upon God. Those who truly love God, truly love their fellow-men. They constantly seek to do good to all those who are connected with them. They are laborers together with God.—"Before Honor Is Humility," *Signs of the Times*, July 16, 1896, par. 6, 7.

Thursday, April 24: A Light to the Gentiles

O what a power for good a converted man—transformed daily—can exert to bring blessing and gladness to the world. When the church is imbued with the spirit of obedience and love, the members will exert in the world a saving influence, and God will withhold from them nothing that will crown that influence with success and victory. Men and women are His agencies for the salvation of souls. Those who are filled with an earnest desire to draw sinners to Christ have the sympathy and co-operation of the heavenly universe.—Letter 108, 1902, par. 23.

Without a living faith in Christ as a personal Saviour, it is impossible to make your faith felt in a skeptical world. If you would draw sinners out of the swift-running current, your own feet must not stand on slippery places.

We need constantly a fresh revelation of Christ, a daily experience that harmonizes with His teachings. High and holy attainments are within our reach. Continual progress in knowledge and virtue is God's purpose for us. His law is the echo of His own voice, giving to all the invitation, "Come up higher; be holy, holier still." Every day we may advance in perfection of Christian character.

Those who are engaged in service for the Master need an experience much higher, deeper, broader, than many have yet thought of having. Many who are already members of God's great family know little of what it means to behold His glory, and to be changed from glory to glory. Many have a twilight perception of Christ's excellence, and their hearts thrill with joy. They long for a fuller, deeper sense of the Saviour's love. Let these cherish every desire of the soul after God.

The Holy Spirit works with those who will be worked, moulds those who will be moulded, fashions those who will be fashioned. Give yourselves the culture of spiritual thoughts and holy communings. You have seen but the first rays of the early dawn of His glory. As you follow on to know the Lord, you will know that the "path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 274.

Thousands can be reached in the most simple and humble way. The most intellectual, those who are looked upon as the world's most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words of one who loves God, and

who can speak of that love as naturally as the worldling speaks of the things that interest him most deeply.

Often the words well prepared and studied have but little influence. But the true, honest expression of a son or daughter of God, spoken in natural simplicity, has power to unbolt the door to hearts that have long been closed against Christ and His love.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 232.

Friday, April 25: For Further Reading

“God to Control His Heritage,” in *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 10, August 1, 1895, par. 1–11.

“Nineveh, That Great City,” in *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 277, 278.

Lesson 5

The Nations: Part 2

Sabbath Afternoon, April 26

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; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. 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;” 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*, p. 492.

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” Ezekiel 28:17. “Thou hast said in thine heart, . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High.” Isaiah 14:13, 14. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.

Now the perfect harmony of heaven was broken. Lucifer’s disposition to serve himself instead of his Creator aroused a feeling of apprehension when observed by those who considered that the glory of God should be supreme. In heavenly council the angels pleaded with Lucifer. The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the

Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. God Himself had established the order of heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker and bring ruin upon himself. But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed his jealousy of Christ to prevail, and became the more determined. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 35, 36.

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 493.

Sunday, April 27: The Very First Commandment

The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all aftertime. As an illustration of its principles a model school was established in Eden, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students. . . .

The book of nature, which spread its living lessons before them, afforded an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. On every leaf of the forest and stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and sea and sky, God's name was written. With both the animate and the inanimate creation—with leaf and flower and tree, and with every living creature, from the leviathan of the waters to the mote in the sunbeam—the dwellers in Eden held converse, gathering from each the secrets of its life. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balancings of the clouds" (Job 37:16), the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night—all were objects of study by the pupils of earth's first school. —*Education*, pp. 20, 21.

God gave Adam and Eve employment in Eden. Eden was the school for our first parents, and God was their Instructor. They learned how to till the

soil, and how to care for the things which the Lord had planted. They did not look upon labor as degrading, but as a great blessing. Industry was a pleasure to Adam and Eve in their sinless state. Everything responded to their efforts to develop and perfect; but the fault of Adam changed the order of things. The earth was cursed and no longer only brought forth that which was good. Yet God decreed that man should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and this decree was not given as a curse. To labor in faith and hope would bring a blessing to Adam and Eve and their descendants. God never meant that man should have nothing to do; but the deeper the curse of sin, the further men go from the order of God.— “The Kind of Schools Needed,” in Manuscript 8a, 1894, par. 9.

Heaven is a school; its field of study, the universe; its teacher, the Infinite One. A branch of this school was established in Eden; and, the plan of redemption accomplished, education will again be taken up in the Eden school.

Between the school established in Eden at the beginning and the school of the hereafter there lies the whole compass of this world’s history—the history of human transgression and suffering, of divine sacrifice, and of victory over death and sin. . . . Restored to His presence, man will again, as at the beginning, be taught of God: “My people shall know My name: . . . they shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak: behold, it is I.”

There, when the veil that darkens our vision shall be removed and our eyes shall behold that world of beauty of which we now catch glimpses through the microscope; when we look on the glories of the heavens, now scanned afar through the telescope; when, the blight of sin removed, the whole earth shall appear “in the beauty of the Lord our God,” what a field will be open to our study!—*The Adventist Home*, p. 547.

Monday, April 28: Daniel 2

In the history of nations the student of God’s word may behold the literal fulfillment of divine prophecy. Babylon, shattered and broken at last, passed away because in prosperity its rulers had regarded themselves as independent of God, and had ascribed the glory of their kingdom to human achievement. The Medo-Persian realm was visited by the wrath of Heaven because in it God’s law had been trampled underfoot. The fear of the Lord

had found no place in the hearts of the vast majority of the people. Wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption prevailed. The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt; and these sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral worth.

The power exercised by every ruler on the earth is Heaven-imparted; and upon his use of the power thus bestowed, his success depends. To each the word of the divine Watcher is, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me." Isaiah 45:5. And to each the words spoken to Nebuchadnezzar of old are the lesson of life: "Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor: if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." Daniel 4:27.

To understand these things,—to understand that "righteousness exalteth a nation;" that "the throne is established by righteousness," and "upholden by mercy;" to recognize the outworking of these principles in the manifestation of His power who "removeth kings, and setteth up kings,"—this is to understand the philosophy of history. Proverbs 14:34; 16:12; 20:28; Daniel 2:21.

In the word of God only is this clearly set forth. Here it is shown that the strength of nations, as of individuals, is not found in the opportunities or facilities that appear to make them invincible; it is not found in their boasted greatness. It is measured by the fidelity with which they fulfill God's purpose.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 501, 502.

The image revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, while representing the deterioration of the kingdoms of the earth in power and glory, also fitly represents the deterioration of religion and morality among the people of these kingdoms. As nations forget God, in like proportion they become weak morally.

Babylon passed away because in her prosperity she forgot God, and ascribed the glory of her prosperity to human achievement.

The Medo-Persian kingdom was visited by the wrath of heaven because in this kingdom God's law was trampled under foot. The fear of the Lord found no place in the hearts of the people. The prevailing influences in Medo-Persia were wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption.

The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt. They deteriorated because they cast off their allegiance to God. As they forgot him, they sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral value.—"The

Moral Deterioration of the Nation,” *Youth’s Instructor*, September 22, 1903, par. 2–5.

Tuesday, April 29: Daniel 7

Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that it might be seen whether it would fulfill the purpose of “the Watcher and the Holy One.” Prophecy has traced the rise and fall of the world’s great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. With each of these, as with nations of less power, history repeated itself. Each had its period of test, each failed, its glory faded, its power departed, and its place was occupied by another.

While the nations rejected God’s principles, and in this rejection wrought their own ruin, it was still manifest that the divine, overruling purpose was working through all their movements.—*Education*, pp. 176, 177.

The crown removed from Israel passed successively to the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. God says, “It shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.”

That time is at hand. Today the signs of the times declare that we are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Everything in our world is in agitation. Before our eyes is fulfilling the Saviour’s prophecy of the events to precede his coming: “Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. . . . Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.”

The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they realize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.

Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth, and when God shall bid his angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture. . . .

To us who are standing on the very verge of the fulfilment of these great scenes, of what deep moment, of what living interest, are these delineations of the things to come—events for which, since our first parents turned their steps from Eden, God’s children have watched and waited, longed and prayed!—“The Time of the End,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, November 23, 1905, par. 5–8, 13.

Wednesday, April 30: Between Land and Sea

But the beast with lamblike horns was seen “coming up out of the earth.” Instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, the nation thus represented must arise in territory previously unoccupied and grow up gradually and peacefully. It could not, then, arise among the crowded and struggling nationalities of the Old World—that turbulent sea of “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” It must be sought in the Western Continent.

What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America. Again and again the thought, almost the exact words, of the sacred writer has been unconsciously employed by the orator and the historian in describing the rise and growth of this nation. The beast was seen “coming up out of the earth;” and, according to the translators, the word here rendered “coming up” literally signifies “to grow or spring up as a plant.” And, as we have seen, the nation must arise in territory previously unoccupied.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 440.

The lamblike horns and dragon voice of the symbol point to a striking contradiction between the professions and the practice of the nation thus represented. The “speaking” of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities. By such action it will give the lie to those liberal and peaceful principles which it has put forth as the foundation of its policy. The prediction that it will speak “as a dragon” and exercise “all the power of the first beast” plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the

dragon and the leopardlike beast. And the statement that the beast with two horns “causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast” indicates that the authority of this nation is to be exercised in enforcing some observance which shall be an act of homage to the papacy.

Such action would be directly contrary to the principles of this government, to the genius of its free institutions, to the direct and solemn avowals of the Declaration of Independence, and to the Constitution. The founders of the nation wisely sought to guard against the employment of secular power on the part of the church, with its inevitable result—intolerance and persecution. The Constitution provides that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” and that “no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.” Only in flagrant violation of these safeguards to the nation’s liberty, can any religious observance be enforced by civil authority. But the inconsistency of such action is no greater than is represented in the symbol. It is the beast with lamblike horns—in profession pure, gentle, and harmless—that speaks as a dragon.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 442.

Thursday, May 1: Prophecy Again

The Lord has a people on the earth, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. He has His thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Such will stand with Him on Mount Zion. But they must stand on this earth, girded with the whole armor, ready to engage in the work of saving those who are ready to perish. Heavenly angels conduct this search, and spiritual activity is demanded of all who believe present truth, that they may join the angels in their work.

We need not wait till we are translated to follow Christ. God’s people may do this here below. We shall follow the Lamb of God in the courts above only if we follow Him here. Following Him in heaven depends on our keeping His commandments now. We are not to follow Christ fitfully or capriciously, only when it is for our advantage.

We must choose to follow Him. In daily life we must follow His example, as a flock trustfully follows its shepherd. We are to follow Him by suffering for His sake, saying, at every step, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” His life practice must be our life practice. And as we thus seek to be

like Him, and to bring our wills into conformity to His will, we shall reveal Him.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 978.

The mighty angel who instructed John was no less a personage than Jesus Christ. Setting His right foot on the sea, and His left upon the dry land, shows the part which He is acting in the closing scenes of the great controversy with Satan. This position denotes His supreme power and authority over the whole earth. The controversy had waxed stronger and more determined from age to age, and will continue to do so, to the concluding scenes when the masterly working of the powers of darkness shall reach their height. Satan, united with evil men, will deceive the whole world and the churches who receive not the love of the truth. But the mighty angel demands attention. He cries with a loud voice. He is to show the power and authority of His voice to those who have united with Satan to oppose the truth. . . .

The angel's position, with one foot on the sea, the other on the land, signifies the wide extent of the proclamation of the message. It will cross the broad waters and be proclaimed in other countries, even to all the world. The comprehension of truth, the glad reception of the message, is represented in the eating of the little book. The truth in regard to the time of the advent of our Lord was a precious message to our souls.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 971.

Friday, May 2: For Further Reading

“A Work of Reform,” in *The Great Controversy*, p. 453.

“Symbolism of the Three Angels’ Messages,” in *Maranatha*, June 14, p. 173.

Lesson 6

Understanding Sacrifice

Sabbath Afternoon, May 3

The sacrificial service that had pointed to Christ passed away; but the eyes of men were turned to the true sacrifice for the sins of the world. The earthly priesthood ceased; but we look to Jesus, the minister of the new covenant, and “to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” “The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: . . . but Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, . . . by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Hebrews 12:24; 9:8–12.

