

THE PARADOXES OF CHRIST



LESSON STUDY HELPS

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Lesson 1 Study Help***Sabbath, December 30th, 2023*****The Desire of Ages, Chapter 26, pp. 253****“At Capernaum”**

Notwithstanding the action of the Sanhedrin against Jesus, the people eagerly awaited the development of His mission. All heaven was astir with interest. Angels were preparing the way for His ministry, moving upon men's hearts, and drawing them to the Saviour.

In Capernaum the nobleman's son whom Christ had healed was a witness to His power. And the court official and his household joyfully testified of their faith. When it was known that the Teacher Himself was among them, the whole city was aroused. Multitudes flocked to His presence. On the Sabbath the people crowded the synagogue until great numbers had to turn away, unable to find entrance.

All who heard the Saviour "were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power." "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Luke 4:32; Matthew 7:29. The teaching of the scribes and elders was cold and formal, like a lesson learned by rote. To them the word of God possessed no vital power. Their own ideas and traditions were substituted for its teaching. In the accustomed round of service they professed to explain the law, but no inspiration from God stirred their own hearts or the hearts of their hearers.

Jesus had nothing to do with the various subjects of dissension among the Jews. It was His work to present the truth. His words shed a flood of light upon the teachings of patriarchs and prophets, and the Scriptures came to men as a new revelation. Never before had His hearers perceived such a depth of meaning in the word of God.

Jesus met the people on their own ground, as one who was acquainted with their perplexities. He made truth beautiful by presenting it in the most direct and simple way. His language was pure, refined, and clear as a running stream. His voice was as music to those who had listened to the monotonous tones of the rabbis. But while His teaching was simple, He spoke as one having authority. This characteristic set His teaching in contrast with that of all others. The rabbis spoke with doubt and hesitancy, as if the Scriptures might be interpreted to mean one thing or exactly the opposite. The hearers were daily involved in greater uncertainty. But Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. Whatever His subject, it was presented with power, as if His words could not be controverted.

Lesson 2A Study Help***Sabbath, January 6th, 2024*****God's Amazing Grace, Chapter 5 pp. 13-14, 16-19****“A Spiritual Kingdom”****January 5th**

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. [John 18:36]

The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. The gospel of the grace of God, with its spirit of self-abnegation, can never be in harmony with the spirit of the world. The two principles are antagonistic. . .

But today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority. Since Christ is not now here in person, they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom. The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. They would have received Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God, and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." He would not accept the earthly throne. . . .

Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. . . . Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the Word of God. . . .

Now, as in Christ's day, the work of God's kingdom lies not with those who are clamouring for recognition and support by earthly rulers and human laws, but with those who are declaring to the people in His name those spiritual truths that will work in the receivers the experience of Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

Lesson 2B Study Help***Sabbath, January 6th, 2024*****God's Amazing Grace, Chapter 6 pp. 14, 16-19****“Unlike Earthly Kingdoms”****January 6th**

And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? [Mark 4:30]

Christ found the kingdoms of the world corrupt. After Satan was expelled from heaven, he erected his standard of rebellion on this earth, and sought by every means to win men to his standard. . . . His purpose was to establish a kingdom which would be governed by his own laws, and carried on with his own resources, independent of God; and so well did he succeed, that when Christ came to the world to establish a kingdom, He looked upon the governments of men, and said, "Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God?" Nothing in civil society afforded Him a comparison. . .

In striking contrast to the wrong and oppression so universally practised were the mission and work of Christ. . . . He planned a government which would use no force; His subjects would know no oppression. . . . Not as a fierce tyrant did He come, but as the Son of man; not to conquer the nations by His iron power, but "to preach good tidings unto the meek;" "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" "to comfort all that mourn" (Isaiah 61:1, 2). He came as the divine Restorer, bringing to oppressed and downtrodden humanity the rich and abundant grace of Heaven, that by the power of His righteousness, man, fallen and degraded though he was, might be a partaker of divinity. . .

Christ taught that His church is a spiritual kingdom. He Himself, "the Prince of peace," is the head of His church. In His person humanity, inhabited by divinity, was represented to the world. The great end of His mission was to be a sin-offering for the world, that by the shedding of blood an atonement might be made for the whole race of men. With a heart ever touched with the feelings of our infirmities, an ear ever open to the cry of suffering humanity, a hand ever ready to save the discouraged and despairing, Jesus, our Saviour, "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). . . .

And all who are members of the kingdom of Christ will represent Him in character and disposition.

Lesson 2C Study Help***Sabbath, January 6th, 2024*****God's Amazing Grace, Chapter 8 pp. 16****“God's Kingdom in the Heart”****January 8th**

Behold, the kingdom of God is within you. [Luke 17:21]

The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses--extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.

Some of the Pharisees had come to Jesus demanding "when the kingdom of God should come" (Luke 17:20). More than three years had passed since John the Baptist gave the message that like a trumpet call had sounded through the land, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). And as yet these Pharisees saw no indication of the establishment of the kingdom. . . .

Jesus answered, "The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show [margin]: neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." The kingdom of God begins at the heart. Look not here or there for manifestations of earthly power to mark its coming.

