

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2016: *The Role of the Church in the Community*

Lesson 1 “The Restoration of All Things”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 1:26, 27; Deuteronomy 6:5; Genesis 3:8–19; James 4:4; Galatians 4:19; Mark 2:1–12; John 10:10.

Memory Text

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Image of God
- III. The Fall and Its Aftermath
- IV. Enmity and Atonement
- V. Restoration in Jesus
- VI. The Restoring Role of the Church
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This quarter we will explore this wholistic version of the ‘everlasting gospel’ and will examine the role of the church in impacting their communities with this gospel.” (Introduction to the quarter) What do we mean when we say that the gospel is wholistic? Why is it important to view it that way?
2. “What is the whole gospel? Jesus’ mission and ministry depicted in Luke 4:16–21 portrays the whole gospel as more than preaching the truth of salvation by faith, however foundational that is to all that we do. Jesus shows us that preaching the gospel also means tangible expressions of love and compassion for the poor, hungry, sick, brokenhearted, oppressed, outcast, and imprisoned. It’s about biblical justice and undoing what the devil has done, at least to whatever degree we now can as we look forward to Jesus’ ultimate triumph over evil at the end of the age.” (Introduction)
3. If this is the case, why does the research show “that approximately 30 percent of Seventh-day Adventists are involved in meeting the needs of the community outside the church? What about the remaining 70 percent?” (Introduction) Is it possible

- that on the grass root level we have not managed to preach and model “the wholistic gospel”? What might be possible reasons for that?
4. “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (Daniel 2:44, NKJV). What a restoration!” (Sabbath afternoon)
 5. “But we don’t wait until the Second Coming for the restoration to begin. Those who are in Christ are a new creation now (2 Corinthians 5:17); and we are predestined to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus now (Romans 8:29). Also, He calls us and empowers us, as His church, so that we can work toward the restoration of others as well.” (Sabbath afternoon) What are the advantages and disadvantages of seeing the Bible through the prism of restoration?
 6. “Jesus came, died for the sins of the world, and promised to come again.” (Sabbath afternoon) So is Jesus’ death a payment of penalty for sin or could it be seen in the context of restoration? What is gained by such a perspective?
 7. Sunday’s lesson deals with the image of God. How does the Scripture indicate what being made in God’s image means?
 8. “Together, male and female, in their fullness and completeness, they represented the image of God.” (Sunday’s lesson) What is the significance of the Bible defining the image of God in terms of connectedness and relationship?
 9. When the author of Genesis used the Hebrew word “*tselem*” for the “image”, this was subversively counter-cultural for his time! What prevailing cultural ideas in our society try to enslave people today? How different/similar this is around the globe?
 10. “No question, the Fall was real, the Fall was hard, and the Fall was terribly consequential for the race. The long, sad story of human history, right up to current events, reveals the tragic consequences of sin. How thankful we can be, then, for the promise that one day the tragedy of sin is going to be over and done and never repeated.” (Monday’s lesson)
 11. Which consequences of sin are still present in our society/experience and which are and should be reversed because of Jesus’ finished work on the cross?
 12. Tuesday’s lesson deals with Enmity & Atonement: “By eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the couple placed themselves and all humanity at enmity with God (see Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:21, James 4:4). God’s promise here implies that God would set in motion His plan to draw humanity back to Himself, thus shifting their enmity to Satan. Thus, by shifting the enmity from Himself to Satan, God would establish an avenue through which He could save humanity while, at the same time, not violate the principles of His divine government. This is what is known in the original sense as “atonement,” what God has done and is doing in order to ultimately restore what had been lost in the Fall.”
 13. “Theologians sometimes use the word expiation to talk about how this atonement works. The Latin root, *expiare*, means ‘to atone for,’ and the idea involves reparation for a wrong deed. Someone did something wrong, they violated a law, and justice demands a penalty to pay for that wrong. In English, it is sometimes said that the