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25. Though the ministration was to be removed from the earthly to the heavenly temple; though the sanctuary and our great high priest would be invisible to human sight, yet the disciples were to suffer no loss thereby. They would realize no break in their communion, and no diminution of power because of the Saviour’s absence. While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth. —*Christ in His Sanctuary*, p. 66.

As His mission had opened to Jesus in the temple, He shrank from contact with the multitude. He wished to return from Jerusalem in quietness, with those who knew the secret of His life. By the paschal service, God was seeking to call His people away from their worldly cares, and to remind them of His wonderful work in their deliverance from Egypt. In this work He desired them to see a promise of deliverance from sin. As the blood of the slain lamb sheltered the homes of Israel, so the blood of Christ was to save their souls; but they could be saved through Christ only

as by faith they should make His life their own. There was virtue in the symbolic service only as it directed the worshipers to Christ as their personal Saviour. God desired that they should be led to prayerful study and meditation in regard to Christ's mission.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 82.

Jesus Christ laid off His royal robe, His kingly crown, and clothed His divinity with humanity, in order to become a substitute and surety for humanity, that dying in humanity He might by His death destroy him who had the power of death. He could not have done this as God, but by coming as man Christ could die. By death He overcame death. The death of Christ bore to the death him who had the power of death, and opened the gates of the tomb for all who receive Him as their personal Saviour.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 462.

Sunday, May 4: Futile Sacrifices?

The Lord was not ignorant of the feelings of resentment cherished by Cain; but he would have Cain reflect upon his course, and, becoming convinced of his sin, repent, and set his feet in the path of obedience. There was no cause for his wrathful feelings toward either his brother or his God; it was his own disregard of the plainly expressed will of God that had led to the rejection of his offering. Through his angel messenger, God said to this rebellious, stubborn man: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." "If thou doest well"—not having your own way, but obeying God's commandments, coming to him with the blood of the slain victim, thus showing faith in the promised Redeemer, who, in the fullness of time, would make an atonement for guilty man, that he might not perish, but have eternal life. . . .

Thus the matter was plainly laid open before Cain; but his combativeness was aroused because his course was questioned, and he was not permitted to follow his own independent ideas. He was angry with God and angry with his brother. He was angry with God because he would not accept the plans of sinful man in place of the divine requirements, and he was angry with his brother for disagreeing with him.—"Cain and Able Tested," *Signs of the Times*, December 16, 1886, par. 8, 10.

An important lesson may be learned from the history of the offerings of

Cain and Abel. The claims of infinite justice, and the demands of God's law, can be met only by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The most costly offering that man may bring to God, the fruit of his toil, his physical and intellectual acquirements, already belong to his Creator. Man has nothing which he has not received. Neither material wealth nor intellectual greatness will atone for the sin of the soul. Cain scorned the idea that it was necessary to come to God with an offering of blood. In the same spirit many in our day refuse to believe that the blood of Christ was shed as a sacrifice for the sins of men. Although Cain chose to disregard the command of God, he brought his offering with great confidence. He looked upon it as the fruit of his own labor, and hence as belonging to himself; and in presenting it to God he felt that he was placing his Creator under obligations to him. . . . The great question should be, What can I do to meet the approval of God? not, How can I best please myself?

Abel trusted wholly in the merits of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. It was this faith that connected him with God. The promise of a Redeemer was dimly understood; but the sacrificial offerings cast light upon the promise. Cain had the same opportunity of learning and accepting these truths as had Abel. God did not accept one and reject the other without sufficient reason. Abel believed and obeyed; Cain doubted and rebelled. God is no respecter of persons, yet he will reward the obedient, and punish the disobedient.—“The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels: Chapter 5—Cain and Abel,” *Signs of the Times*, February 6, 1879, par. 5, 6.

Monday, May 5: The Blood of Bulls and Goats

The types and shadows of the sacrificial service, with the prophecies, gave the Israelites a veiled, indistinct view of the mercy and grace to be brought to the world by the revelation of Christ. To Moses was unfolded the significance of the types and shadows pointing to Christ. He saw to the end of that which was to be done away when, at the death of Christ, type met antitype. He saw that only through Christ can man keep the moral law. By transgression of this law man brought sin into the world, and with sin came death. Christ became the propitiation for man's sin. He proffered his perfection of character in the place of man's sinfulness. He took upon himself the curse of disobedience. The sacrifices and offerings pointed

forward to the sacrifice he was to make. The slain lamb typified the Lamb that was to take away the sin of the world.

It was seeing the object of that which was to be done away, seeing Christ as revealed in the law, that illumined the face of Moses. The ministration of the law, written and engraved in stone, was a ministration of death. Without Christ, the transgressor was left under its curse, with no hope of pardon. The ministration had of itself no glory, but the promised Saviour, revealed in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law, made the moral law glorious.—“The Righteousness of Christ in the Law,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 22, 1902, par. 6, 7.

Through the plan of salvation the justice and mercy of God are fully vindicated, and to all eternity rebellion will never again arise, affliction never again touch the universe of God.

To fallen man was revealed the plan of infinite sacrifice through which salvation was to be provided. Nothing but the death of God’s dear Son could expiate man’s sin, and Adam marvelled at the goodness of God in providing such a ransom for the sinner. Through the love of God, a star of hope illumined the terrible future that spreads before the transgressor. Through the institution of the typical system of sacrifice, the death of Christ was ever to be kept before guilty man, that he might better comprehend the nature of sin, the results of transgression, and the merit of the divine offering. Had there been no sin, man would never have known death. But in the innocent victim slain by his own hand, he beheld the fruits of sin,—the death of the Son of God in his behalf. He sees the immutable character of the law he has transgressed, and confessing his sin, relies upon the merits of the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

The plan of saving sinners through Christ alone was the same in the days of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and in every successive generation living before the advent of Christ, as it is in our day. Patriarchs, prophets, and martyrs from righteous Abel, looked forward to a coming Saviour, and they showed their faith in Him by sacrifices and offerings. The sacrifice of beasts shadowed forth the sinless offering of God’s dear Son, and pointed forward to his death upon the cross. But at the crucifixion type met antitype, and the typical system ceased.—“The Plan of Salvation the Same in All Ages,” *The Bible Echo*, July 15, 1893, par. 5–7.

Tuesday, May 6: The Passover Lamb

Jesus is our surety. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us. Every drop of blood shed by the Jewish sacrifices pointed to the Lamb of God. All the typical offerings were fulfilled in him. Type met antitype when he died on the cross. He came to make it possible, by the sacrifice of himself, to put away sin. He paid the ransom for our redemption. We are bought with a price; and Christ calls upon us to let him take our sins, and impute to us his righteousness.—“Go, Preach the Gospel,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 19, 1898, par. 7.

Jesus was an earnest, constant worker. Never lived there among men another so weighted with responsibilities. Never another carried so heavy a burden of the world’s sorrow and sin. Never another toiled with such self-consuming zeal for the good of men. Yet His was a life of health. Physically as well as spiritually He was represented by the sacrificial lamb, “without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:19. In body as in soul He was an example of what God designed all humanity to be through obedience to His laws.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 51.

The observance of the Passover began with the birth of the Hebrew nation. On the last night of their bondage in Egypt, when there appeared no token of deliverance, God commanded them to prepare for an immediate release. He had warned Pharaoh of the final judgment on the Egyptians, and He directed the Hebrews to gather their families within their own dwellings. Having sprinkled the doorposts with the blood of the slain lamb, they were to eat the lamb, roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. “And thus shall ye eat it,” He said, “with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord’s passover.” Exodus 12:11. At midnight all the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. Then the king sent to Israel the message, “Rise up, and get you forth from among my people; . . . and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said.” Exodus 12:31. The Hebrews went out from Egypt an independent nation. The Lord had commanded that the Passover should be yearly kept. “It shall come to pass,” He said, “when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel

in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians.” Thus from generation to generation the story of this wonderful deliverance was to be repeated.

The Passover was followed by the seven days’ feast of unleavened bread. On the second day of the feast, the first fruits of the year’s harvest, a sheaf of barley, was presented before the Lord. All the ceremonies of the feast were types of the work of Christ. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was an object lesson of redemption, which the Passover was intended to keep in memory. The slain lamb, the unleavened bread, the sheaf of first fruits, represented the Saviour.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 76, 77.

Wednesday, May 7: Jesus at the Temple

“His name shall be called Immanuel, . . . God with us.” “The light of the knowledge of the glory of God” is seen “in the face of Jesus Christ.” From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was “the image of God,” the image of His greatness and majesty, “the outshining of His glory.” It was to manifest this glory that He came to our world. To this sin-darkened earth He came to reveal the light of God’s love,—to be “God with us.” Therefore it was prophesied of Him, “His name shall be called Immanuel.”

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,”—“that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” 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.

God commanded Moses for Israel, “Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8), and He abode in the sanctuary, in the midst of His people. Through all their weary wandering in the desert, the symbol of His presence was with them. So Christ set up His tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment. He pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life. “The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.” John 1:14, R. V., margin.

Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour’s life on earth, we see “God with us.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 23, 24.

Thursday, May 8: For You Created All Things!

The world’s Redeemer was equal with God. His authority was as the authority of God. He declared that He had no existence separate from the Father. The authority by which He spoke, and wrought miracles, was expressly His own, yet He assures us that He and the Father are one. . . .

As Legislator, Jesus exercised the authority of God; His commands and decisions were supported by the Sovereignty of the eternal throne. The glory of the Father was revealed in the Son; Christ made manifest the character of the Father. He was so perfectly connected with God, so completely embraced in His encircling light, that he who had seen the Son, had seen the Father. His voice was as the voice of God.—“Christ Revealed the Father,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 7, 1890, par. 1, 2.

Oh, that all could behold our precious Saviour as He is, a Saviour. Let His hand draw aside the veil which conceals His glory from our eyes. It shows Him in His high and holy place. What do we see? Our Saviour, not in a position of silence and inactivity. He is surrounded with heavenly intelligences, cherubim, and seraphim, ten thousand times ten thousand of angels.

All these heavenly beings have one object above all others, in which they

are intensely interested—His church in a world of corruption. All these armies are in the service of the Prince of heaven, exalting the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. They are working for Christ under His commission, to save to the uttermost all who look to Him and believe in Him. These heavenly intelligences are speeding on their mission, doing for Christ that which Herod and Pilate did against Him. They confederate together to uphold the honor and glory of God. They are united in a holy alliance, in a grand and sublime unity of purpose, to show forth the power and compassion and love and glory of the crucified and risen Saviour.

In their service, these armies of heaven illustrate what the church of God should be. Christ is working in their behalf in the heavenly courts, sending out His messengers to all parts of the globe, to the assistance of every suffering one who looks to Him for relief, for spiritual life and knowledge.

The church of Christ on earth is amid the moral darkness of a disloyal world, which is trampling upon the law of Jehovah. But their Redeemer, who has purchased their ransom with the price of His own precious blood, has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Emmanuel. The bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, shining through His church, will gather into His fold every lost, straying sheep, who will come unto Him and find refuge in Him. They will find peace and light and joy in Him who is peace and righteousness for ever.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 967, 968.

Friday, May 9: For Further Reading

“The Passover,” in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 273–279;

“He That Hath Seen Me Hath Seen the Father,” *Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1890, par. 1–13.

Lesson 7

Foundations for Prophecy

Sabbath Afternoon, May 10

Ever since the fall of Adam Christ had been committing the seed of the word to His chosen servants, to be sown in human hearts. And an unseen agency, even an omnipotent power, had worked silently but effectually to produce the harvest. The dew and rain and sunshine of God's grace had been given, to refresh and nourish the seed of truth. Christ was about to water the seed with His own blood. His disciples were privileged to be laborers together with God. They were coworkers with Christ and with the holy men of old. By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, thousands were to be converted in a day. This was the result of Christ's sowing, the harvest of His work.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 192.

The whole universe is under the control of the Prince of life. . . . He paid the ransom money for the whole world. All may be saved through Him. He calls upon us to obey, believe, receive, and live. He would gather together a church embracing the whole human family, if all would leave the black banner of rebellion and place themselves under His banner. Those who believe on Him, He will present to God as loyal subjects. He is our Mediator as well as our Redeemer. He will defend His chosen followers against Satan's power and subdue all their enemies. . . .