The works of Christ not only declared Him to be the Messiah, but showed in what manner His kingdom was to be established. . . . It comes through the gentleness of the inspiration of His word, through the inward working of His Spirit, the fellowship of the soul with Him who is its life. The greatest manifestation of its power is seen in human nature brought to the perfection of the character of Christ. . . .

When God gave His Son to our world, He endowed human beings with imperishable riches,--riches compared with which the treasured wealth of men since the world began is nothingness. Christ came to the earth and stood before the children of men with the hoarded love of eternity, and this is the treasure that, through our connection with Him, we are to receive, to reveal, and to impart.

Lesson 2D Study Help***Sabbath, January 6th, 2024*****God's Amazing Grace, Chapter 11 pp. 19****“Established by Christ’s Death”****January 11th**

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. [1 Peter 2:24]

At the very time when they [Christ's disciples] expected to see their Lord ascend the throne of David, they beheld Him seized as a malefactor, scourged, derided, and condemned, and lifted up on the cross of Calvary. . . .

The announcement which had been made by the disciples in the name of the Lord was in every particular correct, and the events to which it pointed were even then taking place. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15), had been their message. . . . And the "kingdom of God" which they had declared to be at hand was established by the death of Christ. This kingdom was not, as they had been taught to believe, an earthly empire. Nor was it that future, . . . everlasting kingdom, in which "all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Daniel 7:27). As used in the Bible, the expression "kingdom of God" is employed to designate both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. . . .

The kingdom of grace was instituted immediately after the fall of man. . . . Yet it was not actually established until the death of Christ. Even after entering upon His earthly mission, the Saviour . . . might have drawn back from the sacrifice of Calvary. In Gethsemane the cup of woe trembled in His hand. He might even then have wiped the blood-sweat from His brow, and have left the guilty race to perish in their iniquity. . . . But when the Saviour yielded up His life, and with His expiring breath cried out, "It is finished," then the fulfillment of the plan of redemption was assured. The promise of salvation made to the sinful pair in Eden was ratified. The kingdom of grace, which had before existed by the promise of God, was then established.

Thus the death of Christ--the very event which the disciples had looked upon as the final destruction of their hope-- was that which made it forever sure. . . . The event that had filled them with mourning and despair was that . . . in which centered the future life and eternal happiness of all God's faithful ones in all the ages.

*Lesson 3 Study Help**Sabbath, January 13th, 2024***Christ's Object Lessons, Chapter 26, pp 374-375****“Friends by the Mammon of Unrighteousness”**

Christ calls upon everyone to consider. Make an honest reckoning. Put into one scale Jesus, which means eternal treasure, life, truth, heaven, and the joy of Christ in souls redeemed; put into the other every attraction the world can offer. Into one scale put the loss of your own soul, and the souls of those whom you might have been instrumental in saving; into the other, for yourself and for them, a life that measures with the life of God. Weigh for time and for eternity. While you are thus engaged, Christ speaks: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark 8:36.

God desires us to choose the heavenly in place of the earthly. He opens before us the possibilities of a heavenly investment. He would give encouragement to our loftiest aims, security to our choicest treasure. He declares, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Isaiah 13:12. When the riches that moth devours and rust corrupts shall be swept away, Christ's followers can rejoice in their heavenly treasure, the riches that are imperishable.

Better than all the friendship of the world is the friendship of Christ's redeemed. Better than a title to the noblest palace on earth is a title to the mansions our Lord has gone to prepare. And better than all the words of earthly praise will be the Saviour's words to His faithful servants, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34

To those who have squandered His goods, Christ still gives opportunity to secure lasting riches. He says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you." "Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupts." Luke 6:38; 12:33. "Charge them that are rich in this world, . . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Then let your property go beforehand to heaven. Lay up your treasures beside the throne of God. Make sure your title to the unsearchable riches of Christ. "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." R. V.

Lesson 4A Study Help***Sabbath, January 20th, 2024*****Christ's Object Lessons, Chapter 2, pp 58-61****In Good Ground**

The sower is not always to meet with disappointment. Of the seed that fell into good ground the Saviour said, This "is he that hears the word, and understands it; which also bears fruit, and brings forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." "That on the good ground are they, which, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." {COL 58.1}

The "honest and good heart" of which the parable speaks, is not a heart without sin; for the gospel is to be preached to the lost. Christ said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Mark 2:17. He has an honest heart who yields to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. He confesses his guilt, and feels his need of the mercy and love of God. He has a sincere desire to know the truth, that he may obey it. The good heart is a believing heart, one that has faith in the word of God. Without faith it is impossible to receive the word. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6. {COL 58.2}

This "is he that hears the word, and understands it." The Pharisees of Christ's day closed their eyes lest they should see, and their ears lest they should hear; therefore the truth could not reach their hearts. They were to suffer retribution for their wilful ignorance and self-imposed blindness. But Christ taught His disciples that they were to open their minds to instruction, and be ready to believe. He pronounced a blessing upon them because they saw and heard with eyes and ears that believed. {COL 59.1}

