

SUBSTITUTES OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY



LESSON STUDY HELPS

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**To Be Like Jesus
Chapter 12, pp. 381**

“God’s Leads to True Repentance”

December 29th

Perhaps everyone will listen and turn from his evil way, that I may relent concerning the calamity which I purpose to bring on them because of the evil of their doings. **Jeremiah 26:3, NKJV.**

[The apostle Paul writes that] “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” . . . The law which promised life to the obedient pronounced death upon the transgressor. “Wherefore,” he says, “the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” {BLJ 381.2}

How wide the contrast between these words of Paul and those that come from many of the pulpits of today. The people are taught that obedience to God’s law is not necessary to salvation; that they have only to believe in Jesus, and they are safe. Without the law, human beings have no conviction of sin, and feel no need of repentance. Not seeing their lost condition as violators of God’s law, they do not feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ as their only hope of salvation. {BLJ 381.3}

The law of God is an agent in every genuine conversion. There can be no true repentance without conviction of sin. The Scriptures declare that “sin is the transgression of the law,” and that “by the law is the knowledge of sin.” {BLJ 381.4}

In order to see their guilt, sinners must test their character by God’s great standard of righteousness. To discover their defects, they must look into the mirror of the divine statutes. But while the law reveals their sins, it provides no remedy. The gospel of Christ alone can offer pardon. In order to stand forgiven, sinners must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed, and faith in Christ, their atoning sacrifice. {BLJ 381.5}

Without true repentance, there can be no true conversion. Many are deceived here, and too often their entire experience proves to be a deception. This is why so many who are joined to the church have never been joined to Christ. {BLJ 381.6}

“The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” In the new birth, the heart is renewed by divine grace, and brought into harmony with God as it is brought into subjection to His law. When this mighty change has taken place, the sinner has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. The old life of alienation from God has ended; the new life of reconciliation, of faith and love, has begun. Then will “the righteousness of the law” “be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”—The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, pp. 297, 298.

The Desire of Ages
Chapter 1, pp. 25, and Chapter 4, pp. 48
“God With Us” and “Unto You a Saviour”

In stooping to take upon Himself humanity, Christ revealed a character the opposite of the character of Satan. But He stepped still lower in the path of humiliation. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:8. As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of the common priest, so Christ took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." Isaiah 53:5. {DA 25.1}

Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "With His stripes we are healed." {DA 25.2}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the "Son of man" who shares the throne of the universe. It is the "Son of man" whose name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love. {DA 25.3}

Oh that today the human family could recognize that song! The declaration then made, the note then struck, will swell to the close of time, and resound to the ends of the earth. When the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, with healing in His wings, that song will be re-echoed by the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, saying, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Revelation 19:6. {DA 48.1}

As the angels disappeared, the light faded away, and the shadows of night once more fell on the hills of Bethlehem. But the brightest picture ever beheld by human eyes remained in the memory of the shepherds. "And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." {DA 48.2}

Departing with great joy, they made known the things they had seen and heard. "And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God." {DA 48.3}

Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when shepherds listened to the angels' song. Humanity is still as much the object of heaven's solicitude as when common men of common occupations met angels at noonday, and talked with the heavenly messengers in the vineyards and the fields. To us in the common walks of life, heaven may be very near. Angels from the courts above will attend the steps of those who come and go at God's command. {DA 48.4}

The story of Bethlehem is an exhaustless theme. In it is hidden "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." Romans 11:33. We marvel at the Saviour's sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall. Human pride and self-sufficiency stand rebuked in His presence. Yet this was but the beginning of His wonderful condescension. It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life. {DA 48.5}

The Desire of Ages
Chapter 1, pp. 19-26
“God With Us”

"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." {DA 19.1}

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. {DA 19.2}

In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation. It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. "His strength setteth fast the mountains." "The sea is His, and He made it." Psalm 65:6; 95:5. It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song. And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father's love. {DA 20.1}