Christ desired His disciples to understand that He would not leave them orphans. . . . He was about to die, but He desired them to realize that He would live again. And although after His ascension He would be absent from them, yet by faith they might see and know Him, and He would have the same loving interest in them that He had while with them.—“Coworkers with Christ,” in *From the Heart*, p. 252.

There is no comforter like Christ, so tender and so true. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. His Spirit speaks to the heart.

Circumstances may separate us from our friends; the broad, restless ocean may roll between us and them. Though their sincere friendship may still exist, they may be unable to demonstrate it by doing for us that which would be gratefully received. But no circumstances, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, he is always there, one given in Christ's place, to act in his stead. He is always at our right hand, to speak soothing, gentle words; to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. This Spirit works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of this Spirit reveal its fruit,—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.—“Words of Comfort—No. 2,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 26, 1897, par. 15.

Sunday, May 11: Here I Am, Send Me

As Isaiah beheld this revelation of the glory and majesty of his Lord, he was overwhelmed with a sense of the purity and holiness of God. How sharp the contrast between the matchless perfection of his Creator, and the sinful course of those who, with himself, had long been numbered among the chosen people of Israel and Judah! “Woe is me!” he cried; “for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” [Isaiah 6:5]. Standing, as it were, in the full light of the divine presence within the inner sanctuary, he realized that if left to his own imperfection and inefficiency, he would be utterly unable to accomplish the mission to which he had been called. But a seraph was sent to relieve him of his distress and to fit him for his great mission. A living coal from the altar was laid upon his lips, with the words, “Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” Then the voice of God was heard saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” and Isaiah responded, “Here am I; send me.” Verses 7, 8.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 307, 308.

God has His workmen in every age. The call of the hour is answered by the human agencies. Thus it will be when the divine voice cries, “Whom shall I send? and who will go for us?” The response will come, “Here am I, send me.” The Lord imparts a fitness for the work to every man and woman

who will co-operate with divine power. A great work is to be done in our world, and human agencies will surely respond to the demand. And all the requisite talent, courage, perseverance, faith, and tact will come as they put the armor on. The world must hear the warning. When the call comes, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” send back the answer clear and distinct, “Here am I; send me.”—“An Appeal,” *The Bible Echo*, September 18, 1899, par. 17.

Isaiah had a wonderful view of God’s glory. He saw the manifestation of God’s power, and after beholding His majesty, a message came to him to go and do a certain work. He felt wholly unworthy for the work. . . . [W]hen he beheld the inexpressible majesty of God, he said, “I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a living coal in his hands, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar, and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” This is the work that as individuals we need to have done for us. We want the living coal from off the altar placed upon our lips. We want to hear the word spoken, “Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged”—“Constant Attainment Essential to Christian Life,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 4, 1889, par. 10.

Monday, May 12: The Two Cherubim

The glorious memorial of God’s wonderful power is soon to be restored to its rightful place. Then paradise lost will be paradise restored. God’s plan for the redemption of man will be complete. The Son of Man will bestow upon the righteous the crown of everlasting life, and they shall “serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”—“The First and Second Advent,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, September 5, 1899, par. 15.

As the ransomed ones are welcomed to the City of God, there rings out upon the air an exultant cry of adoration. The two Adams are about to meet. . . . As Adam discerns the prints of the cruel nails, he does not fall upon the bosom of his Lord, but in humiliation casts himself at His feet, crying: “Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain!” Tenderly the Saviour lifts him up and bids him look once more upon the Eden home from which he has so long been exiled.

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, was a fresh reminder 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. He sees the vines that his own hands have trained, the very flowers that he once loved to care for. 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. He touches the golden harp, and the vaults of heaven echo the triumphant song: “Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and lives again!” The family of Adam take up the strain and cast their crowns at the Saviour’s feet as they bow before Him in adoration.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 647, 648.

Tuesday, May 13: Like Burning Coals of Fire

In the world to come, Christ will lead the redeemed beside the river of life, and will teach them wonderful lessons of truth. He will unfold to them the mysteries of nature. They will see that a Master-Hand holds the worlds in position. They will behold the skill displayed by the great Artist in

coloring the flowers of the field, and will learn of the purposes of the merciful Father, who dispenses every ray of light, and with the holy angels the redeemed will acknowledge in songs of grateful praise God's supreme love to an unthankful world. Then it will be understood that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—"Our Need of the Holy Spirit," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 3, 1907, par. 13.

From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 161.

Upon the banks of the river Chebar, Ezekiel beheld a whirlwind seeming to come from the north, "a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber." A number of wheels intersecting one another were moved by four living beings. High above all these "was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it." "And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings." Ezekiel 1:4, 26; 10:8.

The wheels were so complicated in arrangement that at first sight they appeared to be in confusion; yet they moved in perfect harmony. Heavenly beings, sustained and guided by the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, were impelling those wheels; above them, upon the sapphire throne, was the Eternal One; and round about the throne was a rainbow, the emblem of divine mercy.

As the wheel-like complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations, He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of this earth.—*The Truth About Angels*, pp. 137, 138.

Wednesday, May 14: God Among His People

God gave a clear and definite knowledge of his will to Israel by especial precepts, showing the duty of man to God and to his fellow-men. The worship due to God was clearly defined. A special system of rites and ceremonies was established, which would secure the remembrance of God among his people, and thereby serve as a hedge to guard and protect the ten commandments from violation. . . .

God's people, whom he calls his peculiar treasure, were privileged with a two-fold system of law; the moral and the ceremonial. The one, pointing back to creation to keep in remembrance the living God who made the world, whose claims are binding upon all men in every dispensation, and which will exist through all time and eternity. The other, given because of man's transgression of the moral law, the obedience to which consisted in sacrifices and offerings pointing to the future redemption. Each is clear and distinct from the other. From the creation the moral law was an essential part of God's divine plan, and was as unchangeable as himself. The ceremonial law was to answer a particular purpose of Christ's plan for the salvation of the race. The typical system of sacrifices and offerings was established that through these services the sinner might discern the great offering, Christ.—“The Law of God,” *Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath*, May 6, 1875, par. 3, 4.

The gift of Christ is the highest possible pledge of help in all our trouble and victory in all our conflicts. In Christ is the strength of His people; for all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. Let us as a people who have had great light remember that Christ sits among His people as a refiner and purifier of silver. He is continually cleansing the hearts of those who engage in His service as workers together with God. He will work through every soul. He is continually cleansing the hearts of those who are willing to be cleansed, separating the pure from the impure.—Letter 195, 1899, par. 12.

A period of about half a year was occupied in the building of the tabernacle. When it was completed, Moses examined all the work of the builders, comparing it with the pattern shown him in the mount and the directions he had received from God. “As the Lord had commanded, even so

had they done it: and Moses blessed them.” With eager interest the multitudes of Israel crowded around to look upon the sacred structure. While they were contemplating the scene with reverent satisfaction, the pillar of cloud floated over the sanctuary and, descending, enveloped it. “And the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” There was a revealing of the divine majesty, and for a time even Moses could not enter. With deep emotion the people beheld the token that the work of their hands was accepted. There were no loud demonstrations of rejoicing. A solemn awe rested upon all. But the gladness of their hearts welled up in tears of joy, and they murmured low, earnest words of gratitude that God had condescended to abide with them.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 349, 350.

Thursday, May 15: The Fall of Lucifer

All heaven had rejoiced to reflect the Creator’s glory and to show forth His praise. And while God was thus honored, all had been peace and gladness. But a note of discord now marred the celestial harmonies. The service and exaltation of self, contrary to the Creator’s plan, awakened forebodings of evil in minds to whom God’s glory was supreme. The heavenly councils pleaded with Lucifer. The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. God Himself had established the order of heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker, and bring ruin upon himself. But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed jealousy of Christ to prevail, and he became the more determined.

Pride in his own glory nourished the desire for supremacy. The high honors conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as the gift of God and called forth no gratitude to the Creator. He gloried in his brightness and exaltation, and aspired to be equal with God. He was beloved and revered by the heavenly host. Angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was the acknowledged Sovereign of heaven, one in power and authority with the Father. In all the counsels of God, Christ was a participant, while Lucifer was not permitted thus to enter into the divine purposes. “Why,” questioned this mighty angel, “should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He thus honored above Lucifer?”—*The Great*

Controversy, pp. 494, 495.

Christ did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and with His parting breath He exclaimed, “It is finished.” John 19:30. The battle had been won. His right hand and His holy arm had gotten Him the victory. As a Conqueror He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? All heaven triumphed in the Saviour’s victory. Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost.

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, “It is finished,” had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ’s victory.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 758.

Now the guilt of Satan stood forth without excuse. He had revealed his true character as a liar and a murderer. It was seen that the very same spirit with which he ruled the children of men, who were under his power, he would have manifested had he been permitted to control the inhabitants of heaven. He had claimed that the transgression of God’s law would bring liberty and exaltation; but it was seen to result in bondage and degradation.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 502.

Friday, May 16: For Further Reading

“The Origin of Evil,” in *The Truth About Angels*, pp. 30, 31.

“The Controversy Ended,” in *The Great Controversy*, pp. 676–678.

Lesson 8

In the Psalms: Part 1

Sabbath Afternoon, May 17

The New Testament opens to us the rich importance of the Old Testament history. Praise the Lord, oh my soul. We are to search the Old Testament carefully, for it is a treasure house of knowledge. In the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, the cloudy pillar was over that moving, denominated people as a canopy by day for forty years. At night that cloud was lighted up over them, testifying that Christ, the Light of the world, was to be their courage and their teacher and their leader. . . . [A]nd now we need to put on the whole armor, that whatever may arise we will be prepared, through the imparted power of God, to know how to meet every emergency.

We must keep in mind constantly the words of Christ, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness.” [John 8:12.] We have the Word of both the Old and the New Testament history. Trust in God. Christ is the Truth, the Alpha of the Old Testament history, and all its treasures are made clear and important by the New Testament history.

Some say the Old Testament history is moonlight, the New Testament history is sunlight. As I read the Old Testament history I cannot say this. His going forth is prepared as the morning. Christ is just as much shining as the way, the truth, and the life in the Old Testament history as in the New. His instruction to Israel from Mount Sinai is the same powerful light as was expressed in His teachings when He revealed Himself in person as the Great Teacher, the Son of the Infinite God. All His words are verity and truth.—Manuscript 142, 1904, par. 7–9.

The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God. From the first intimation of hope in the sentence pronounced in Eden, to that last glorious promise of the Revelation, “They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads,” the burden of every book and every passage of the Bible is the unfolding of this wondrous theme,—man’s uplifting, the power of God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Here we behold the Majesty of heaven, as He

humbled Himself to become our Substitute and Surety, to cope single-handed with the powers of darkness, and to gain the victory in our behalf. A reverent contemplation of such themes as these can not fail to soften, purify, and ennoble the heart, and, at the same time, to inspire the mind with new strength and vigor.—“Our Great Treasure-House,” *Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1906, par. 1.

Sunday, May 18: Our High Priest

Christ was without sin, else His life in human flesh and His death on the cross would have been of no more value in procuring grace for the sinner than the death of any other man. While He took upon Him humanity, it was a life taken into union with Deity. He could lay down His life as priest and also victim. He possessed in Himself power to lay it down and take it up again. He offered Himself without spot to God.

The atonement of Christ sealed forever the everlasting covenant of grace. It was the fulfilling of every condition upon which God suspended the free communication of grace to the human family. Every barrier was then broken down which intercepted the freest fulness of the exercise of grace, mercy, peace, and love to the most guilty of Adam's race.—Manuscript 92, 1899, par. 15, 16.

As has been stated, the earthly sanctuary was built by Moses according to the pattern shown him in the mount. It was “a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices;” its two holy places were “patterns of things in the heavens;” Christ, our great High Priest, is “a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” Hebrews 9:9, 23; 8:2. As in vision the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne.” He saw an angel “having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.” Revelation 4:5; 8:3. Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven; and he saw there the “seven lamps of fire” and the “golden altar” represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth. Again, “the temple of God was opened” (Revelation 11:19), and he looked within the inner veil, upon

the holy of holies. Here he beheld “the ark of His testament” (Revelation 11:19), represented by the sacred chest constructed by Moses to contain the law of God.