The good-ground hearer receives the word "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." 1 Thessalonians 2:13. Only he who receives the Scriptures as the voice of God speaking to himself is a true learner. He trembles at the word; for to him it is a living reality. He opens his understanding and his heart to receive it. Such hearers were Cornelius and his friends, who said to the apostle Peter, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." Acts 10:33. {COL 59.2}

A knowledge of the truth depends not so much upon strength of intellect as upon pureness of purpose, the simplicity of an earnest, dependent faith. To those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance, angels of God draw near. The Holy Spirit is given to open to them the rich treasures of the truth. {COL 59.3}

The good-ground hearers, having heard the word, keep it. Satan with all his agencies of evil is not able to catch it away. {COL 59.4}

Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must meditate upon the truth that has been presented to him. By earnest attention and prayerful thought he must learn the meaning of the words of truth, and drink deep of the spirit of the holy oracles. {COL 59.5}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures. {COL 60.1}

"And bring forth fruit." Those who, having heard the word, keep it, will bring forth fruit in obedience. The word of God, received into the soul, will be manifest in good works. Its results will be seen in a Christlike character and life. Christ said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father

which hath sent Me." John 5:30. And the Scripture says, "He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." 1 John 2:6. {COL 60.2}

The word of God often comes in collision with man's hereditary and cultivated traits of character and his habits of life. But the good-ground hearer, in receiving the word, accepts all its conditions and requirements. His habits, customs, and practices are brought into submission to God's word. In his view the commands of finite, erring man sink into insignificance beside the word of the infinite God. With the whole heart, with undivided purpose, he is seeking the life eternal, and at the cost of loss, persecution, or death itself, he will obey the truth. {COL 60.3}

And he brings forth fruit "with patience." None who receive God's word are exempt from difficulty and trial; but when affliction comes, the true Christian does not become restless, distrustful, or despondent. Though we cannot see the definite outcome of affairs, or discern the purpose of God's providences, we are not to cast away our confidence. Remembering the tender mercies of the Lord, we should cast our care upon Him, and with patience wait for His salvation. {COL 60.4}

Through conflict the spiritual life is strengthened. Trials well borne will develop steadfastness of character and precious spiritual graces. The perfect fruit of faith, meekness, and love often matures best amid storm clouds and darkness. {COL 61.1}

"The husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." James 5:7. So the Christian is to wait with patience for the fruition in his life of the word of God. Often when we pray for the graces of the Spirit, God works to answer our prayers by placing us in circumstances to develop these fruits; but we do not understand His purpose, and wonder, and are dismayed. Yet none can develop these graces except through the process of growth and fruit bearing. Our part is to receive God's word and to hold it fast, yielding ourselves fully to its control, and its purpose in us will be accomplished. {COL 61.2}

"If a man love Me," Christ said, "he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14:23. The spell of a stronger, a perfect mind will be over us; for we have a living connection with the source of all-enduring strength. In our divine life we shall be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. We shall no longer live the common life of selfishness, but Christ will live in us. His character will be reproduced in our nature. Thus shall we bring forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit--"some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred." {COL 61.3}

Lesson 4B Study Help***Sabbath, January 20th, 2024*****Christ's Object Lessons, Chapter 8, pp 106****How Hidden?**

And today men are eagerly seeking for earthly treasure. Their minds are filled with selfish, ambitious thoughts. For the sake of gaining worldly riches, *honour*, or power, they place the maxims, traditions, and requirements of men above the requirements of God. From them the treasures of His word are hidden. {COL 106.1}

"The natural man *receives* not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Corinthians 2:14. {COL 106.2}

"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4. {COL 106.3}

Value of the Treasure

The Saviour saw that men were absorbed in getting gain, and were losing sight of eternal realities. He undertook to correct this evil. He sought to break the infatuating spell that was *paralysing* the soul. Lifting up His voice He cried, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:26. He presents before fallen humanity the nobler world they have lost sight of, that they may behold eternal realities. He takes them to the threshold of the Infinite, flushed with the indescribable glory of God, and shows them the treasure there. {COL 106.4}

Lesson 4C Study Help***Sabbath, January 20th, 2024*****Christ's Object Lessons, Chapter 29, pp 419-421****To Meet the Bridegroom**

In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven's resources. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit. {COL 419.1}

It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts. {COL 419.2}

Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Emmanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives. {COL 419.3}

The indwelling of the Spirit will be shown by the outflowing of heavenly love. The divine fullness will flow through the consecrated human agent, to be given forth to others. {COL 419.4}

The Sun of Righteousness has "healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. So from every true disciple is to be diffused an influence for life, courage, helpfulness, and true healing. {COL 419.5}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour. {COL 419.6}

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, Let your light shine. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord's glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence. {COL 420.1}

The revelation of His own glory in the form of humanity will bring heaven so near to men that the beauty adorning the inner temple will be seen in every soul in whom the Saviour dwells. Men will be captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ. And in currents of praise and thanksgiving from the many souls thus won to God, glory will flow back to the great Giver. {COL 420.2}