Now sin has marred God's perfect work, yet that handwriting remains. Even now all created things declare the glory of His excellence. There is nothing, save the selfish heart of man, that lives unto itself. No bird that cleaves the air, no animal that moves upon the ground, but ministers to some other life. There is no leaf of the forest, or lowly blade of grass, but has its ministry. Every tree and shrub and leaf pours forth that element of life without which neither man nor animal could live; and man and animal, in turn, minister to the life of tree and shrub and leaf. The flowers breathe fragrance and unfold their beauty in blessing to the world. The sun sheds its light to gladden a thousand worlds. The ocean, itself the source of all our springs and fountains, receives the streams from every land, but takes to give. The mists ascending from its bosom fall in showers to water the earth, that it may bring forth and bud. {DA 20.2}

The angels of glory find their joy in giving,--giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know. {DA 21.1}

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life. {DA 21.2}

In heaven itself this law was broken. Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world. {DA 21.3}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun

of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal." Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. {DA 22.2}

Lucifer had said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; . . . I will be like the Most High." Isaiah 14:13, 14. But Christ, "being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." Philippians 2:6, 7, R. V., margin. {DA 22.3}

This was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father's side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father's hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing. {DA 22.4}

Nearly two thousand years ago, a voice of mysterious import was heard in heaven, from the throne of God, "Lo, I come." "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. . . . Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God." Hebrews 10:5-7. In these words is announced the fulfillment of the purpose that had been hidden from eternal ages. Christ was about to visit our world, and to become incarnate. He says, "A body hast Thou prepared Me." Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured the light of His presence. That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the manifestation of His glory was shrouded. His divinity was veiled with humanity,—the invisible glory in the visible human form. {DA 23.1}

This great purpose had been shadowed forth in types and symbols. The burning bush, in which Christ appeared to Moses, revealed God. The symbol chosen for the representation of the Deity was a lowly shrub, that seemingly had no attractions. This enshrined the Infinite. The all-merciful God shrouded His glory in a most humble type, that Moses could look upon it and live. So in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, God communicated with Israel, revealing to men His will, and imparting to them His grace. God's glory was subdued, and His majesty veiled, that the weak vision of finite men might behold it. So Christ was to come in "the body of our humiliation" (Philippians 3:21, R. V.), "in the likeness of men." In the eyes of the world He possessed no beauty that they should desire Him; yet He was the incarnate God, the light of heaven and earth. His glory was veiled, His greatness and majesty were hidden, that He might draw near to sorrowful, tempted men. {DA 23.2}

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. {DA 23.3}

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." {DA 24.1}

Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents, with all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences. "In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Hebrews 2:17. If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are." Hebrews 4:15. He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. He says, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. As He went about doing good, and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God's law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God. {DA 24.2}

By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey. It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, "I AM THAT I AM. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Exodus 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel's deliverance. So when He came "in the likeness of men," He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God "manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16. And to us He says: "I AM the Good Shepherd." "I AM the living Bread." "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." John 10:11; 6:51; 14:6; Matthew 28:18. I AM the assurance of every promise. I AM; be not afraid. "God with us" is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven. {DA 24.3}

In stooping to take upon Himself humanity, Christ revealed a character the opposite of the character of Satan. But He stepped still lower in the path of humiliation. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:8. As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of the common priest, so Christ took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." Isaiah 53:5. {DA 25.1}

Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "With His stripes we are healed." {DA 25.2}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the "Son of man" who shares the throne of the universe. It is the "Son of man" whose name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love. {DA 25.3}

Of His people God says, "They shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land. For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!" Zechariah 9:16, 17. The exaltation of the redeemed will be an eternal testimony to God's mercy. "In the ages to come," He will "show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "To the intent that . . . unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known . . . the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Ephesians 2:7; 3:10, 11, R. V. {DA 26.1}

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. {DA 26.2}

The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died,—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, "and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift,—Immanuel, "God with us." {DA 26.3}

God's Amazing Grace
Chapter 71, pp. 79

“Christ Shares His Father's Throne”

March 12th

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. **Psalm 110:1.** {AG 79.1}