Moses made the earthly sanctuary, “according to the fashion that he had seen.” Paul declares that “the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry,” when completed, were “the patterns of things in the heavens.” Acts 7:44; Hebrews 9:21, 23. And John says that he saw the sanctuary in heaven. That sanctuary, in which Jesus ministers in our behalf, is the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy.—*Christ in His Sanctuary*, pp. 54, 55.

“He shall bear the glory.” To Christ belongs the glory of redemption for the fallen race. Through the eternal ages, the song of the ransomed ones will be: “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, . . . to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.” Revelation 1:5, 6.—*Christ in His Sanctuary*, p. 138.

Monday, May 19: On Mount Zion

“These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” Revelation 14:4. The vision of the prophet pictures them as standing on Mount Zion, girt for holy service, clothed in white linen, which is the righteousness of the saints. But all who follow the Lamb in heaven must first have followed Him on earth, not fretfully or capriciously, but in trustful, loving, willing obedience, as the flock follows the shepherd.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 591.

Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man’s hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders; and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver

trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, “Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?” Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke: “Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you.” At this our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sang again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth.—*Early Writings*, p. 15.

We are to do all that we can do on our part to fight the good fight of faith. We are to wrestle, to labor, to strive, to agonize to enter in at the strait gate. We are to set the Lord ever before us. With clean hands, with pure hearts, we are to seek to honor God in all our ways. Help has been provided for us in Him who is mighty to save. The spirit of truth and light will quicken and renew us by its mysterious workings; for all our spiritual improvement comes from God, not from ourselves. . . .

Jesus came to our world to bring divine power to man, that through his grace, we might be transformed into his likeness. When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man’s best service, and he makes up for the deficiency with his own divine merit.—“Faith and Works,” *Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1890, par. 2, 6.

Tuesday, May 20: Law in Our Hearts

It was upon his knowledge of the long-sufferance of Jehovah and of His infinite love and mercy, that Moses based his wonderful plea for the life of Israel when, on the borders of the Promised Land, they refused to advance in obedience to the command of God. At the height of their rebellion the Lord had declared, “I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them;” and He had proposed to make of the descendants of Moses “a greater nation and mightier than they.” Numbers 14:12. But the prophet pleaded the marvelous providences and promises of God in behalf of the chosen nation. And then, as the strongest of all pleas, he urged the love of God for fallen man. See verses 17–19.

Graciously the Lord responded, “I have pardoned according to thy word.”

And then He imparted to Moses, in the form of a prophecy, a knowledge of His purpose concerning the final triumph of Israel. “As truly as I live,” He declared, “all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.” Verses 20, 21. God’s glory, His character, His merciful kindness and tender love—that which Moses had pleaded in behalf of Israel—were to be revealed to all mankind. And this promise of Jehovah was made doubly sure; it was confirmed by an oath. As surely as God lives and reigns, His glory should be declared “among the heathen, His wonders among all people.” Psalm 96:3. —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 312, 313.

The glory of Christ is his character, and his character is an expression of the law of God. He fulfilled the law in its every specification, and gave to the world in his life a perfect pattern of what it is possible for humanity to attain unto by cooperation with divinity. In his humanity Christ was dependent upon the Father, even as humanity is now dependent upon God for divine power in attaining unto perfection of character. God’s law is an exponent of his character, an expression of his holiness; but, viewed by him who has fallen through sin, it is a voice of condemnation, a ministration of death. It is not in the province of law to pardon the transgressor; for “by the law is the knowledge of sin.” “By the law shall no flesh be justified.” No ray of hope shines forth from the law to the sinner, and its transgressor can find no answer from the law to his anxious inquiry, “What shall I do to be saved?” “How shall I be just with God?”

But through Christ a way of escape has been provided. Our Redeemer came in the flesh to condemn sin in the flesh, to lay hold of the repenting soul with an unyielding grasp, and at the same time to grasp the throne of God, becoming the connecting link between humanity and divinity, between earth and heaven. He is the only refuge for the guilty soul. In searching to know God, man is directed to Christ, who lived out the law of God, and manifested to the world the attributes of the Father. In the Son of God the inexpressible goodness of God is revealed; for in him mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Christ in the flesh, condemning sin in the flesh, was a perfect revelation of God to the world. Christ declared: “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”—“Character of the Law Revealed in Christ’s Life,”

Signs of the Times, December 12, 1895, par. 2, 3.

Wednesday, May 21: Psalm 5

Brethren and sisters, the Lord is our God. If Christ is formed within, the hope of glory, we have a hope in God that it is impossible for us to keep to ourselves. We will praise Him. We do not praise Him as much as we should. Whoso offers praise glorifies God. Now instead of speaking doleful words, and telling of our trials and afflictions, let us thank God that we can speak at all, and resolve that we will endeavor to glorify His name. Let us take such a position that we may honor and glorify God upon the earth. Let this determination be expressed in our words and in all our business transactions.—Manuscript 38, 1908, par 28.

Difficulties will arise that will try your faith and patience. Face them bravely. Look on the bright side. If the work is hindered, be sure that it is not your fault, and then go forward, rejoicing in the Lord. Heaven is full of joy. It resounds with the praises of Him who made so wonderful a sacrifice for the redemption of the human race. Should not the church on earth be full of praise? Should not Christians publish throughout the world the joy of serving Christ? Those who in heaven join with the angelic choir in their anthem of praise must learn on earth the song of heaven, the keynote of which is thanksgiving.

Never let your courage fail. Never talk unbelief because appearances are against you. As you work for the Master you will feel pressure for want of means, but the Lord will hear and answer your petitions for help. Let your language be: “The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.” Isaiah 50:7.

If you make a mistake, turn your defeat into victory. The lessons that God sends will always, if well learned, bring help in due time. Put your trust in God. Pray much, and believe. Trusting, hoping, believing, holding fast the hand of Infinite Power, you will be more than conquerors.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 244.

Then I was pointed to the glory of heaven, to the treasure laid up for the faithful. Everything was lovely and glorious. The angels would sing a lovely

song, then they would cease singing and take their crowns from their heads and cast them glittering at the feet of the lovely Jesus, and with melodious voices cry, “Glory, Alleluia!” I joined with them in their songs of praise and honor to the Lamb, and every time I opened my mouth to praise Him, I felt an unutterable sense of the glory that surrounded me. It was a far more, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Said the angel, “The little remnant who love God and keep His commandments and are faithful to the end will enjoy this glory and ever be in the presence of Jesus and sing with the holy angels.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 65, 66.

Thursday, May 22: Teach Transgressors Your Way

The prophecies in the eighteenth of Revelation will soon be fulfilled. During the proclamation of the third angel’s message, “another angel” is to “come down from heaven, having great power,” and the earth is to be “lightened with his glory.” The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously bless consecrated human instrumentalities that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and thanksgiving, filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and with His unsurpassed glory, as the waters cover the sea.

Those who have held the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end will be wide-awake during the time that the third angel’s message is proclaimed with great power. During the loud cry, the church, aided by the providential interpositions of her exalted Lord, will diffuse the knowledge of salvation so abundantly that light will be communicated to every city and town. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of salvation. So abundantly will the renewing Spirit of God have crowned with success the intensely active agencies, that the light of present truth will be seen flashing everywhere.—“The Closing Work,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 13, 1904, par. 3, 4.

The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are “the times of refreshing” to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall

send Jesus.” Acts 3:19, 20.

Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.

The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord’s side.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 611, 612.

Friday, May 23: For Further Reading

“Character of the Law Revealed in Christ’s Life,” *Signs of the Times*, December 12, 1895, par. 5–10;

“The Perils and Privileges of the Last Days,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, November 22, 1892, par. 7, 8.

Lesson 9

In the Psalms: Part 2

Sabbath Afternoon, May 24

The Saviour knew that no argument, however logical, would melt hard hearts or break through the crust of worldliness and selfishness. He knew that His disciples must receive the heavenly endowment; that the gospel would be effective only as it was proclaimed by hearts made warm and lips made eloquent by a living knowledge of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life. The work committed to the disciples would require great efficiency; for the tide of evil ran deep and strong against them. A vigilant, determined leader was in command of the forces of darkness, and the followers of Christ could battle for the right only through the help that God, by His Spirit, would give them.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 31.

Now the Saviour's eye penetrates the future; He beholds the broader fields in which, after His death, the disciples are to be witnesses for Him. His prophetic glance takes in the experience of His servants through all the ages till He shall come the second time. He shows His followers the conflicts they must meet; He reveals the character and plan of the battle. He lays open before them the perils they must encounter, the self-denial that will be required. He desires them to count the cost, that they may not be taken unawares by the enemy. Their warfare is not to be waged against flesh and blood, but "against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12, R. V. They are to contend with supernatural forces, but they are assured of supernatural help. All the intelligences of heaven are in this army. And more than angels are in the ranks. The Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord's host, comes down to direct the battle. Our infirmities may be many, our sins and mistakes grievous; but the grace of God is for all who seek it with contrition. The power of Omnipotence is enlisted in behalf of those who trust in God.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 352.

God brings us into trials in order that we may be drawn nearer to Him. The psalmist says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord

delivereth him out of them all.” David was a representative man. His history is of interest to every soul who is striving for eternal victories. In his life two powers struggled for the mastery. Unbelief marshaled its forces, and tried to eclipse the light shining upon him from the throne of God. Day by day the battle went on in his heart, Satan disputing every step of advance made by the forces of righteousness. David understood what it meant to fight against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world. At times it seemed that the enemy must gain the victory. But in the end, faith conquered, and David rejoiced in the saving power of Jehovah.—“That Your Joy Might Be Full,” *Signs of the Times*, August 11, 1909, par. 9.

Sunday, May 25: A Very Present Help in the Time of Trouble

In all who are under the training of God is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and everyone needs to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10. Here alone can true rest be found. And this is the effectual preparation for all who labor for God. Amid the hurrying throng, and the strain of life’s intense activities, the soul that is thus refreshed will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. The life will breathe out fragrance, and will reveal a divine power that will reach men’s hearts.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 363.

O, let the soul break for the longing it has for God. Exercise the faith that will not lose its hold on God. Let the weary and heavy laden come to Christ. Cry aloud for the Comforter. Let the faint and unbelieving draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to them. Take hold of God with earnest, persevering faith.—Letter 96, 1901, par. 13.

During the life of Jesus on earth, He frequently said to His disciples, “Follow me.” “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” [Luke 9:23.] Obstacles will certainly

confront us on our way; but we must bravely, uncomplainingly press onward. The Lord is good. He is a present help in time of trouble. If we tell the Lord all our troubles and we believe His Word, He will hear and answer prayer. He invites us to come to Him. “Ask,” He says, “and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” [Matthew 7:7.] The treasure-house is full. We may draw from it continually. Never will it become exhausted.

Is the Lord ever wearied with our prayers? No, no. When we importune Him with earnestness of heart, He hears. He will say to us, “Here I am.” [Isaiah 58:9.] We need never be discouraged. If we had to depend upon ourselves to work out the problem of salvation, we should be distrustful of self and be full of trying perplexities. But this burden has not been laid upon us. Hear and understand this most precious invitation given to every human being: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke the yoke of restraint, submission, and obedience upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” [Matthew 11:28-30.] Shall we not individually say, “By the grace of God, I will comply with the conditions”?—Letter 14, 1902, par. 13, 14.

Monday, May 26: Hope Amid Turmoil

To us who are standing on the very verge of their fulfillment, of what deep moment, what living interest, are these delineations of the things to come—events for which, since our first parents turned their steps from Eden, God’s children have watched and waited, longed and prayed!

Fellow pilgrim, we are still amid the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities; but soon our Saviour is to appear to bring deliverance and rest. Let us by faith behold the blessed hereafter as pictured by the hand of God. He who died for the sins of the world is opening wide the gates of Paradise to all who believe on Him. Soon the battle will have been fought, the victory won. Soon we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence the trials and sufferings of this life will seem as nothingness. The former things “shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while,

and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” “Israel shall be saved . . . with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.” Isaiah 65:17; Hebrews 10:35–37; Isaiah 45:17.

Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed. “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” James 5:7, 8.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 731, 732.

We are desponding when we might be hopeful. I dare not take the eye of faith from Jesus to the boisterous billows as did poor, trembling Peter, lest I sink. I see enough turmoil, confusion, and perplexity to distract and confuse me should I look upon them and dwell upon them. I say many times a day, Help, Lord, for Thou alone canst help and I will trust in Thee fully and entirely. The work is Thine, the cause is Thine. Thou wilt not suffer Thy Truth to be reproached.