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1. To those who go out to meet the Bridegroom is this message given. Christ is coming with power and

great glory. He is coming with His own glory and with the glory of the Father. He is coming with all the holy angels with Him. While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing. The unsullied light will shine from His splendour, and Christ the Redeemer will be admired by all who have served Him. While the wicked flee from His presence, Christ's followers will rejoice. The patriarch Job, looking down to the time of Christ's second advent, said, "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not a stranger." Job 19:27, margin. To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts. {COL 420.3}

With uplifted heads, with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness shining upon them, with rejoicing that their redemption draws nigh, they go forth to meet the Bridegroom, saying, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." Isaiah 25:9. {COL 421.1}

"And 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 reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. . . . And he says unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Revelation 19:6-9; 17:14. {COL 421.2}

*Lesson 5 Study Help**Sabbath, January 27th, 2024***Selected Messages, book 1, Chapter 47, page 313****“The Truth as it is in Jesus”****“Mature In Christian Experience”**

It is natural for us to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think; but although it is painful for us to know ourselves as we really are, yet we should pray that God will reveal us to ourselves, even as He sees us. But we should not cease to pray when we have simply asked for a revelation of ourselves; we should pray that Jesus may be revealed to us as a sin-pardoning Saviour. When we see Jesus as He is, earnest desires should awaken in our hearts to be rid of self, that we may be filled with all the fullness of Christ. When this is our experience, we shall do good to one another, and use all the means within our reach to attain unto godliness. We must cleanse our souls from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God.

The love of a holy God is an amazing principle, which can stir the universe in our behalf during the hours of our probation and trial. But after the season of our probation, if we are found transgressors of God's law, the God of love will be found a minister of vengeance. God makes no compromise with sin. The disobedient will be punished. The wrath of God fell upon His beloved Son as Christ hung upon the cross of Calvary in the transgressor's place. The love of God now reaches out to embrace the lowest, vilest sinner that will come to Christ with contrition. It reaches out to transform the sinner into an obedient, faithful child of God; but not a soul can be saved if he continues in sin.

Sin is the transgression of the law, and the arm that is now mighty to save will be strong to punish when the transgressor passes the bounds that limit divine forbearance. He who refuses to seek for life, who will not search the Scriptures to see what is truth, lest he should be condemned in his practices, will be left to blindness of mind and to the deceptions of Satan. To the same degree that the penitent and obedient are shielded by God's love, the impenitent and disobedient will be left to the result of their own ignorance and hardness of heart, because they receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved.

There are many who profess Christ, but who never become mature Christians. They admit that man is fallen, that his faculties are weakened, that he is unfitted for moral achievement, but they say that Christ has borne all the burden, all the suffering, all the self-denial, and they are willing to let Him bear it. They say that there is nothing for them to do but to believe; but Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Jesus kept the commandments of God. The Pharisees declared that He broke the fourth commandment because He made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day; but Jesus turned to the accusing Pharisees, and asked, "Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus" (Luke 6:9-11).

This miracle, instead of convincing the Pharisees that Jesus was the Son of God, filled them with rage, because many who witnessed the miracle glorified God. Jesus declared that His work of mercy was lawful on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees declared that it was not lawful. Which shall we believe? Christ said, "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10). Then it is certainly safe for us to follow the way of Christ, and keep the commandments. God has given us faculties which should be constantly exercised in cooperating with Jesus, in working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Lesson 6 Study Help***Sabbath, February 3rd, 2024*****That I May Know Him, Chapter 11 pp. 326****“A Day of Reckoning”****November 26th**

For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. [Matthew 25:29]

If talents are well improved, increased talents are the result. "Unto every one that hath shall be given." . . . If Heaven's bestowed gifts are not appreciated and improved as God's intrusted capital--if they are buried in worldliness, in selfishness--these powers capable of blessing humanity decrease, and because the God of heaven is not sought after and glorified as the source of all these precious endowments, He is dishonoured, and He cuts off the supply. In order to increase, to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we must put to use by human effort our physical and intellectual powers.

Those who hoard up their talents to rust, unemployed, unimproved, must not think that such action in any way relieves them from responsibility, for God holds us responsible for the good we might do if we took up the yoke with Christ, lifting His burdens, learning more of His meekness and lowliness of heart day by day. The interest continues to accumulate on buried talents, and instead of decreasing our responsibility the burying of our talent only increases and intensifies it.

Let the human agent consider the solemn fact that the day of reckoning is just before us, and that we are daily deciding what our eternal destiny shall be. The Master examines every individual case, dealing personally with the talents entrusted by Him. O solemn day of reckoning; that day which will bring paleness to many faces; that day in which the words shall be spoken to many, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting"! It will be an awful thing to be found "wanting" when the book of accounts is opened in that great day. . . . Upon the decisions reached in that day depends the future, eternal interest of every soul. We shall have unspeakable joy, or unutterable woe and misery. . . . O how Jesus will love to recompense every true worker! Every faithfully performed duty will receive His blessing. It is then that He pronounces the benediction, "Well done."