- guilty person owes a 'debt to society' because of what he or she did." (Tuesday's lesson)
14. "In our situation we sinned, but in the plan of salvation, the atonement, Christ's sacrificial death relieves us from the legal consequences of that wrongdoing. Instead, Christ Himself paid the penalty for us. The punishment that legally (yes, God's government has laws) should have been ours was given to Jesus instead. That way, the demands of justice were met, but they were met in Jesus instead of us." (Tuesday's lesson)
 15. How did we get from relational restoration to penalty and payment? What are the consequences of this shifting of models (throughout the centuries and for us personally)?
 16. The lesson ends with "The Restoring Role of the Church" and quotes the story from Mark 2:1-12. How did an individualistic understanding of religion and the plan of salvation throughout the centuries distort the role and place of the church? How do we keep a balanced view between a Catholic understanding (without the church there is no salvation!) and a Pentecostal understanding (the Spirit talks to me, so I actually do not need you!)?
 17. "It has been said that John 10:10 is the Seventh-day Adventist message in a nutshell. It was clearly Christ's mission statement." (Thursday's lesson) What are the implications of this for us individually and as a church? What kind of "business" are we in?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now when we read that first angel's message to "worship the Creator of the heaven and earth, the Creator of the sea and springs," perhaps we are reminded that the first mention of the Sabbath comes in the Bible at the end of creation week. I wonder if tonight we could think back in imagination to the very dramatic events of that first week of this earth's history. The war had begun already in heaven. Satan had already leveled his charges and his accusations. One third of the angels had already agreed with him that God is not worthy of our love and our trust. Right in the middle of that devastating crisis, God invites his family to watch him as he creates yet another world—this time, ours. How easily he could have created our world with a snap of his fingers, in just an instant of time.

But in the dramatic and significant setting of the great controversy, he chose this time to do it in six twenty-four hour days. On the first day, all he said was "Let there be light." That's all. And then day two, three, four, five, as God in unhurried majesty and drama unfolded his plans for our earth. By the sixth day, what a beautiful place this was. Where now were Satan's charges that God was selfish? I mean, look at the freedom. He created us in his own image with power to think and to do. And we know from human history that he created us free to either love and trust him, or hate him and spit in his face, because it has been done. And he created us able to

do it! God even allowed Satan to approach our first parents at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And he didn't hide that tree in some dark corner of the garden; he put it right in the middle near the Tree of Life, so that Adam and Eve would see it every time they came to that other tree.

Look in Genesis 2:9 of the reference sheet: "In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (NIV)

Then God stunned the universe by sharing with us, as far as he possibly could with mere created human beings, some of his own marvelous creative power. God so designed it that when a man and a woman come together in love, they are able to share life with little people; create little people in their own image. Isn't it interesting to watch our children and our grandchildren? They look so much like us. They behave like us, at our best points and our worst points. Truly, they do reflect our image and God designed it to be this way. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10, "The Reminder of the Evidence" recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG>

How sad that religion through the years has made light of reason, the image of God within us, the power to think, to be intelligent individuals. Who do you suppose is behind the mocking of reason and intelligence in the history of religion? Who will lose if we use what mentality we have left? Who will lose if we become demanding of the evidence and investigate every claim we hear in the name of religion? Since the truth is not with Satan, he has only to lose if we begin to inquire. Since the truth is with God, he has nothing to lose if we inquire. He's not afraid of our questions. He invites us to be demanding of evidence, for the evidence is with him. I wince whenever I hear us make light of reason. Of course, reason can be perverted, to be sure. Every good thing can. The Sabbath has been perverted. Is that a reason for giving up the Sabbath? Reason has been perverted. Is that a reason to give it up? It's the ability we have to weigh the evidence in the great controversy and cast an intelligent vote, for which we'll be held responsible. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 4, recorded October, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/7MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/8MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

Take the law as a whole, even. The law in the larger view is God's emergency measure to help us in this emergency. And the apostles specifically say that. Take a little thing like the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not to eat the fruit of that tree in the Garden. In the narrower view, in the view that is preoccupied with what God has done for us on this planet,

God said “don’t touch that tree” *before* sin. And that would simply be a test of their obedience, and it’s often so explained. But in the larger, great controversy view, they were told not to go near that tree *after* sin entered the universe. And then you look on the tree, not as a test of obedience, but as something given to us to protect us, because Lucifer could only approach them at the tree. And he did! And so the more one takes the larger view, the more arbitrariness goes out of God’s requirements, and his measures, and his provisions. He just looks a whole lot better in the great controversy view. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, “The Conflict in God’s Family” recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>*

Lou: For our final question, “For the sake of restoring us into God’s image, was death necessary? Couldn’t God have forgiven us without Jesus having to die?”