—Letter 3b, 1881, par. 5.

We are still amidst the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities. Let us consider most earnestly the blessed hereafter. Let our faith pierce through every cloud of darkness and behold Him who died for the sins of the world. He has opened the gates of paradise to all who receive and believe on Him. To them He gives power to become the sons and daughters of God. Let the afflictions which pain us so grievously become instructive lessons, teaching us to press forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ. Let us be encouraged by the thought that the Lord is soon to come. Let this hope gladden our hearts. “Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Hebrews 10:37. Blessed are those servants who, when their Lord comes, shall be found watching.—*Heaven*, p. 160.

Tuesday, May 27: Under His Feet

To this time the revelator looks forward when he says, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He

shall reign forever and ever.” Revelation 11:15. The context clearly shows when this will take place: “The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.” Verse 18. It is at the time of the final judgment, the reward of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked that the kingdom of Christ will be set up. When all who oppose the sovereignty of Christ have been destroyed, the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. . . .

Until that time the kingdom of Christ cannot be established on the earth. His kingdom is not of this world. His followers are to account themselves “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” Paul says, “Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Hebrews 11:13; Philippians 3:20, R.V.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 763.

The kingdom of God’s grace is now being established, as day by day hearts that have been full of sin and rebellion yield to the sovereignty of His love. But the full establishment of the kingdom of His glory will not take place until the second coming of Christ to this world. “The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,” is to be given to “the people of the saints of the Most High.” Daniel 7:27. They shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them “from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:34. And Christ will take to Himself His great power and will reign.

The heavenly gates are again to be lifted up, and with ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy ones, our Saviour will come forth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jehovah Immanuel “shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.” “The tabernacle of God” shall be with men, “and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 21:3. . . .

The petition, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,” is a prayer that the reign of evil on this earth may be ended, that sin may be forever destroyed, and the kingdom of righteousness be established. Then in earth as in heaven will be fulfilled “all the good pleasure of His goodness.” 2 Thessalonians 1:11.—*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, pp. 108, 110.

Wednesday, May 28: Wine and Blood

It is God's purpose to manifest through His people the principles of His kingdom. That in life and character they may reveal these principles, He desires to separate them from the customs, habits, and practises of the world. He seeks to bring them nearer to Himself that He may make known to them His will. His purpose for His people today is the same that He had for Israel when He brought them forth from Egypt. By beholding the goodness, the mercy, the justice, and the love of God revealed in His church, the world is to have a representation of His character. And when the law of God is thus exemplified in the life, even the world will recognize the superiority of those who love and fear and serve God above every other people in the world.—*Recreation*, Pamphlet 145, p. 3.

My brethren and sisters, in your ministry come close to the people. Uplift those who are cast down. Treat of calamities as disguised blessings, of woes as mercies. Work in a way that will cause hope to spring up in the place of despair. . . .

“The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly.” [Zephaniah 1:14.] To every worker I would say: Go forth in humble faith, and the Lord will go with you. But watch unto prayer. This is the science of your labor. The power is of God. Work in dependence upon Him, remembering that you are laborers together with Him. He is your Helper. Your strength is from Him. He will be your wisdom, your righteousness, your sanctification, your redemption. Wear the yoke of Christ, daily learning of Him His meekness and lowliness. He will be your comfort, your rest.—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 37, 38.

Every act of obedience to Christ, every act of self-denial for His sake, every trial well endured, every victory gained over temptation, is a step in the march to the glory of final victory. If we take Christ for our guide, He will lead us safely. The veriest sinner need not miss his way. Not one trembling seeker need fail of walking in pure and holy light. Though the path is so narrow, so holy that sin cannot be tolerated therein, yet access has been secured for all, and not one doubting, trembling soul need say, “God cares nought for me.”

The road may be rough and the ascent steep; there may be pitfalls upon

the right hand and upon the left; we may have to endure toil in our journey; when weary, when longing for rest, we may have to toil on; when faint, we may have to fight; when discouraged, we must still hope; but with Christ as our guide we shall not fail of reaching the desired haven at last. Christ Himself has trodden the rough way before us and has smoothed the path for our feet.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessings*, p. 140.

Thursday, May 29: That Your Salvation May Be Known

God has given you precious privileges and advantages in sending you the light of his truth, and you are to improve these blessings, and let others share your mercies. What large missionary fields there are right around your homes, what opportunities every day for you to speak of the value of God's promises, to revive poor souls who are compelled to labor hard for small wages, to encourage the hearts of those who are struggling with poverty, who have scarcely the bare necessities of life! The children of God are called upon to show forth the praises of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light; for they are to be Christ's representatives. They should ever seek to teach those with whom they come in contact, of higher, holier truths than the questions of commonplace life. The Lord says through the prophet Ezekiel, "I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing."—"God's Object in Blessing His People," *Signs of the Times*, February 3, 1890, par. 5.

The greatest work, the noblest effort, in which man can engage, is to point his fellow-men to the Lamb of God. O let us urge the importance of this work with greater earnestness than we have manifested in the past. Let our church-members begin to work. Let them reveal Christ in every thought, word, and act. If they represent him aright, they will receive the reward of life eternal and a home in heaven.—"Christ's Representatives," *The Gospel Herald*, December 10, 1902, par. 10.

In every generation God has sent His servants to rebuke sin, both in the world and in the church. But the people desire smooth things spoken to them, and the pure, unvarnished truth is not acceptable. Many reformers, in entering upon their work, determined to exercise great prudence in

attacking the sins of the church and the nation. They hoped, by the example of a pure Christian life, to lead the people back to the doctrines of the Bible. But the Spirit of God came upon them as it came upon Elijah, moving him to rebuke the sins of a wicked king and an apostate people; they could not refrain from preaching the plain utterances of the Bible—doctrines which they had been reluctant to present. They were impelled to zealously declare the truth and the danger which threatened souls. The words which the Lord gave them they uttered, fearless of consequences, and the people were compelled to hear the warning.

Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 606.

Friday, May 30: For Further Reading

“A Present Help in Every Time of Trouble,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 16, 1901, par. 1–12;

“Christ’s Representatives,” *The Southern Review*, September 13, 1898, par. 1–5.

Lesson 10

Upon Whom the Ends Have Come

Sabbath Afternoon, May 31

Those who profess to be looking for the soon coming of our Saviour, should have Abrahamic faith, a faith that is valued because it has cost them something, a faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. The example of Abraham is left on record for us upon whom the ends of the world have come. We must believe that God is in earnest with us, and that he is not to be trifled with. He means what he says, and he requires of us implicit faith and willing obedience. Then will he let his light shine around about us, and we shall be all light in the Lord.—“The Faith of Abraham,” *Signs of the Times*, April 1, 1875, par. 32.

If the saints of the Old Testament were to be bright and shining lights to the world, we are bound to shine brighter than they, because we have all the light which they had flashing upon our pathway from the prophetic past and the additional light which has come to us in the life of Christ. Fuller prophecies reveal the true Jehovah to those upon whom the ends of the world are come. God has a special light in this age of the world, a special message to give in the proclamation of the third angel’s message—the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.—“Ye Are the Light of the World,” *Present Truth*, November 4, 1886, par. 8.

God calls upon His people to gain a deeper insight into His plans and His law. His law is the transcript of His character. It is unchangeable; for God will not alter the thing that has gone out of His lips. Christ has declared that the law is perfect; and with David we may say, “It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law.”

Jesus Christ is to be the center of influence. The Holy Spirit is to be the efficiency of every one who is trying to do right. With all their energies human beings are to co-operate with the great Center of infinite love and

infinite power. There are those in our world who are longing for a deeper religious experience, who are bemoaning the dearth of the Holy Spirit's power in the lives of the professed followers of Christ. When men return to their loyalty to God, they will cease to trample underfoot His plain commands. They will exalt God. His word will be to them a light shining amid the moral darkness. They will obey the words, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—"The Warfare Between Good and Evil," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 16, 1901, par. 16, 17.

Sunday, June 1: The Wrath of the Lamb

They will call on the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. "The wrath of the Lamb,"—One who ever showed himself full of tenderness, patience, and long-suffering, who, having given himself up as the sacrificial offering, was led as a lamb to the slaughter, to save sinners from the doom now falling upon them because they would not allow Him to take away their guilt.

The judgment will be conducted in accordance with the rules God has laid down. By the law which men are now called upon to obey, but which many refuse to accept, all will be judged. As by it character is tested, every man will find his proper place in one of two classes. He will either be holy to the Lord through obedience to His law, or be stained with sin through transgression. He will either have done good, cooperating in faith with Jesus to restore the moral image of God in man, or he will have done evil, denying the Saviour by an ungodly life. Christ will separate them from one another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left. Then men and women will see that their course of action has decided their destiny. They will be rewarded or punished according as they have obeyed or violated the law of God.—"A Message for Today," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 18, 1901, par. 13, 14.

The sins that called for vengeance upon the antediluvian world exist today. The fear of God is banished from the hearts of men, and His law is treated with indifference and contempt. The intense worldliness of that

generation is equaled by that of the generation now living. Said Christ, “As in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:38, 39. God did not condemn the antediluvians for eating and drinking; He had given them the fruits of the earth in great abundance to supply their physical wants. Their sin consisted in taking these gifts without gratitude to the Giver, and debasing themselves by indulging appetite without restraint.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 101.

Monday, June 2: Noah’s Evangelism

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Hebrews 11:7. While Noah was giving his warning message to the world, his works testified of his sincerity. It was thus that his faith was perfected and made evident. He gave the world an example of believing just what God says. All that he possessed, he invested in the ark. As he began to construct that immense boat on dry ground, multitudes came from every direction to see the strange sight and to hear the earnest, fervent words of the singular preacher. Every blow struck upon the ark was a witness to the people.

Many at first appeared to receive the warning; yet they did not turn to God with true repentance. They were unwilling to renounce their sins. During the time that elapsed before the coming of the Flood, their faith was tested, and they failed to endure the trial. Overcome by the prevailing unbelief, they finally joined their former associates in rejecting the solemn message. Some were deeply convicted, and would have heeded the words of warning; but there were so many to jest and ridicule, that they partook of the same spirit, resisted the invitations of mercy, and were soon among the boldest and most defiant scoffers; for none are so reckless and go to such lengths in sin as do those who have once had light, but have resisted the convicting Spirit of God.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 95.

In the days of Noah, “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in

the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. . . . And the Lord said unto 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 with the earth.” [Genesis 6:5, 6, 13.]

But though men were so wicked, God would not destroy them without warning. “My spirit shall not always strive with man,” He said; “yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” [Verse 3.] And during this period of probation, Noah’s message of warning was to sound in their ears.

At first many were startled by this message. Some believed it, and some died in the faith. But as time went by, the message lost its power over the careless, world-loving people. They forgot all thought of peril, and laughed at Noah for building an ark on dry land. But still the work of building went on. Noah showed his faith by his works, and by his faith and works condemned the world.

As Noah warned the world, so the people of God in this day are to warn the world. By their faith and works they are to condemn the world. They will have the same wicked resistance to meet that Noah met in his day. But they are not to fail or be discouraged. God calls for men who will deal prudently and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.—Letter 59, 1901, par. 28–31.

Tuesday, June 3: The Story of Sodom and Gomorrah

Every act of life, however small, has its bearing for good or for evil. Faithfulness or neglect in what are apparently the smallest duties may open the door for life’s richest blessings or its greatest calamities. It is little things that test the character. It is the unpretending acts of daily self-denial, performed with a cheerful, willing heart, that God smiles upon. We are not to live for self, but for others. And it is only by self-forgetfulness, by cherishing a loving, helpful spirit, that we can make our life a blessing. The little attentions, the small, simple courtesies, go far to make up the sum of life’s happiness, and the neglect of these constitutes no small share of human wretchedness.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 158.

The uncontrolled indulgence and consequent disease and degradation

that existed at Christ's first advent will again exist, with intensity of evil, before His second coming. Christ declares that the condition of the world will be as in the days before the Flood, and as in Sodom and Gomorrah. Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart will be evil continually. Upon the very verge of that fearful time we are now living, and to us should come home the lesson of the Saviour's fast. Only by the inexpressible anguish which Christ endured can we estimate the evil of unrestrained indulgence. His example declares that our only hope of eternal life is through bringing the appetites and passions into subjection to the will of God.