Lesson 7 Study Help***Sabbath, February 9th, 2024*****Our High Calling, Chapter 4, pp. 100****“Wearing Christ’s Yoke”****April 4th**

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. [Matthew 11:30]

Wearing the yoke with Christ, means to work in His lines, to be a co-partner with Him in His sufferings and toils for lost humanity.

In accepting Christ's yoke of restraint and obedience, you will find that it is of the greatest help to you. Wearing this yoke keeps you near the side of Christ, and He bears the heaviest part of the load.

The yoke and the cross are symbols representing the same thing-- the giving up of the will to God. Wearing the yoke unites finite man in companionship with the dearly beloved Son of God. Lifting the cross cuts away self from the soul, and places man where he learns how to bear Christ's burdens. We cannot follow Christ without wearing His yoke, without lifting the cross and bearing it after Him. If our will is not in accord with the divine requirements, we are to deny our inclinations, give up our darling desires, and step in Christ's footsteps. . .

Men frame for their own necks yokes that seem light and pleasant to wear, but they prove galling in the extreme. Christ sees this, and He says, "Take My yoke upon you. The yoke you would place upon your own neck, thinking it a precise fit, will not fit at all. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me the lessons essential for you to learn."

Your work is not to gather up burdens of your own. . . . We often think we are having a hard time in bearing burdens, and it is too often the case, because God has not made any provision for us to carry these burdens; but when we bear His yoke and carry His burdens, we can testify that the yoke of Christ is easy and His burdens are light, because He has made provision for these.

Yet that yoke will not give us a life of ease and freedom and selfish indulgence. The life of Christ was one of self-sacrifice and self-denial at every step; and with consistent, Christlike tenderness and love, His true follower will walk in the footsteps of the Master; and as he advances in this life, he will become more and more inspired with the spirit and life of Christ.

Lesson 8 Study Help***Sabbath, February 17th, 2024*****God's Amazing Grace, Chapter 9, pp. 270****"For The Humble"****September 19th**

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. [1 Peter 5:6]

To be clothed with humility does not mean that we are to be dwarfs in intellect, deficient in aspiration, and cowardly in our lives, shunning burdens lest we fail to carry them successfully. Real humility fulfils God's purposes by depending upon His strength.

God works by whom He will. He sometimes selects the humblest instrument to do the greatest work, for His power is revealed through the weakness of men. We have our standard, and by it we pronounce one thing great and another small; but God does not estimate according to our rule. We are not to suppose that what is great to us must be great to God, or that what is small to us must be small to Him.

All boasting of merit in ourselves is out of place. . . . The reward is not of works, lest any man should boast; but it is all of grace. . . .

There is no religion in the enthronement of self. He who makes self-glorification his aim will find himself destitute of that grace which alone can make him efficient in Christ's service. Whenever pride and self-complacency are indulged the work is marred. . . .

The Christian who is such in his private life, in the daily surrender of self, in sincerity of purpose and purity of thought, in meekness under provocation, in faith and piety, in fidelity in that which is least, the one who in the home life represents the character of Christ--such a one may in the sight of God be more precious than even the world-renowned missionary or martyr. . . .

Not in our learning, not in our position, not in our numbers or entrusted talents, not in the will of man, is to be found the secret of success. Feeling our inefficiency we are to contemplate Christ, and through Him who is the strength of all strength, the thought of all thought, the willing and obedient will gain victory after victory. . . . Blessed will be the recompense of grace to those who have wrought for God in the simplicity of faith and love.

Lesson 9 Study Help***Sabbath, February 24th, 2024*****The Ministry of Healing, Chapter 41, page 486****“In Contact with Others”****“Forbearance Under Wrong”**

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

Under a storm of stinging, fault-finding words, keep the mind stayed upon the word of God. Let mind and heart be stored with God's promises. If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the precious promises:

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Psalm 37:5, 6.

"There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." Luke 12:2.

"Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but Thou brought us out into a wealthy place." Psalm 66:12.

We are prone to look to our fellow men for sympathy and uplifting, instead of looking to Jesus. In His mercy and faithfulness God often permits those in whom we place confidence to fail us, in order that we may learn the folly of trusting in man and making flesh our arm. Let us trust fully, humbly, unselfishly in God. He knows the sorrows that we feel to the depths of our being, but which we cannot express. When all things seem dark and unexplainable, remember the words of Christ, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." John 13:7.

*Lesson 10 Study Help**Sabbath, March 2nd, 2024***Christ's Object Lessons, Chapter 22, page 282-283****"Saying and Doing"**

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." 2 Peter 1:2-7.

If you cultivate faithfully the vineyard of your soul, God is making you a labourer together with Himself. And you will have a work to do not only for yourself, but for others. In representing the church as the vineyard, Christ does not teach that we are to restrict our sympathies and labours to our own numbers. The Lord's vineyard is to be enlarged. In all parts of the earth He desires it to be extended. As we receive the instruction and grace of God, we should impart to others a knowledge of how to care for the precious plants. Thus we may extend the vineyard of the Lord. God is watching for evidence of our faith, love, and patience. He looks to see if we are using every spiritual advantage to become skillful workers in His vineyard on earth, that we may enter the Paradise of God, that Eden home from which Adam and Eve were excluded by transgression.