The love of the Father toward a fallen race is unfathomable, indescribable, without a parallel. This love led Him to consent to give His only begotten Son to die, that rebellious man might be brought into harmony with the government of Heaven, and be saved from the penalty of his transgression. The Son of God stepped down from His royal throne, and for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. He became "a Man of sorrows," that we might be made partakers of everlasting joy. . . . God permitted His beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory to a world marred and blighted with sin, shadowed with the shadow of death and the curse. {AG 79.2}

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" (Matthew 1:23). . . . {AG 79.3}

By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey. . . . The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God "manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). . . . "God with us" is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven. . . . {AG 79.4}

In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. . . . "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: . . ." (Isaiah 9:6). God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the "Son of man" who shares the throne of the universe. . . . In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love. {AG 79.5}

The Faith I Live By
Chapter 4, pp. 114
“Proving the Will of God”

April 18th

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. **Romans 12:2.** {FLB 114.1}

Christ came to the world to counteract Satan's falsehood that God had made a law which men could not keep. Taking humanity upon Himself, He came to this earth, and by a life of obedience showed that God has not made a law that man cannot keep. He showed that it is possible for man perfectly to obey the law. Those who accept Christ as their Saviour, becoming partakers of His divine nature, are enabled to follow His example, living in obedience to every precept of the law. Through the merits of Christ, man is to show by his obedience that he could be trusted in heaven, that he would not rebel. {FLB 114.2}

In all His Godlike deeds, the world's Redeemer declares, "I can of mine own self do nothing." "This commandment have I received of my Father." John 5:30; 10:18. All I do is in fulfillment of the counsel and will of My heavenly Father. The history of the daily earthly life of Jesus is the exact record of the fulfillment of the purposes of God toward man. His life and character were the unfolding or representation of the perfection of the character that man may attain by becoming a partaker of the divine nature, and overcoming the world through daily conflicts. {FLB 114.3}

The youth need to keep ever before them the course that Christ followed. . . . In the study of His life we shall learn how much God through Him will do for His children. And we shall learn that, however great our trials may be, they cannot exceed what Christ endured. {FLB 114.4}

Those who walk even as Christ walked, who are patient, gentle, kind, meek and lowly in heart, those who yoke up with Christ and lift His burdens, who yearn for souls as He yearned for them--these will enter into the joy of their Lord. They will see with Christ the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Heaven will triumph, for the vacancies made in heaven by the fall of Satan and his angels will be filled by the redeemed of the Lord. {FLB 114.5}

Acts of the Apostles
Chapter 52 pp. 531-532
“Steadfast ‘til The End”

"This is life eternal," Christ said, "that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. And the prophet Jeremiah declared: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 9:23, 24. Scarcely can the human mind comprehend the breadth and depth and height of the spiritual attainments of him who gains this knowledge. {AA 531.1}

None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through co-operation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory. {AA 531.2}

Before the believer is held out the wonderful possibility of being like Christ, obedient to all the principles of the law. But of himself man is utterly unable to reach this condition. The holiness that God's word declares he must have before he can be saved is the result of the working of divine grace as he bows in submission to the discipline and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth. Man's obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ's righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience. The part of the Christian is to persevere in overcoming every fault. Constantly he is to pray to the Saviour to heal the disorders of his sin-sick soul. He has not the wisdom or the strength to overcome; these belong to the Lord, and He bestows them on those who in humiliation and contrition seek Him for help. {AA 532.1}

The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to co-operate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them. {AA 532.2}

There are those who attempt to ascend the ladder of Christian progress; but as they advance they begin to put their trust in the power of man, and soon lose sight of Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith. The result is failure--the loss of all that has been gained. Sad indeed is the condition of those who, becoming weary of the way, allow the enemy of souls to rob them of the Christian graces that have been developing in their hearts and lives. "He that lacketh these things," declares the apostle, "is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." {AA 532.3}

The Faith I Live By
Chapter 4, pp. 112
“His Righteousness Obtained By Faith”

April 16th

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.
Romans 4:5. {FLB 112.1}

The faith that is unto salvation is not a casual faith, it is not the mere consent of the intellect, it is belief rooted in the heart, that embraces Christ as a personal Saviour, assured that He can save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. . . . {FLB 112.2}