Graham: He could have forgiven us to be sure; in fact, he did. But the questions were out there. And those questions were so potentially destructive that until the questions were answered, the seeds of distrust and sin and rebellion were in the universe. Because I believe even if Lucifer had repented and come back, Jesus would have needed to answer the question. Once the questions were asked, you could count on God to answer them, no matter what it cost, and he did it.

Lou: In the light of what had gone wrong.

Graham: That’s right.

Lou: He just had to follow it all the way through.

Graham: That’s right. And it cost his life in that particular way. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #9 with Lou Venden, “There is no Need to be Afraid of God” recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/9MMCAG>*

The purpose of the plan of salvation is to restore that trust, to bring the rebellion to an end, and thus to establish at-one-ment once again in the whole universe. All of God’s children are unavoidably involved.

Some seem to find it disappointing, even offensive, to learn that Christ did not die primarily for them. But unless God wins this war and reestablishes peace in his family, our salvation is meaningless. Who would want to live for eternity in a warring universe?

Without this larger understanding of a conflict that has involved the universe, it’s hard to understand Paul’s explanation that Jesus shed his blood to bring peace, reconciliation, and

unity to God's children in heaven as well as on earth. But recognition of the war and its issues helps one to take a larger view of the cross and of the plan of salvation and atonement.

The kind of unity God desires cannot be commanded or produced by force or fear. In the course of human history, many tyrants have tried to maintain unity by terror and brutality. But that kind of at-one-ment does not last. Look at what has happened in a number of countries just in recent years.

The kind of at-one-ment God desires is described in the New Testament as a unity that is "inherent in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God." (Ephesians 4:13, REB) People who love and trust the same Jesus and the same God are naturally attracted to each other. The same truth about God that sets them free from tyranny and fear binds them together in the firmest kind of unity. Friends of a friendly God enjoy at-one-ment with each other.

This is where the meaning of the cross is so important. There can be no friendship and at-one-ment where there is fear. Calvary says there is no need to be afraid of God. When God says, "Be my friend," he's not saying, "Be my friend or I'll punish you severely; I'll even put you to death." You don't talk that way to friends—especially if you want to keep their friendship. And friendship is the whole purpose and meaning of atonement. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 164-165. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter12.html>

One of the Lord's most memorable parables was about atonement—in the original sense of that word. Jesus told about a son who wasted his life and his share of his father's estate in riotous self-indulgence. Now penniless and starving, he found employment looking after swine.

As he languished there in the pigsty, he began to remember how good it had been at home and wondered if there might be any way to persuade his offended father to let him come back.

His thoughts might have been very different had he known that his father had long been looking down the road, hoping to catch a glimpse of his son coming home. Unfortunately, the son didn't know his father very well.

He began to think of ways to persuade his father to let him in when he arrived at the door. His father could well be very angry with him. Perhaps he should look for his mother first, and she could help persuade his father to forgive and let him have another chance.

And then there was all that money he'd wasted. He would have to find some way to make amends.

"I know what I'll do," the son decided. "I'll ask him to treat me as one of his hired servants." With that, he started out on his way home, practicing his speech as he went.

Had he looked up, he might have noticed his father still watching for him down that road. “But while he was still a long way off his father saw him, and his heart went out to him; he ran to meet him, flung his arms round him, and kissed him.

“The son said, ‘Father, I have sinned against God and against you; I am no longer fit to be called your son.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Fetch a robe, the best we have, and put it on him . . . and let us celebrate with a feast. For this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.’” (Luke 15:20-24, REB)

At last the son had learned the truth about his father. He didn’t even have to finish that speech. His father had forgiven him long before. But he had to come home to find that out. Now his father’s forgiveness led him to real repentance.