God stands toward His people in the relation of a father, and He has a father's claim to our faithful service. Consider the life of Christ. Standing at the head of humanity, serving His Father, He is an example of what every son should and may be. The obedience that Christ rendered God requires from human beings today. He served His Father with love, in willingness and freedom. "I delight to do Thy will, O My God," He declared; "yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. Christ counted no sacrifice too great, no toil too hard, in order to accomplish the work which He came to do. At the age of twelve He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Luke 2:49. He had heard the call, and had taken up the work. "My meat," He said, "is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:34

Thus we are to serve God. He only serves who acts up to the highest standard of obedience. All who would be sons and daughters of God must prove themselves co-workers with God and Christ and the heavenly angels. This is the test for every soul. Of those who faithfully serve Him the Lord says, "They shall be Mine, . . . in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serves him." Malachi 3:17

God's great object in the working out of His providences is to try men, to give them opportunity to develop character. Thus He proves whether they are obedient or disobedient to His commands. Good works do not purchase the love of God, but they reveal that we possess that love. If we surrender the will to God, we shall not work in order to earn God's love. His love as a free gift will be received into the soul, and from love to Him we shall delight to obey His commandments.

There are only two classes in the world today, and only two classes will be recognized in the judgment--those who violate God's law and those who obey it. Christ gives the test by which to prove our loyalty or disloyalty. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments. . . . He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loves Me. And he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. . . . He that loves Me not keepeth not My sayings; and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me." "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 14:15-24; 15:10.

*Lesson 11 Study Help**Sabbath, March 9th, 2024***Christ's Object Lessons, Chapter 24, page 307-319****"Without a Wedding Garment"**

The parable of the wedding garment opens before us a lesson of the highest consequence. By the marriage is represented the union of humanity with divinity; the wedding garment represents the character which all must possess who shall be accounted fit guests for the wedding.

In this parable, as in that of the great supper, are illustrated the gospel invitation, its rejection by the Jewish people, and the call of mercy to the Gentiles. But on the part of those who reject the invitation, this parable brings to view a deeper insult and a more dreadful punishment. The call to the feast is a king's invitation. It proceeds from one who is vested with power to command. It confers high honour. Yet the honour is unappreciated. The king's authority is despised. While the householder's invitation was regarded with indifference, the king's is met with insult and murder. They treated his servants with scorn, despitefully using them and slaying them.

The householder, on seeing his invitation slighted, declared that none of the men who are bidden should taste of his supper. But for those who had done despite to the king, more than exclusion from his presence and his table is decreed. "He sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

In both parables the feast is provided with guests, but the second shows that there is a preparation to be made by all who attend the feast. Those who neglect this preparation are cast out. "The king came in to see the guests," and "saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how came thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The call to the feast had been given by Christ's disciples. Our Lord had sent out the twelve and afterward the seventy, proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand, and calling upon men to repent and believe the gospel. But the call was not heeded. Those who are bidden to the feast did not come. The servants were sent out later to say, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." This was the message borne to the Jewish nation after the crucifixion of Christ; but the nation that claimed to be God's peculiar people rejected the gospel brought to them in the power of the Holy Spirit. Many did this in the most scornful manner. Others were so exasperated by the offer of salvation, the offer of pardon for rejecting the Lord of glory, that they turned upon the bearers of the message. There was "a great persecution." Acts 8:1. Many both of men and women were thrust into prison, and some of the Lord's messengers, as Stephen and James, were put to death.

Thus the Jewish people sealed their rejection of God's mercy. The result was foretold by Christ in the parable. The king "sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." The judgment pronounced came upon the Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the nation.

The third call to the feast represents the giving of the gospel to the Gentiles. The king said, "The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage."

The king's servants who went out into the highways "gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good." It was a mixed company. Some of them had no more real regard for the giver of the feast than had the ones who rejected the call. The class first bidden could not afford, they thought, to sacrifice any worldly advantage for the sake of attending the king's banquet. And of those who accepted the invitation, there were some who thought only of benefiting themselves. They came to share the provisions of the feast, but had no desire to honour the king.

When the king came in to view the guests, the real character of all was revealed. For every guest at the feast there had been provided a wedding garment. This garment was a gift from the king. By wearing it the guests showed their respect for the giver of the feast. But one man was clothed in his common citizen dress. He had refused to make the preparation required by the king. The garment provided for him at great cost he disdained to wear. Thus he insulted his lord. To the king's demand, "How came thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" he could answer nothing. He was self-condemned. Then the king said, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness."

By the king's examination of the guests at the feast is represented a work of judgment. The guests at the gospel feast are those who profess to serve God, those whose names are written in the book of life. But not all who profess to be Christians are true disciples. Before the final reward is given, it must be decided who are fitted to share the inheritance of the righteous. This decision must be made prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven; for when He comes, His reward is with Him, "to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12. Before His coming, then, the character of every man's work will have been determined, and to every one of Christ's followers the reward will have been apportioned according to his deeds.