The perishing sinner may say: "I am a lost sinner; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' I am a sinner, and He died upon Calvary's cross to save me. I need not remain a moment longer unsaved. He died and rose again for my justification, and He will save me now. I accept the forgiveness He has promised." . . . {FLB 112.3}

The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of justification. By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord imputes unto the believer the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe. He transfers his sins to Jesus, the sinner's representative, substitute, and surety. Upon Christ He lays the iniquity of every soul that believeth. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Corinthians 5:21. . . . {FLB 112.4}

Through repentance and faith we are rid of sin, and look unto the Lord our righteousness. Jesus suffered, the just for the unjust. . . . {FLB 112.5}

Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just. He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Romans 5:1, 2. {FLB 112.6}

God has made ample provision that we may stand perfect in His grace, wanting in nothing, waiting for the appearing of our Lord. {FLB 112.7}

The Great Controversy**Chapter 32 pp. 520****“Snares of Satan”**

The great deceiver has many agents ready to present any and every kind of error to ensnare souls--heresies prepared to suit the varied tastes and capacities of those whom he would ruin. It is his plan to bring into the church insincere, unregenerate elements that will encourage doubt and unbelief, and hinder all who desire to see the work of God advance and to advance with it. Many who have no real faith in God or in His word assent to some principles of truth and pass as Christians, and thus they are enabled to introduce their errors as Scriptural doctrines. {GC 520.1}

The position that it is of no consequence what men believe is one of Satan's most successful deceptions. He knows that the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver; therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel. From the beginning the servants of God have contended against false teachers, not merely as vicious men, but as inculcators of falsehoods that were fatal to the soul. Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, firmly and fearlessly opposed those who were turning men from the word of God. That liberality which regards a correct religious faith as unimportant found no favor with these holy defenders of the truth. {GC 520.2}

The vague and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, and the many conflicting theories concerning religious faith, that are found in the Christian world are the work of our great adversary to confuse minds so that they shall not discern the truth. And the discord and division which exist among the churches of Christendom are in a great measure due to the prevailing custom of wresting the Scriptures to support a favorite theory. Instead of carefully studying God's word with humility of heart to obtain a knowledge of His will, many seek only to discover something odd or original. {GC 520.3}

Faith and Works
Chapter 9, pp. 70-71

“The Quality of Our Faith”

This is Righteousness by Faith

And what is it to believe? It is to fully accept that Jesus Christ died as our sacrifice; that He became the curse for us, took our sins upon Himself, and imputed unto us His own righteousness. Therefore we claim this righteousness of Christ, we believe it, and it is our righteousness. He is our Saviour. He saves us because He said He would. Are we going to go into all the explanations as to how He can save us? Do we have the goodness in ourselves that will make us better and cleanse us from the spots and stains of sin, enabling us then to come to God? We simply cannot do it. {FW 70.2}

Don't you know that when the young man came to Christ and asked Him what he should do that he might have life, Christ told him to keep the commandments. Said he, "I have done it." Now the Lord wanted to bring this lesson right home. "What lack I yet? I am perfectly whole" (Matthew 19:20). He did not see that there was a thing the matter with him or why he should not have eternal life. "I have done it," he said. Now Christ touches the plague spot of his heart. He says, "Come, follow Me, and ye shall have life." {FW 70.3}

What did he do? He turned away very sorrowful, for he had great possessions. {FW 70.4}

Now he had not kept the commandments at all. He should have accepted Jesus Christ as his Saviour and taken hold of His righteousness. Then, as he had the righteousness of Christ, he could keep the law of God. The young ruler could not trample that law under his feet. He must respect it; he must love it. Then Christ would bring divine power to combine with man's efforts. {FW 70.5}

Christ took upon Himself humanity for us. He clothed His divinity, and divinity and humanity were combined. He showed that that law which Satan declared could not be kept, could be kept. Christ took humanity to stand here in our world, to show that Satan had lied. He took humanity upon Himself to demonstrate that with divinity and humanity combined, man could keep the law of Jehovah. Separate humanity from divinity, and you can try to work out your own righteousness from now till Christ comes, and it will be nothing but a failure. {FW 71.1}