In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. Through this channel Satan will bring temptation upon us. Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all whose trust is not in God. And by passing over the ground which man must travel, our Lord has prepared the way for us to overcome. It is not His will that we should be placed at a disadvantage in the conflict with Satan. He would not have us intimidated and discouraged by the assaults of the serpent. "Be of good cheer," He says; "I have overcome the world." John 16:33.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 122.

Love for perishing souls inspired Abraham's prayer. While he loathed the sins of that corrupt city, he desired that the sinners might be saved. His deep interest for Sodom shows the anxiety that we should feel for the impenitent. We should cherish hatred of sin, but pity and love for the sinner. . . .

The spirit of Abraham was the spirit of Christ. The Son of God is Himself the great Intercessor in the sinner's behalf. He who has paid the price for its redemption knows the worth of the human soul.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 140.

Wednesday, June 4: The Judge of All the Earth

During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place. The apostle Paul points to this judgment as an event that follows the Second Advent. "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts."

(1 Corinthians 4:5.) Daniel declares that when the Ancient of Days came, “judgment was given to the saints of the Most High.” (Daniel 7:22.) At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God. John in the Revelation says: “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.” “They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4, 6.) It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, “the saints shall judge the world.” (1 Corinthians 6:2.) In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death.—*Homeward Bound*, p. 382.

The Saviour had spoken freely to Pilate, explaining His own mission as a witness to the truth. Pilate had disregarded the light. He had abused the high office of judge by yielding his principles and authority to the demands of the mob. Jesus had no further light for him. Vexed at His silence, Pilate said haughtily:

“Speakest Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?”

Jesus answered, “Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.”

Thus the pitying Saviour, in the midst of His intense suffering and grief, excused as far as possible the act of the Roman governor who gave Him up to be crucified. What a scene was this to hand down to the world for all time! What a light it sheds upon the character of Him who is the Judge of all the earth!—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 736.

The Lord is doing His work. All heaven is astir. The Judge of all the earth is soon to arise and vindicate His insulted authority. The mark of deliverance will be set upon the men who keep God’s commandments, who revere His law, and who refuse the mark of the beast or of his image. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 451.

Thursday, June 5: The Pre-Advent Judgment

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. Says the prophet Daniel: "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." The revelator, describing the same scene, adds: "Another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20:12.

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. Daniel, looking down to "a time of trouble, such as never was," declares that God's people shall be delivered, "everyone that shall be found written in the book." And the revelator says that those only shall enter the city of God whose names "are written in the Lamb's book of life." Daniel 12:1; Revelation 21:27.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

While Jesus is pleading for the subjects of His grace, Satan accuses them before God as transgressors. The great deceiver has sought to lead them into skepticism, to cause them to lose confidence in God, to separate themselves from His love, and to break His law. Now he points to the record of their lives, to the defects of character, the unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer, to all the sins that he has tempted them to commit, and because of these he claims them as his subjects.

Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying: I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of My hands. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Psalm 51:17. And to the accuser of His people He declares: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Zechariah 3:2. Christ will clothe His faithful ones with His own righteousness, that He may present them to His Father "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Ephesians 5:27. Their names stand enrolled in the book of life, and concerning them it is written: "They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy." Revelation 3:4.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 484.

Friday, June 6: For Further Reading

“The Millennium,” in *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 415, 516;

“The Captivity of Satan and His Angels,” in *Maranatha*, p. 313.

Lesson 11

Ruth and Esther

Sabbath Afternoon, June 7

The decree of the Medes and Persians could not be revoked; apparently there was no hope; all the Israelites were doomed to destruction.

But the plots of the enemy were defeated by a Power that reigns among the children of men. In the providence of God, Esther, a Jewess who feared the Most High, had been made queen of the Medo-Persian kingdom. Mordecai was a near relative of hers. In their extremity they decided to appeal to Xerxes in behalf of their people. Esther was to venture into his presence as an intercessor. “Who knoweth,” said Mordecai, “whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Verse 14.

The crisis that Esther faced demanded quick, earnest action; but both she and Mordecai realized that unless God should work mightily in their behalf, their own efforts would be unavailing. So Esther took time for communion with God, the source of her strength.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 601.

The Bible is a revelation of the divine will and purpose of God. Those who follow its teachings are doers of the words of Christ, and by this means they bring solid timbers into their character building. Let us heed the words of inspiration, which exhort us to “be pitiful, be courteous.” Boaz represented the character of the Christian gentleman. Like Abraham, he commanded his household after him to keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. He showed courtesy to all his servants, and as he passed among his workmen in the field, he said unto the reapers, “The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee.” Here is a lesson . . . for employers and the employed. The [workers] are strengthened in their hearts to do righteously, to be faithful to [employers] who manifest respectful kindness and courtesy towards them. Christians should be the most courteous people in the world.—“Respond to Divine Love,” *Home Missionary*, December 1, 1894, par. 1.

Occasions of indulgence such as are pictured in the first chapter of Esther, do not glorify God. But the Lord accomplishes His will through men who are nevertheless misleading others. If God did not stretch forth His restraining hand, strange presentations would be seen. But God impresses human minds to accomplish His purpose, even though the one used continues to follow wrong practices. And the Lord works out His plans through men who do not acknowledge His lessons of wisdom. In His hand is the heart of every earthly ruler, to turn whithersoever He will, as He turneth the waters of the river.

Through the experience that brought Esther to the Medo-Persian throne, God was working for the accomplishment of His purposes for His people. That which was done under the influence of much wine worked out for good to Israel.—“Lessons from Esther,” in Manuscript 39, 1910, par. 16, 17.

Sunday, June 8: Famine in “The House of Bread”

It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties and continues her motion round the sun. The hand of God guides the planets and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. It is through His power that summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, day and night follow each other in their regular succession. It is by His word that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves appear and the flowers bloom. Every good thing we have, each ray of sunshine and shower of rain, every morsel of food, every moment of life, is a gift of love.

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.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 74, 75.

The things of nature that we now behold give us but a faint conception of Eden’s glory. Sin has marred earth’s beauty; on all things may be seen traces of the work of evil. Yet much that is beautiful remains. Nature testifies that One infinite in power, great in goodness, mercy, and love,

created the earth, and filled it with life and gladness. Even in their blighted state, all things reveal the handiwork of the great Master Artist. Wherever we turn, we may hear the voice of God, and see evidences of His goodness.

From the solemn roll of the deep-toned thunder and old ocean's ceaseless roar, to the glad songs that make the forests vocal with melody, nature's ten thousand voices speak His praise. In earth and sea and sky, with their marvelous tint and color, varying in gorgeous contrast or blended in harmony, we behold His glory. The everlasting hills tell us of His power. The trees that wave their green banners in the sunlight, and the flowers in their delicate beauty, point to their Creator. The living green that carpets the brown earth tells of God's care for the humblest of His creatures. The caves of the sea and the depths of the earth reveal His treasures. He who placed the pearls in the ocean and the amethyst and chrysolite among the rocks, is a lover of the beautiful. The sun rising in the heavens is a representative of Him who is the life and light of all that He has made. All the brightness and beauty that adorn the earth and light up the heavens, speak of God.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 411.

Monday, June 9: Ruth and Boaz

Further provision was made for the poor. There is nothing, after their recognition of the claims of God, that more distinguishes the laws given by Moses than the liberal, tender, and hospitable spirit enjoined toward the poor. Although God had promised greatly to bless His people, it was not His design that poverty should be wholly unknown among them. He declared that the poor should never cease out of the land. There would ever be those among His people who would call into exercise their sympathy, tenderness, and benevolence. Then, as now, persons were subject to misfortune, sickness, and loss of property; yet so long as they followed the instruction given by God, there were no beggars among them, neither any who suffered for food. . . .

Such were the provisions made by our merciful Creator, to lessen suffering, to bring some ray of hope, to flash some gleam of sunshine, into the life of the destitute and distressed.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 530, 534.

Christ honored the marriage relation by making it also a symbol of the union between Him and His redeemed ones. He Himself is the Bridegroom;

the bride is the church, of which, as His chosen one, He says, “Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.” Song of Solomon 4:7.

Christ “loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it; . . . that it should be holy and without blemish.” “So ought men to love their wives.” Ephesians 5:25-28.

The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 356.

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.

Tuesday, June 10: Boaz as Redeemer

Those who accept Christ as their personal Saviour are not left as orphans, to bear the trials of life alone. He receives them as members of the heavenly family; He bids them call His Father their Father. They are His “little ones,” dear to the heart of God, bound to Him by the most tender and abiding ties. He has toward them an exceeding tenderness, as far surpassing what our father or mother has felt toward us in our helplessness as the divine is above the human.

Of Christ’s relation to His people, there is a beautiful illustration in the laws given to Israel. When through poverty a Hebrew had been forced to

part with his patrimony, and to sell himself as a bondservant, the duty of redeeming him and his inheritance fell to the one who was nearest of kin. See Leviticus 25:25, 47–49; Ruth 2:20. So the work of redeeming us and our inheritance, lost through sin, fell upon Him who is “near of kin” unto us. It was to redeem us that He became our kinsman. Closer than father, mother, brother, friend, or lover is the Lord our Saviour. “Fear not,” He says, “for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine.” “Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.” Isaiah 43:1, 4.

Christ loves the heavenly beings that surround His throne; but what shall account for the great love wherewith He has loved us? We cannot understand it, but we can know it true in our own experience. And if we do hold the relation of kinship to Him, with what tenderness should we regard those who are brethren and sisters of our Lord! Should we not be quick to recognize the claims of our divine relationship? Adopted into the family of God, should we not honor our Father and our kindred?—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 327.

One reason of the spiritual feebleness of today is the low estimate that believers in Christ are constantly inclined to form of themselves. Christ paid an infinite price for us, and he desires his chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price he placed upon them. Do not disappoint Jesus by placing a low estimate upon yourselves. Embrace the opportunities and privileges which will increase your value with God; for by accepting the treasures of his grace you will become precious and lovely in his sight. Practical godliness will run through your lives like threads of gold, and as God beholds your consecration to him, he will say, “I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.” All heaven rejoices over the weak, faulty human soul that gives itself to Jesus, and in his strength lives a life of purity.—“The Source of Strength,” *Signs of the Times*, October 22, 1896, par. 8.

Wednesday, June 11: Haman and Satan

The decree which is to go forth against the people of God in the near future is in some respects similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the

Jews in the time of Esther. The Persian edict sprang from the malice of Haman against Mordecai. Not that Mordecai had done Haman harm, but he had refused to flatter his vanity by showing him the reverence which is due only to God. The king's decision against the Jews was secured under false pretenses. Satan instigated this scheme in order to rid the earth of those who preserved a knowledge of the true God. But his plots were defeated by a counter-power that reigns among the children of men. Angels who excel in strength were commissioned to protect the people of God, and the plots of their adversaries returned upon their own heads.

History repeats itself. The same masterful mind that plotted against the faithful in ages past is now at work to gain control of the Protestant churches, that through them he may condemn and put to death all who will not worship the idol sabbath. We have not to battle with man, as it may appear. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. But if the people of God will put their trust in Him, and by faith rely upon His power, the devices of Satan will be defeated in our time as signally as in the days of Mordecai. . . .

Christ never purchased peace and friendship by compromise with evil. Tho His heart overflowed with love toward the human race, He could not be indulgent to their sins. Because He loved men and women, He was a stern reprove of their vices. His life of suffering, the humiliation to which He was subjected by a perverse nation, show His followers that there must be no sacrifice of principle. God's tried people must maintain watchfulness, with fervent prayer, lest, in their eagerness to prevent discord, they surrender truth, and thus dishonor the God of truth. Peace is too dearly obtained if purchased by the smallest concession to Satan's agencies. The least surrender of principle entangles us in the snare of the enemy.—“The Seal of God—No. 2,” *Signs of the Times*, November 8, 1899, par. 9, 10, 13.

Thoughts and meditations upon the goodness of God to us would close the avenues of the soul to Satan's suggestions.

God's love for us is proved daily; yet we are thoughtless of His favors and indifferent to His entreaties. He seeks to impress us with His Spirit of tenderness, His love and forbearance; but we scarcely recognize the marks of His kindness, and have little sense of the lesson of love He desires us to learn. Some, like Haman, forget all God's favors, because Mordecai is before

them and is not disgraced; because their hearts are filled with enmity and hatred, rather than love, the spirit of our dear Redeemer, who gave His precious life for His enemies.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 222.