It is while men are still dwelling upon the earth that the work of investigative judgment takes place in the courts of heaven. The lives of all His professed followers pass in review before God. All are examined according to the record of the books of heaven, and according to his deeds the destiny of each is forever fixed.

By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given "that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Revelation 19:8; Ephesians 5:27. The fine linen, says the Scripture, "is the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:8. It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour.

The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering.

This is what the transgressors of God's law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve's disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God.

But this they can never do. Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. "I counsel thee," He says, "to buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Revelation 3:18.

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.

The guests at the marriage feast were inspected by the king. Only those were accepted who had obeyed his requirements and put on the wedding garment. So it is with the guests at the gospel feast. All must pass the scrutiny of the great King, and only those are received who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness.

Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine.

It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. "He that keepeth His commandments dwell in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." "Hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments." 1 John 3:24; 2:3. This is the genuine evidence of conversion. Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness.

The truth is to be planted in the heart. It is to control the mind and regulate the affections. The whole character must be stamped with the divine utterances. Every jot and tittle of the word of God is to be brought into the daily practice.

He who becomes a partaker of the divine nature will be in harmony with God's great standard of righteousness, His holy law. This is the rule by which God measures the actions of men. This will be the test of character in the judgment.

There are many who claim that by the death of Christ the law was abrogated; but in this they contradict Christ's own words, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. . . . Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." Matthew 5:17, 18. It was to atone for man's transgression of the law that Christ laid down His life. Could the law have been changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died. By His life on earth He honoured the law of God. By His death He established it. He gave His life as a sacrifice, not to destroy God's law, not to create a lower standard, but that justice might be maintained, that the law might be shown to be immutable, that it might stand fast forever.

Satan had claimed that it was impossible for man to obey God's commandments; and in our own strength it is true that we cannot obey them. But Christ came in the form of humanity, and by His perfect obedience He proved that humanity and divinity combined can obey every one of God's precepts.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John 1:12. This power is not in the human agent. It is the power of God. When a soul receives Christ, he receives power to live the life of Christ.

God requires perfection of His children. His law is a transcript of His own character, and it is the standard of all character. This infinite standard is presented to all that there may be no mistake in regard to the kind of people whom God will have to compose His kingdom. The life of Christ on earth was a perfect expression of God's law, and when those who claim to be children of God become Christlike in character, they will be obedient to God's commandments. Then the Lord can trust them to be of the number who shall compose the family of heaven. Clothed in the glorious apparel of Christ's righteousness, they have a place at the King's feast. They have a right to join the blood-washed throng.

The man who came to the feast without a wedding garment represents the condition of many in our world today. They profess to be Christians, and lay claim to the blessings and privileges of the gospel; yet they feel no need of a transformation of character. They have never felt true repentance for sin. They do not realize their need of Christ or exercise faith in Him. They have not overcome their hereditary or cultivated tendencies to wrongdoing. Yet they think that they are good enough in themselves, and they rest upon their own merits instead of trusting in Christ. Hearers of the word, they come to the banquet, but they have not put on the robe of Christ's righteousness.

Many who call themselves Christians are mere human moralists. They have refused the gift which alone could enable them to honour Christ by representing Him to the world. The work of the Holy Spirit is to them a strange work. They are not doers of the word. The heavenly principles that distinguish those who are one with Christ from those who are one with the world have become almost indistinguishable. The professed followers of Christ are no longer a separate and peculiar people. The line of demarcation is indistinct. The people are subordinating themselves to the world, to its practices, its customs, its selfishness. The church has gone over to the world in transgression of the law, when the world should have come over to the church in obedience to the law. Daily the church is being converted to the world.

All these expect to be saved by Christ's death, while they refuse to live His self-sacrificing life. They extol the riches of free grace, and attempt to cover themselves with an appearance of righteousness, hoping to screen their defects of character; but their efforts will be of no avail in the day of God.

The righteousness of Christ will not cover one cherished sin. A man may be a law-breaker in heart; yet if he commits no outward act of transgression, he may be regarded by the world as possessing great integrity. But God's law looks into the secrets of the heart. Every act is judged by the motives that prompt it. Only that which is in accord with the principles of God's law will stand in the judgment.

God is love. He has shown that love in the gift of Christ. When "He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," He withheld nothing from His purchased possession. (John 3:16.) He gave all heaven, from which we may draw strength and efficiency, that we be not repulsed or overcome by our great adversary. But the love of God does not lead Him to excuse sin. He did not excuse it in Satan; He did not excuse it in Adam or in Cain; nor will He excuse it in any other of the children of men. He will not connive at our sins or overlook our defects of character. He expects us to overcome in His name.

Those who reject the gift of Christ's righteousness are rejecting the attributes of character which would constitute them the sons and daughters of God. They are rejecting that which alone could give them a fitness for a place at the marriage feast.

In the parable, when the king inquired, "How came thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" the man was speechless. So it will be in the great judgment day. Men may now excuse their defects of character, but in that day they will offer no excuse.