By living faith, by earnest prayer to God, and depending upon Jesus' merits, we are clothed with His righteousness, and we are saved. "Oh, yes," some say, "we are saved in doing nothing. In fact, I am saved. I need not keep the law of God. I am saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ." Christ came to our world to bring all men back to allegiance to God. To take the position that you can break God's law, for Christ has done it all, is a position of death, for you are as verily a transgressor as anyone. {FW 71.2}

Then what is it? It is to hear and to see that with the righteousness of Christ which you hold by faith, righteousness supplied by His efforts and His divine power, you can keep the commandments of God. {FW 71.3}

Not Saved in Indolence

Now we want that faith. But will man be saved in indolence? Can he be saved in doing nothing? Never, never! He must be a colaborer with Jesus Christ. He cannot save himself. "We are labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9). And how is it? All heaven is laboring to elevate the human race from the degradation of sin. All heaven is open to the inhabitants of earth. The angels of God are sent to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). {FW 71.4}

**The Faith I Live By
Chapter 4, pp. 116**

“Sanctification the Work of a Lifetime”

April 20th

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. **John 17:19.** {FLB 116.1}

The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven. {FLB 116.2}

Many commit the error of trying to define minutely the fine points of distinction between justification and sanctification. Into the definitions of these two terms they often bring their own ideas and speculations. Why try to be more minute than is Inspiration on the vital question of righteousness by faith? {FLB 116.3}

As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. {FLB 116.4}

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of constantly dying to sin, and constantly living for Christ. Wrongs cannot be righted nor reformations wrought in the character by feeble, intermittent efforts. It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall overcome. {FLB 116.5}

It [sanctification] is not merely a theory, an emotion, or a form of words, but a living, active principle, entering into the everyday life. It requires that our habits of eating, drinking, and dressing be such as to secure the preservation of physical, mental, and moral health, that we may present to the Lord our bodies—not an offering corrupted by wrong habits but—"a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." {FLB 116.6}

The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. . . . If studied and obeyed, the Word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. {FLB 116.7}

There is no such thing as instantaneous sanctification. True sanctification is a daily work, continuing as long as life shall last. {FLB 116.8}

Christ Triumphant
Chapter 4, pp. 126
“To God Be The Glory”

April 29th

With his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly. . . . And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, ye shall not bring this congregation into the land. **Numbers 20:10-12.** {CTr 126.1}

It would be the greatest folly in the world for any of us to take credit to ourselves for any success we may have. The more humbly we walk with God, the more will He manifest Himself to us to help us. The Lord never designed to send out His servants to do a work for Him, with all the opposition of Satan and evil angels against them, unless He gives them divine help. The reason that we do not have greater success in the work is that we depend on our own efforts rather than upon the help God will give us. . . . Consider how Satan rules his agents and works through them to do his work of darkness and deception. It is your privilege to believe that Jesus will work more earnestly for you so that you can do His work. . . . {CTr 126.2}

All heaven is interested in the work of those who are to be saved in the kingdom of God. “Without me,” says Christ, “ye can do nothing.” Therefore there is not one iota of glory that we can take to ourselves. Notwithstanding you may feel your weakness, yet you may link yourself to the mighty God. I know that I am nothing, but Jesus is mighty to save. I can do nothing, but Jesus can do great things. God wants me in the work, but my efforts will be useless without His help. {CTr 126.3}

The constant cry of Israel was “It is Moses that has done this,” and they did not keep God in view. God had a lesson to teach His people, and when Moses ventured to take the glory to himself, God showed the people that it was not Moses but God who had done the work. At last came the word to Moses, “Thou shalt not go into the holy land.” The Lord demonstrated to the Israelitish host whose hand it was that was leading them. {CTr 126.4}

When we feel our utter nothingness, it is then that Christ sees it is time for Him to give us His Spirit. He will clothe us with His salvation when we give the whole credit and glory of the work to Him. The Lord help us, my dear brethren and sisters, to learn the precious lessons in the school of Christ. These lessons are meekness and lowliness of heart. Some never learn these lessons. They work and work in themselves, and they do not understand who is the Source of their strength and power.—Manuscript 8, 1886. {CTr 126.5}