Thursday, June 12: For Such a Time as This

The trying experiences that came to God's people in the days of Esther were not peculiar to that age alone. The revelator, looking down the ages to the close of time, has declared, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17. Some who today are living on the earth will see these words fulfilled. The same spirit that in ages past led men to persecute the true church, will in the future lead to the pursuance of a similar course toward those who maintain their loyalty to God. Even now preparations are being made for this last great conflict.

The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews. Today the enemies of the true church see in the little company keeping the Sabbath commandment, a Mordecai at the gate. The reverence of God's people for His law is a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord and are trampling on His Sabbath.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 605.

In ancient times the Lord worked in a wonderful way through consecrated women who united in His work with men whom He had chosen to stand as His representatives. He used women to gain great and decisive victories. More than once, in times of emergency, He brought them to the front and worked through them for the salvation of many lives. Through Esther the queen, the Lord accomplished a mighty deliverance for His people. At a time when it seemed that no power could save them, Esther and the women associated with her, by fasting and prayer and prompt action, met the issue, and brought salvation to their people.—*Daughters of God*, p. 45.

The trying experiences that came to God's people in the days of Esther, were not peculiar to that age alone. The Revelator, looking down the ages to the close of time, declared by inspiration, "The dragon was wroth with the

woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” . . .

The decree which is to go forth against the people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews in the time of Esther. . . .

Those who fear God can not accept an institution that violates a precept of the decalogue. On this battle-field comes the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. And we are not left in doubt as to the issue. Now, as in the days of Esther and Mordecai, the Lord will vindicate his truth and his people.—“The Return of the Exiles—No. 11,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 23, 1908, par. 20–22.

Friday, June 13: For Further Reading

“In the Days of Queen Esther,” in *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 598–605.

“Christ’s Followers the Light of the World,” in *Gospel Workers*, pp. 433–437.

Lesson 12

Precursors

Sabbath Afternoon, June 14

The names of Daniel and his companions were changed to names representing Chaldean deities. Great significance was attached to the names given by Hebrew parents to their children. Often these stood for traits of character that the parent desired to see developed in the child. The prince in whose charge the captive youth were placed, “gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.” . . .

At the very outset of their career there came to them a decisive test of character. It was provided that they should eat of the food and drink of the wine that came from the king’s table. In this the king thought to give them an expression of his favor and of his solicitude for their welfare. But a portion having been offered to idols, the food from the king’s table was consecrated to idolatry; and one partaking of it would be regarded as offering homage to the gods of Babylon. In such homage, loyalty to Jehovah forbade Daniel and his companions to join. Even a mere pretense of eating the food or drinking the wine would be a denial of their faith. To do this would be to array themselves with heathenism and to dishonor the principles of the law of God. . . .

But Daniel did not hesitate. The approval of God was dearer to him than the favor of the most powerful earthly potentate—dearer than life itself. He determined to stand firm in his integrity, let the result be what it might. He “purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank.” And in this resolve he was supported by his three companions.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 480, 481, 483.

Will the Lord forget his people in this trying hour? Did he forget faithful Noah when judgments were visited upon the antediluvian world? Did he

forget Lot when the fire came down from Heaven to consume the cities of the plain? Did he forget Joseph surrounded by idolaters in Egypt? Did he forget Elijah when the oath of Jezebel threatened him with the fate of the prophets of Baal? Did he forget Jeremiah in the dark and dismal pit of his prison-house? Did he forget the three worthies in the fiery furnace? or Daniel in the den of lions? . . .

Though enemies may thrust them into prison, yet dungeon walls cannot cut off the communication between their souls and Christ. One who sees their every weakness, who is acquainted with every trial, is above all earthly powers; and angels will come to them in lonely cells, bringing light and peace from Heaven. The prison will be as a palace; for the rich in faith dwell there, and the gloomy walls will be lighted up with heavenly light, as when Paul and Silas prayed and sung praises at midnight in the Philippian dungeon.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 626.

Sunday, June 15: Daniel Two and the Historicist Approach to Prophecy

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 499, 500.

Hundreds of years before certain nations came upon the stage of action, the Omniscient One looked down the ages and predicted the rise and fall of the universal kingdoms. God declared to Nebuchadnezzar that the kingdom of Babylon should fall, and a second kingdom would arise, which also would have its period of trial. Failing to exalt the true God, its glory would fade, and a third kingdom would occupy its place. This also would pass away; and a fourth, strong as iron, would subdue the nations of the world.

Had the rulers of Babylon—that richest of all earthly kingdoms—kept always before them the fear of Jehovah, they would have been given wisdom and power which would have bound them to Him and kept them

strong. But they made God their refuge only when harassed and perplexed. At such times, failing to find help in their great men, they sought it from men like Daniel—men who they knew honored the living God and were honored by Him. To these men they appealed to unravel the mysteries of Providence; for though the rulers of proud Babylon were men of the highest intellect, they had separated themselves so far from God by transgression that they could not understand the revelations and the warnings given them concerning the future.

In the history of nations the student of God's word may behold the literal fulfillment of divine prophecy. Babylon, shattered and broken at last, passed away because in prosperity its rulers had regarded themselves as independent of God, and had ascribed the glory of their kingdom to human achievement. The Medo-Persian realm was visited by the wrath of Heaven because in it God's law had been trampled underfoot. The fear of the Lord had found no place in the hearts of the vast majority of the people. Wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption prevailed. The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt; and these sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral worth. . . .

In the word of God only is this clearly set forth. Here it is shown that the strength of nations, as of individuals, is not found in the opportunities or facilities that appear to make them invincible; it is not found in their boasted greatness. It is measured by the fidelity with which they fulfill God's purpose.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 501, 502.

Monday, June 16: Worshiping the Image

The Lord did not forget His own. As His witnesses were cast into the furnace, the Saviour revealed Himself to them in person, and together they walked in the midst of the fire. In the presence of the Lord of heat and cold, the flames lost their power to consume.

From his royal seat the king looked on, expecting to see the men who had defied him utterly destroyed. But his feelings of triumph suddenly changed. The nobles standing near saw his face grow pale as he started from the throne and looked intently into the glowing flames. In alarm the king, turning to his lords, asked, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? . . . Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of

God.”

How did that heathen king know what the Son of God was like? The Hebrew captives filling positions of trust in Babylon had in life and character represented before him the truth. When asked for a reason of their faith, they had given it without hesitation. Plainly and simply they had presented the principles of righteousness, thus teaching those around them of the God whom they worshiped. They had told of Christ, the Redeemer to come; and in the form of the fourth in the midst of the fire the king recognized the Son of God.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 508, 509.

These faithful Hebrews possessed great natural ability and intellectual culture, and they occupied a high position of honor; but all these advantages did not lead them to forget God. All their powers were yielded to the sanctifying influence of divine grace. By their godly example, their steadfast integrity, they showed forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. In their wonderful deliverance was displayed, before that vast assembly, the power and majesty of God. Jesus placed himself by their side in the fiery furnace, and by the glory of his presence convinced the proud king of Babylon that it could be no other than the Son of God. The light of Heaven had been shining forth from Daniel and his companions, until all their associates understood the faith which ennobled their lives and beautified their characters. By the deliverance of his faithful servants, the Lord declares that he will take his stand with the oppressed, and overthrow, all earthly powers that would exalt their own glory and trample under foot the God of Heaven.—“The Life of Daniel and Illustration of True Sanctification,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, February 1, 1881, par. 21.

The three Hebrew youth, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego (we have no record of Daniel’s being present), did not dishonor the God of heaven by paying homage to this idol. Their action was reported to the king. Angered, he called them before him and by threats endeavored to induce them to unite with the multitude in worshiping the image. Courteously, yet firmly, they declared their allegiance to the God of heaven and their faith in His power to deliver them in the hour of trial.—Manuscript 110, 1904, par. 52.

Tuesday, June 17: Worshiping the Image, Again

Trial and persecution will come to all who, in obedience to the Word of God, refuse to worship this false sabbath. Force is the last resort of every false religion. At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them. So it will be now. The Papacy has exercised her power to compel men to obey her, and she will continue to do so. We need the same spirit that was manifested by God's servants in the conflict with paganism. Giving an account of the treatment of the Christians by the emperor of Rome, Tertullian says, "We are thrown to the wild beasts to make us recant; we are burned in the flames; we are condemned to prisons and to mines; we are banished to islands,—such as Patmos,—and all have failed." So it was in the case of the three Hebrew worthies; their eye was single to the glory of God; their souls were steadfast; the power of the truth held them firmly to their allegiance to God. It is in the power of God alone that we shall be enabled to be loyal to him. . . .

The commandments of finite, sinful men are to sink into insignificance beside the Word of the eternal God. Truth is to be obeyed at any cost, even tho gaping prisons, chain-gangs, and banishment stare us in the face. If you are loyal and true, that God who walked with the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, who protected Daniel in the lions' den, who manifested himself to John on the lonely island, will go with you wherever you go. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain you; and you will realize the fulfilment of the promise, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."—"God's Care for His Children," *Signs of the Times*, May 6, 1897, par. 16, 18.

The beast with two horns "causeth [commands] all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Revelation 13:16, 17. The third angel's warning is: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." . . .

After the warning against the worship of the beast and his image the

prophecy declares: “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Since those who keep God’s commandments are thus placed in contrast with those that worship the beast and his image and receive his mark, it follows that the keeping of God’s law, on the one hand, and its violation, on the other, will make the distinction between the worshipers of God and the worshipers of the beast.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 445.

Wednesday, June 18: Early Church Persecution

The day of Peter’s execution was at last appointed, but still the prayers of the believers ascended to heaven; and while all their energies and sympathies were called out in fervent appeals for help, angels of God were guarding the imprisoned apostle. In the prison Peter was placed between two soldiers, and was bound by two chains, each chain being fastened to the wrist of one of the guards. He was therefore unable to move without their knowledge. The prison doors were securely fastened, and a strong guard was placed before them. All chance of rescue or escape by human means was thus cut off. But man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.

The apostle was not intimidated by the situation. Since his reinstatement after his denial of Christ, he had unflinchingly braved danger, and had shown a noble courage and boldness in preaching a crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour. As he lay in his cell, he called to mind the words that Christ had spoken to him: “Verily, verily I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.” Peter believed that the time had come for him to yield up his life for Christ’s sake.

The night before the day set for the execution, Peter, bound with chains, slept as usual between two soldiers. Remembering Peter’s former escape from prison, Herod on this occasion took double precautions. In order to secure extra vigilance, the soldiers on guard were made answerable for the safekeeping of the prisoner. Peter was confined in a rock-hewn cell, the doors of which were strongly bolted and barred. But the bolts and bars and the Roman guard, which effectually cut off from the prisoner all possibility of human aid, were but to make more complete the triumph of God in the deliverance of Peter from prison. Herod was lifting his hand against

Omnipotence, but he was to be utterly humiliated and defeated in his attempt upon the life of God's servant.—“The Deliverance of Peter,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 27, 1911, par. 10–12.

It is the work of the angels to come close to the tried, the suffering, the tempted. They labor untiringly in behalf of those for whom Christ died. When sinners are led to give themselves to the Saviour, angels bear the tidings heavenward, and there is great rejoicing among the heavenly host. “Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” Luke 15:7. A report is borne to heaven of every successful effort on our part to dispel the darkness and to spread abroad the knowledge of Christ. As the deed is recounted before the Father, joy thrills through all the heavenly host.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 153.

Thursday, June 19: The Mark of the Beast

It will require moral courage to do God's work unflinchingly. Those who do this can give no place to self love, to selfish considerations, ambition, love of ease, or desire to shun the cross. We are commanded to “cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet.” Shall we labor to make the name of God a praise in the earth? Shall we obey his voice, or shall we listen to the soothing voice of the evil one, and be rocked to a fatal slumber just on the eve of eternal realities? The truth is everything to us, or it is nothing. Let those who want to make a name in the world, go with the world; but let those who would serve God, obey God, and not man. In the great conflict between faith and unbelief, the whole Christian world will be involved. All will take sides. Some may not apparently engage in the conflict on either side. They may not appear to take sides against the truth, but they will not come out boldly for Christ, through fear of losing property or suffering reproach. All such are numbered with the enemies of Christ; for Christ says, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”—“Seek First the Kingdom of God,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, February 7, 1893, par. 12.