The professed churches of Christ in this generation are exalted to the highest privileges. The Lord has been revealed to us in ever-increasing light. Our privileges are far greater than were the privileges of God's ancient people. We have not only the great light committed to Israel, but we have the increased evidence of the great salvation brought to us through Christ. That which was type and symbol to the Jews is reality to us. They had the Old Testament history; we have that and the New Testament also. We have the assurance of a Saviour who has come, a Saviour who has been crucified, who has risen, and over the rent sepulchre of Joseph has proclaimed, "I am the resurrection and the life." In our knowledge of Christ and His love the kingdom of God is placed in the midst of us. Christ is revealed to us in sermons and chanted to us in songs. The spiritual banquet is set before us in rich abundance. The wedding garment, provided at infinite cost, is freely offered to every soul. By the messengers of God are presented to us the righteousness of Christ, justification by faith, the exceeding great and precious promises of God's word, free access to the Father by Christ, the comfort of the Spirit, the well-grounded assurance of eternal life in the kingdom of God. What could God do for us that He has not done in providing the great supper, the heavenly banquet?

In heaven it is said by the ministering angels: The ministry which we have been commissioned to perform we have done. We pressed back the army of evil angels. We sent brightness and light into the souls of men, quickening their memory of the love of God expressed in Jesus. We attracted their eyes to the cross of Christ. Their hearts were deeply moved by a sense of the sin that crucified the Son of God. They were convicted. They saw the steps to be taken in conversion; they felt the power of the gospel; their hearts were made tender as they saw the sweetness of the love of God. They beheld the beauty of the character of Christ. But with the many it was all in vain. They would not surrender their own habits and character. They would not put off the garments of earth in order to be clothed with the robe of heaven. Their hearts were given to covetousness. They loved the associations of the world more than they loved their God.

Solemn will be the day of final decision. In prophetic vision the apostle John describes it: "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and 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 20:11, 12.

Sad will be the retrospect in that day when men stand face to face with eternity. The whole life will present itself just as it has been. The world's pleasures, riches, and honors will not then seem so important. Men will then see that the righteousness they despised is alone of value. They will see that they have fashioned their characters under the deceptive allurements of Satan. The garments they have chosen are the badge of their allegiance to the first great apostate. Then they will see the results of their choice. They will have a knowledge of what it means to transgress the commandments of God.

There will be no future probation in which to prepare for eternity. It is in this life that we are to put on the robe of Christ's righteousness. This is our only opportunity to form characters for the home which Christ has made ready for those who obey His commandments.

The days of our probation are fast closing. The end is near. To us the warning is given, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Luke 21:34. Beware lest it find you unready.

Take heed lest you be found at the King's feast without a wedding garment.

"In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." "Blessed is he that watches, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Matthew 24:44; Revelation 16:15.

Lesson 12 Study Help***Sabbath, March 16th, 2024*****The Desire of Ages, Chapter 79, page 758****“It is Finished”**

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.

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The arch-apostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion

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

Lesson 13 Study Help

*Sabbath, March 23rd, 2024***The Upward Look, Chapter 9, pp. 250****“Faithfulness in Little Things”****August 24th**

Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. [Luke 19:17]

If our active temperament gathers in a large amount of work that we have not strength nor the grace of Christ to do understandingly and with order and exactitude, everything we undertake shows imperfection, and the work is constantly marred. God is not glorified, however good the motive. . .

God would have us pay heed to His words. The carefully wrought service in the sight of God is of value although easily overlooked by human eyes, yet indispensable in this world where we are doing our work. God wants intelligent workers, doing their work not hurriedly, but carefully, and thoroughly, always preserving the humility of Jesus. Those who put thought and painstaking into the higher duties should put care and thought into the smaller duties, showing exactitude and diligence.

Oh, how much neglected work is done, how much leaving things at loose ends because there is a constant desire to take on greater work. The work is slurred over that relates to the service of God, because they pull so much work before them that there is nothing done thoroughly. But all the work must bear the scrutiny of the Judge of all the earth. The smaller duties connected with the service of the Master assume importance because it is Christ's service. Selfishness and self-esteem should be guarded against as your bitterest enemy. But how easily self finds opportunities to exhibit itself, and how Satan exults at the exhibitions, and how sorrowful and ashamed are the angels of God of man's foolishness. How unlike Jesus Christ; in what contrast to the example He has given us in His own life. How far removed from His requirements, to crucify self with the affections and lusts. . .

What will be our feelings when we shall stand on the sea of glass? Shall we look back on the hours of our impatience here? Shall we stand upon the eternal hills of paradise and take in the events of our past life and see how many unnecessary trials we had because we thought God was dependent upon us to do everything? God help us to see our own littleness and God's greatness. God forbid that we should have exalted ideas of our own greatness, and exalt self. Magnitude of experience is no measure of worth. God has a standard so unlike human standards, and if we see God's estimate of us, we would see value where we supposed was littleness, and littleness where we supposed was greatness.--Letter 48, Aug. 24, 1886, to "Dear Brethren Engaged in Labour in Nimes" [France].

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