Lesson 11 Study Help

Friday, December 8th, 2023

The Desire of Ages Chapter 9, pp. 674—678 “Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled”

Jesus looks with compassion on His disciples. He cannot save them from the trial, but He does not leave them comfortless. He assures them that He is to break the fetters of the tomb, and that His love for them will not fail. "After I am risen again," He says, "I will go before you into Galilee." Matthew 26:32. Before the denial, they have the assurance of forgiveness. After His death and resurrection, they knew that they were forgiven, and were dear to the heart of Christ. {DA 674.1}

Jesus and the disciples were on the way to Gethsemane, at the foot of Mount Olivet, a retired spot which He had often visited for meditation and prayer. The Saviour had been explaining to His disciples His mission to the world, and the spiritual relation to Him which they were to sustain. Now He illustrates the lesson. The moon is shining bright, and reveals to Him a flourishing grapevine. Drawing the attention of the disciples to it, He employs it as a symbol. {DA 674.2}

"I am the true Vine," He says. Instead of choosing the graceful palm, the lofty cedar, or the strong oak, Jesus takes the vine with its clinging tendrils to represent Himself. The palm tree, the cedar, and the oak stand alone. They require no support. But the vine entwines about the trellis, and thus climbs heavenward. So Christ in His humanity was dependent upon divine power. "I can of Mine own self do nothing," He declared. John 5:30. {DA 674.3}

"I am the true Vine." The Jews had always regarded the vine as the most noble of plants, and a type of all that was powerful, excellent, and fruitful. Israel had been represented as a vine which God had planted in the Promised Land. The Jews based their hope of salvation on the fact of their connection with Israel. But Jesus says, I am the real Vine. Think not that through a connection with Israel you may become partakers of the life of God, and inheritors of His promise. Through Me alone is spiritual life received. {DA 675.1}

"I am the true Vine, and My Father is the husbandman." On the hills of Palestine our heavenly Father had planted this goodly Vine, and He Himself was the husbandman. Many were attracted by the beauty of this Vine, and declared its heavenly origin. But to the leaders in Israel it appeared as a root out of a dry ground. They took the plant, and bruised it, and trampled it under their unholy feet. Their thought was to destroy it forever. But the heavenly Husbandman never lost sight of His plant. After men thought they had killed it, He took it, and replanted it on the other side of the wall. The vine stock was to be no longer visible. It was hidden from the rude assaults of men. But the branches of the Vine hung over the wall. They were to represent the Vine. Through them grafts might still be united to the Vine. From them fruit has been obtained. There has been a harvest which the passers-by have plucked. {DA 675.2}

"I am the Vine, ye are the branches," Christ said to His disciples. Though He was about to be removed from them, their spiritual union with Him was to be unchanged. The connection of the branch with the vine, He said, represents the relation you are to sustain to Me. The scion is engrafted into the living vine, and fiber by fiber, vein by vein, it grows into the vine stock. The life of the vine becomes the life of the branch. So the soul dead in trespasses and sins receives life through connection with Christ. By faith in Him as a personal Saviour the union is formed. The sinner unites his weakness to Christ's strength, his emptiness to Christ's fullness, his frailty to Christ's enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ. The humanity of Christ has touched our humanity, and our humanity has touched divinity. Thus through the agency of the Holy Spirit man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is accepted in the Beloved. {DA 675.3}

This union with Christ, once formed, must be maintained. Christ said, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the root to the branches is unobstructed and constant. Separated from the vine, the branch cannot live. No more, said Jesus, can you live apart from Me. The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation. {DA 676.1}

"Abide in Me, and I in you." Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the

strength and perfection of His own character. {DA 676.2}

The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the outermost twig. So Christ communicates the current of spiritual strength to every believer. So long as the soul is united to Christ, there is no danger that it will wither or decay. {DA 676.3}

The life of the vine will be manifest in fragrant fruit on the branches. "He that abideth in Me," said Jesus, "and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our lives; not one will be missing. {DA 676.4}