As the prodigal stood there in his father’s arms, he began to experience the original meaning of atonement.

Servants understand atonement as making amends.

Friends understand atonement as making friends. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 166-168. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter12.html>

So Paul makes it plain, as all the Bible writers have, that God is the one who has the power to heal. He’s the one who forgives, he’s the one who restores, he’s the one who has made every move whether to win us or to warn us. It all comes from him.

So we make no contribution in this way to our own salvation. Our being set right depends upon our trust in God. Salvation comes by trusting God, and not by our own works. We have no basis for boasting in this, but rather to glorify God for the kind of person he is and for his willingness to wait so long to win some of us back.

Now this is why Ellen White puts it in this order in a quotation I read near the end. To me, it’s so impressive; I’d like to read it one more time. It’s in the *Signs of the Times* reprints that are just coming out now. It appeared in 1890, just a year and a half after the Minneapolis General Conference. What a summation of what Paul has been saying:

The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions [which in turn make God seem arbitrary and unreasonable]. He was pictured even as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of His creatures [severe]. The very attributes that belong to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent Him before the fallen

children of earth. Now angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which He could set and keep men right [I wonder if she had the word “justify” in the back of her mind. I just wish I could know that for sure because, to me, that’s the essential meaning of that experience]. The only way in which He could set and keep men right was to make Himself visible and familiar to their eyes. So, Christ came and exulted the character of God, giving to Him the credit of the whole purpose of His own mission on earth [the mission is now restated, “to set men right through the revelation of God.”].

And what is described in Romans as the ultimate demonstration of the righteousness of God—when God showed his Son publicly dying:

So, in Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfection of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion he declared, “I have manifested thy name, I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

By the way, is our work similar? Here is the statement of his work: “When the object of His mission was obtained, that is the revelation of God to the world; the son of God announced that His work was accomplished.”

Do you suppose our work is different? If we follow in his footsteps taking the gospel to all of the world, we will not be able to say the work is finished until we can say we have served to reveal the character of God to the world; that’s our business. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 5, recorded October, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/9MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/10MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

But so often we are trying to settle people on all the other matters. If you settle people on the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the state of the dead, tithe, and health, without settling them on the truth about God they might keep the Sabbath as Jesus’ enemies did. They might pay tithe as his enemies did. They might read the Bible as his enemies did. We could be developing in this “campaign to win a million Adventists”, we could, forbid the thought, develop a million enemies who faithfully keep the Sabbath, practice health reform, pay tithe, and read their Bibles. Now that is a horrible thought. But if we are not clear on the picture of God we might do well not to be in such a hurry. Have you read Ellen White’s comment?

“The Lord is not now working to bring many into the truth, because there are so many unconverted in the church.”

It would seem to defeat the purpose of God if he were to empower us to go out and misrepresent him. He won't do it. But as soon as we are settled into the truth, so the Holy Spirit could give us power of influence and persuasion to tell the truth about God it would make sense for him to do so.

I do not believe the latter rain or the Holy Spirit will fall until God's people are really settled into the truth. The same Spirit that will settle them into the truth will then give them persuasiveness and influence to spread this everlasting good news about God to the whole world and then the end will come. Which raises the question, "What is Christ waiting for now?"

It's nothing artificial. He is waiting for a group to be like Job, and to be able to pass through the time of trouble. Caused by whom?

COMMENT: Satan.

And the theologians? Think of all the people that caused Job trouble and nobody could shake him. And of course behind it all is the adversary. And of what is he trying to persuade these people? Of his age-old misrepresentation of God. In the end all theology goes back to the picture of God. And the Good News is that he is like this, and that he is not like that. And that's why I believe our whole mission as a church is to picture God as he really is. But if we just go and say he is like this, this and this, without evidence, why would anybody believe us? We have to go with the evidence which is where, but in the sixty-six? Remember the man who was reading in the chariot and he couldn't understand Isaiah? We have to be like Philip who got in with him and explained. We need to be able to help people understand this. And I think one of the most helpful things is to help people keep reading on and not getting bogged down in details. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Revelation*, recorded August, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/79MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/80MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. {Ed 17.2}