There can be only two classes. Each party is distinctly stamped, either with the seal of the living God, or with the mark of the beast or his image.

Each son and daughter of Adam chooses either Christ or Barabbas as his general. And all who place themselves on the side of the disloyal are standing under Satan's black banner, and are charged with rejecting and spitefully using Christ. They are charged with deliberately crucifying the Lord of life and glory.

Each one has an important question to answer for himself: Are you on the side of Satan, a transgressor of God's law, or are you loyal to that God who declared himself to be, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." God's character is here displayed as his glory. God has delivered all judgment into the hands of his Son; and as a righteous judge, Christ must pass sentence on every work whether it be good or bad. Justice is as much an expression of love as mercy.—"Christ or Barabbas?" *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 30, 1900, par. 4, 5.

The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 605.

Friday, June 20: For Further Reading

"Three Hebrew Worthies: Heroes for God," in *My Life Today*, March 5, p. 68.

"In the Master's Service," *Signs of the Times*, November 7, 1900, par. 1–11.

Lesson 13

Images of the End

Sabbath Afternoon, June 21

In both the school and the home much of the teaching was oral; but the youth also learned to read the Hebrew writings, and the parchment rolls of the Old Testament Scriptures were open to their study. The chief subjects of study in these schools were the law of God, with the instruction given to Moses, sacred history, sacred music, and poetry. In the records of sacred history were traced the footsteps of Jehovah. The great truths set forth by the types in the service of the sanctuary were brought to view, and faith grasped the central object of all that system—the Lamb of God, that was to take away the sin of the world. A spirit of devotion was cherished. Not only were the students taught the duty of prayer, but they were taught how to pray, how to approach their Creator, how to exercise faith in Him, and how to understand and obey the teachings of His Spirit. Sanctified intellect brought forth from the treasure house of God things new and old, and the Spirit of God was manifested in prophecy and sacred song.—*Education*, p. 47.

As a nation the children of Israel failed of receiving the benefits that God desired to give them. They did not appreciate His purpose or co-operate in its execution. But though individuals and peoples may thus separate themselves from Him, His purpose for those who trust Him is unchanged. “Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever.” Ecclesiastes 3:14.

While there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power to meet the wants of men in the different ages, God’s work in all time is the same. The Teacher is the same. God’s character and His plan are the same. With Him “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” James 1:17.

The experiences of Israel were recorded for our instruction. “All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our

admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” 1 Corinthians 10:11. With us, as with Israel of old, success in education depends on fidelity in carrying out the Creator’s plan. Adherence to the principles of God’s word will bring as great blessings to us as it would have brought to the Hebrew people.—*Education*, p. 50.

The same mighty truths that were revealed through these men, God desires to reveal through the youth and the children of today. The history of Joseph and Daniel is an illustration of what He will do for those who yield themselves to Him and with the whole heart seek to accomplish His purpose.

The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.

But such a character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature—the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man.—*Education*, p. 57.

Sunday, June 22: The Reluctant Prophet

The lesson is for God’s messengers today, when the cities of the nations are as verily in need of a knowledge of the attributes and purposes of the true God as were the Ninevites of old. Christ’s ambassadors are to point men to the nobler world, which has largely been lost sight of. According to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, the only city that will endure is the city whose builder and maker is God. With the eye of faith man may behold the threshold of heaven, flushed with God’s living glory. Through His ministering servants the Lord Jesus is calling upon men to strive with sanctified ambition to secure the immortal inheritance. He urges them to lay up treasure beside the throne of God.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 274.

Jonah revealed that he valued the souls in that wretched city less than he valued his reputation. He feared lest he should be regarded as a false prophet. The compassion shown by God toward the repentant people

“displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.” “Was not this my saying,” he inquired of the Lord, “when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.”

When Jonah saw the Lord exercising his compassionate attributes in sparing the city that had corrupted its ways before him, he should have cooperated with God in his merciful design. But he lost sight of the interests of the people. Again he yielded to his feelings, and, as the result, he was not grieved over the thought that so large a number must perish because they had not been taught to do right. He felt as if he would rather die than live to see the city spared; and in his dissatisfaction he exclaimed, “Now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.”—“Ninevah, That Great City,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 18, 1906, par. 8, 9.

To the prophet Jonah came the word of the Lord, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before Me.” The prophet was tempted to question the wisdom of the call. It seemed as if nothing could be gained by proclaiming such a message in that proud city. He forgot that God whom he served was all-wise and all-powerful. While he hesitated, Satan overwhelmed him with discouragement, and he “rose up to flee unto Tarshish.” Finding a ship ready to sail, “he paid the fare thereof and went down into it, to go with them.”

Jonah had been entrusted with a heavy responsibility. Had the prophet obeyed unquestioningly, he would have been blessed abundantly. Yet in Jonah’s despair the Lord did not desert him. Through trials and strange providences, the prophet’s confidence in God was to be revived.—*From Splendor to Shadow*, p. 144.

Monday, June 23: A Work of Repentance

The forbearance of God has been very great—so great that when we consider the continuous insult to His holy commandments, we marvel. The Omnipotent One has been exerting a restraining power over His own attributes. But He will certainly arise to punish the wicked, who so boldly defy the just claims of the Decalogue.

God allows men a period of probation; but there is a point beyond which divine patience is exhausted, and the judgments of God are sure to follow. The Lord bears long with men, and with cities, mercifully giving warnings to save them from divine wrath; but a time will come when pleadings for mercy will no longer be heard, and the rebellious element that continues to reject the light of truth will be blotted out, in mercy to themselves and to those who would otherwise be influenced by their example.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 276.

God's message for the inhabitants of earth today is, "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matthew 24:44. The conditions prevailing in society, and especially in the great cities of the nations, proclaim in thunder tones that the hour of God's judgment is come and that the end of all things earthly is at hand. We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another—fire, and flood, and earthquake, with war and bloodshed. We are not to be surprised at this time by events both great and decisive; for the angel of mercy cannot remain much longer to shelter the impenitent.

"Behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." Isaiah 26:21. The storm of God's wrath is gathering; and those only will stand who respond to the invitations of mercy, as did the inhabitants of Nineveh under the preaching of Jonah, and become sanctified through obedience to the laws of the divine Ruler. The righteous alone shall be hid with Christ in God till the desolation be overpast.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 278.

Yet Nineveh was not wholly given over to evil. In that city many were reaching out after something better, and, if granted opportunity to learn of the living God, they would put away their evil deeds. And so God revealed Himself to them in an unmistakable manner to lead them to repentance.—*From Splendor to Shadow*, p. 144.

Tuesday, June 24: Belshazzar's Feast

Through the folly and weakness of Belshazzar, the grandson of

Nebuchadnezzar, proud Babylon was soon to fall. Admitted in his youth to a share in kingly authority, Belshazzar gloried in his power and lifted up his heart against the God of heaven. Many had been his opportunities to know the divine will and to understand his responsibility of rendering obedience thereto. He had known of his grandfather's banishment, by the decree of God, from the society of men; and he was familiar with Nebuchadnezzar's conversion and miraculous restoration. But Belshazzar allowed the love of pleasure and self-glorification to efface the lessons that he should never have forgotten. He wasted the opportunities graciously granted him, and neglected to use the means within his reach for becoming more fully acquainted with truth. That which Nebuchadnezzar had finally gained at the cost of untold suffering and humiliation, Belshazzar passed by with indifference.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 522.

Then the writing on the wall was read and interpreted. Belshazzar heard the irrevocable sentence: "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it." "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." "Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." Belshazzar was without excuse, for abundant light had been given him to reform his life. He had had opportunity for knowing the truth; but he lost all the benefits of the knowledge by his course of self-indulgence; he did not meet the mind of God, as a man or a king, and because of this the kingdom had been taken from him. He who has power to set up and to tear down, gave the kingdom to another.

In the history of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, God speaks to nations of today. We are to take to heart the lessons he sought to teach these rebellious kings; for if Belshazzar had pursued a course in harmony with the instruction given to his grandfather, he would have retained not only his kingdom but his life. He disregarded the lessons, and went on in rebellion against God, committing the very sins for which his grandfather had been reproved and punished. He, too, lifted himself up in pride and exaltation, and the final judgment of God fell upon him and his house. His great sin was that, notwithstanding God had given him light, he refused to walk in the paths of righteousness.—"Results of Refusing to Walk in the Light," *Signs of the Times*, July 20, 1891, par. 5, 6.

[Belshazzar] was guilty because he had had the privilege of knowing and

doing the right, and of leading others in the way, and yet refused to heed the light that God had permitted to shine upon his pathway. He had every opportunity of becoming acquainted with God and with his truth, but he would not deny himself in order to know and do righteousness. Now in the midst of his most pronounced idolatry and defiance of God, the bloodless hand writes his doom.—“Results of Refusing to Walk in the Light,” *Signs of the Times*, July 20, 1891, par. 2.

Wednesday, June 25: The Drying of the Euphrates

The history of nations speaks to us today. To every nation and to every individual God has assigned a place in His great plan. Today men and nations are being tested 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 prophecies which the great I AM has given in His word, uniting link after link in the chain of events, from eternity in the past to eternity in the future, tell 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.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 536.

The destruction of Babylon pictures to some degree the final destruction of the world, of which the prophet writes, “Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.” Destruction came upon Babylon while the king and his lords were engaged in feasting and revelry. Cyrus and his army marched up the bed of the river Euphrates; for trenches had been dug, and the river turned from its course, so that there was no obstruction to their entering the city, provided the gates were opened. The guardsmen were indulging in merriment and revelry, and the city was left without defense. Before the officers were aware, the enemy had entered the city, and escape was impossible. Those in one part of the city were slain or captured before those in another part knew that the city was invaded. No alarm was sounded, no cry could be raised to warn the people that the forces of Cyrus were upon them. . . .

Babylon is a symbol of the world at large. When its doom was made certain, its kings and officers seemed to be as men insane, and their own course hastened its destiny. When the doom of a nation is fixed, it seems that all the energy, wisdom, and discretion of its former time of prosperity, deserts its men of position, and they hasten the evil they would avert. Outside enemies are not the greatest peril to an individual or a nation. The overthrow of a nation results, under the providence of God, from some unwise or evil course of its own. But the people who fear God, who are loyal to his laws, who carry out the principles of righteousness in their lives, have a sure defense; God will be the refuge of those who trust in him. —“A Symbol of Final Destruction,” *Signs of the Times*, December 29, 1890, par. 2.

Thursday, June 26: Cyrus, the Anointed

The year that Cyrus succeeded Darius the Mede to the throne of Medo-Persia marked the completion of seventy years since the first company of Hebrews had been carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel, who was familiar with the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah regarding the duration of the captivity, and with the prophecies of Isaiah regarding the restoration by decree of Cyrus, was still living, and was occupying a position of leading responsibility in the Medo-Persian court. His faith in these prophecies led him to plead with God in behalf of his people. And now, when the time came for the temple in Jerusalem to be rebuilt, God moved upon Cyrus as his agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty. And furthermore, Cyrus furnished them the necessary facilities for rebuilding the temple of the Lord. . . .

There were faithful servants of the Most High who were prepared to respond to this decree. Over threescore years before, the Lord had declared that “after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return. . . . Then shall ye call upon me,” the Lord declared, “and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will harken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord;

and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.” Those who were seeking the Lord were prepared to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity afforded them by Cyrus to return to their homes and to restore the temple of God.—“The Return of the Exiles—No. 2: The Decree of Cyrus,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 28, 1907, par. 5, 11.

In the unexpected entry of the army of the Persian conqueror into the heart of the Babylonian capital by way of the channel of the river whose waters had been turned aside, and through the inner gates that in careless security had been left open and unprotected, the Jews had abundant evidence of the literal fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy concerning the sudden overthrow of their oppressors. And this should have been to them an unmistakable sign that God was shaping the affairs of nations in their behalf; for inseparably linked with the prophecy outlining the manner of Babylon’s capture and fall were the words:

“Cyrus, he is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” “I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts.” Isaiah 44:28; 45:13.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 552.

Friday, June 27: For Further Reading

“Jonah’s Day, and Ours,” in *From Splendor to Shadow*, pp. 149, 150.

“A Symbol of the Final Destruction,” *Signs of the Times*, December 29, 1890, par. 1–6.