"My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." While the graft is outwardly united with the vine, there may be no vital connection. Then there will be no growth or fruitfulness. So there may be an apparent connection with Christ without a real union with Him by faith. A profession of religion places men in the church, but the character and conduct show whether they are in connection with Christ. If they bear no fruit, they are false branches. Their separation from Christ involves a ruin as complete as that represented by the dead branch. "If a man abide not in Me," said Christ, "he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." {DA 676.5}

"And every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth [pruneth] it, that it may bring forth more fruit." From the chosen twelve who had followed Jesus, one as a withered branch was about to be taken away; the rest were to pass under the pruning knife of bitter trial. Jesus with solemn tenderness explained the purpose of the husbandman. The pruning will cause pain, but it is the Father who applies the knife. He works with no wanton hand or indifferent heart. There are branches trailing upon the ground; these must be cut loose from the earthly supports to which their tendrils are fastening. They are to reach heavenward, and find their support in God. The excessive foliage that draws away the life current from the fruit must be pruned off. The overgrowth must be cut out, to give room for the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The husbandman prunes away the harmful growth, that the fruit may be richer and more abundant. {DA 676.6}

"Herein is My Father glorified," said Jesus, "that ye bear much fruit." God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him. "If ye abide in Me," He says, "and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ. {DA 677.1}

In this last meeting with His disciples, the great desire which Christ expressed for them was that they might love one another as He had loved them. Again and again He spoke of this. "These things I command you," He said repeatedly, "that ye love one another." His very first injunction when alone with them in the upper chamber was, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practiced by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another. {DA 677.2}

This love is the evidence of their discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another." When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. {DA 678.1}

This love, manifested in the church, will surely stir the wrath of Satan. Christ did not mark out for His disciples an easy path. "If the world hate you," He said, "ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have

persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me." The gospel is to be carried forward by aggressive warfare, in the midst of opposition, peril, loss, and suffering. But those who do this work are only following in their Master's steps. {DA 678.2}

As the world's Redeemer, Christ was constantly confronted with apparent failure. He, the messenger of mercy to our world, seemed to do little of the work He longed to do in uplifting and saving. Satanic influences were constantly working to oppose His way. But He would not be discouraged. Through the prophecy of Isaiah He declares, "I have labored in vain, I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God. . . . Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength." It is to Christ that the promise is given, "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth; . . . thus saith the Lord: . . . I will preserve Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that Thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. . . . They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them." Isaiah 49:4, 5, 7-10. {DA 678.3}

Lesson 12 Study Help**Friday, December 15th, 2023**

The Faith I Live By
Chapter 3, pp. 88
“The Gospel for Both Dispensations”

April 20th

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. **James 1:17.** {FLB 88.1}

Since the fall of Adam, it has been the fashion of the world to sin, and it is for our interest to know what sin is. John declares: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. {FLB 88.2}

God's purpose is . . . to save from sin. . . . The soul, corrupted and deformed, is to be purified, transformed. {FLB 88.3}

Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {FLB 88.4}

The gospel is the power and wisdom of God. {FLB 88.5}

Christ had been sent to earth to represent God in character. . . . He Himself was the gospel. {FLB 88.6}

Many who claim to believe and to teach the gospel . . . set aside the Old Testament Scriptures, of which Christ declared, "They are they which testify of me." John 5:39. In rejecting the Old, they virtually reject the New; for both are parts of an inseparable whole. No man can rightly present the law of God without the gospel, or the gospel without the law. The law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded. The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears. {FLB 88.7}

He who proclaimed the law from Sinai, and delivered to Moses the precepts of the ritual law, is the same that spoke the sermon on the mount. . . . The teacher is the same in both dispensations. God's claims are the same. The principles of His government are the same. For all proceed from Him "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." {FLB 88.8}

The gospel of the New Testament is not the Old Testament standard lowered to meet the sinner and save him in his sins. God requires of all His subjects obedience, entire obedience to all His commandments. {FLB 88.9}

Lesson 13 Study Help**Friday, December 22nd, 2023**

The Faith I Live By
Chapter 3, pp. 88
“The Gospel for Both Dispensations”

March 22nd

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