Our first parents chose to believe the words, as they thought, of a serpent, yet he had given them no tokens of his love. He had done nothing for their happiness and benefit; while God had

given them every thing that was good for food, and pleasant to the sight. Everywhere the eye might rest was abundance and beauty; yet Eve was deceived by the serpent to think that there was something withheld which would make them wise, even as God. Instead of believing and confiding in God, she basely mistrusted his goodness and cherished the words of Satan. {3SG 43.1}

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed. It was the tempter's purpose to thwart the divine plan in man's creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God's work in creating man. {SC 17.1}

In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Colossians 2:3. But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him. The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there—every heart responding to the heart of Infinite Love—would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there. He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy. It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. {SC 17.2}

In order to understand what is comprehended in the work of education, we need to consider both the nature of man and the purpose of God in creating him. We need to consider also the change in man's condition through the coming in of a knowledge of evil, and God's plan for still fulfilling His glorious purpose in the education of the human race. {Ed 14.4}

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to

the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty.
{PP 42.4}

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.
{DA 761.4}

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God. {DA 761.5}

For centuries God looked with patience and forbearance upon the cruel treatment given to his ambassadors, at his holy law prostrate, despised, trampled underfoot. He swept away the inhabitants of the Noachian world with a flood. But when the earth was again peopled, men drew away from God, and renewed their hostility to him, manifesting bold defiance. Those whom God rescued from Egyptian bondage followed in the footsteps of those who had preceded them. Cause was followed by effect; the earth was being corrupted. {RH, July 17, 1900 par. 4}

A crisis had arrived in the government of God. The earth was filled with transgression. The voices of those who had been sacrificed to human envy and hatred were crying beneath the altar for retribution. All heaven was prepared at the word of God to move to the help of his elect. One word from him, and the bolts of heaven would have fallen upon the earth, filling it with fire and flame. God had but to speak, and there would have been thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes and destruction. {RH, July 17, 1900 par. 5}

The heavenly intelligences were prepared for a fearful manifestation of Almighty power. Every move was watched with intense anxiety. The exercise of justice was expected. The angels looked for God to punish the inhabitants of the earth. . . . {RH, July 17, 1900 par. 6}

The heavenly universe was amazed at God's patience and love. To save fallen humanity the Son of God took humanity upon himself, laying aside his kingly crown and royal robe. {RH, July 17, 1900 par. 7}

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. {DA 19.2}

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. {DA 758.2}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate 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. {DA 758.3}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and results of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 12}

Well, then, might the angels rejoice as they looked upon the Saviour's cross; for though they did not then understand all, they knew that the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain, that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure. Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished." {DA 764.4}

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above. But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the

Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace. Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled. {DA 37.2}

“Come now, and let us reason together” is the Creator’s invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

The wind is heard among the branches of the trees, rustling the leaves and flowers; yet it is invisible, and no man knows whence it comes or whither it goes. So with the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. It can no more be explained than can the movements of the wind. A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart. Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher. Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus. By many this is called sudden conversion; but it is the result of long wooing by the Spirit of God,—a patient, protracted process. {DA 172.3}

While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God. {DA 173.1}

It is impossible for finite minds to comprehend the work of redemption. Its mystery exceeds human knowledge; yet he who passes from death to life realizes that it is a divine reality. The beginning of redemption we may know here through a personal experience. Its results reach through the eternal ages. {DA 173.2}

The work of Christ is to redeem, to restore, to seek and to save that which was lost. If we are connected with Christ, we also are partakers of the divine nature and are to be laborers together with God. We are to bind up the bruised and wounded soul; and if a brother or a sister has erred, we are not to join with the enemy in destroying and ruining, but to work with Christ to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. {HP 291.2}

The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves—it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. With it come serenity and composure. It implants in the soul, joy that nothing earthly can destroy,—joy in the Holy Spirit,—health-giving, life-giving joy. {MH 115.3}

Our Saviour's words, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills. Though men have brought suffering upon themselves by their own wrongdoing, He regards them with pity. In Him they may find help. He will do great things for those who trust in Him. {MH 115.4}