

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Second Quarter 2018: *Preparation for the End Time*
Lesson 4 “Salvation *and the End Time*”

Read for this week’s study

John 14:9; Zephaniah 3:17; John 1:1–3; Romans 8:38, 39; Psalm 91:15, 16; Revelation 14:6, 7; Ephesians 1:4, 5.

Memory Text

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Love of the Father
- III. The Love of Christ
- IV. The Love of the Spirit
- V. Assurance of Salvation
- VI. The Everlasting Gospel
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. What is the crucial difference between true Christian faith and all other religions? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read John 14:8-9. What does Jesus’ response to Philip tell us about the Father? What misconceptions about God does this response clear up? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read John 1:1-3, 14 and Philippians 2:5-8. What do they teach us about who Jesus is? Read Romans 8:38-39. How can we come to trust this God more deeply? (Monday’s lesson)
4. Read Luke 12:12, John 16:8-13 and Acts 13:2. What do these texts tell us about the Holy Spirit? How would you go about showing that the Holy Spirit is not just an impersonal force but is actually a unique personality? (Tuesday’s lesson)
5. Read Psalm 91:15-16. What does this text have to say about salvation? Read Joel 2:31-32. How are we to understand the passage’s claim that in the End Time salvation will be found only in the literal city of Jerusalem? If that is so clear biblically, why don’t Adventists and most Christians teach that? Read John 10:28.

What does this text tell us about God? How do we avoid the implications of “once saved always saved”? Read Romans 10:9-13 and 1 John 5:11-13. What do these passages clarify about salvation? (Wednesday’s lesson)

6. Read Revelation 14:6-7. What is the “everlasting gospel”? What does this text help us to understand about salvation in the context of the final events of earth’s history? How far back does this “everlasting” go (see Ephesians 1:4-5)? What is completely unchanging about the gospel? (Thursday’s lesson)
7. Is there such a thing as a false assurance of salvation? Read Matthew 7:21-23 for clarification. Why does Jesus call these followers of His “lawless” ones when they had worked so hard for Him? How can anyone know that the assurance of salvation they feel is really genuine? (Friday’s lesson)
8. Martin Luther reportedly said, “When I look to myself, I don’t know how I can be saved. When I look to Jesus, I don’t know how I can be lost.” What does this statement mean to you? Do you agree with this statement? Is one of these statements wrong or presumptuous or do we need to keep a balance between these two perceptions? (Friday’s lesson)
9. Does being chosen for salvation before the foundation of the world mean that everyone will be saved? If not, what is the significance of that divine choice for us today? (Friday’s lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And Philip said to Jesus, “Tell us about the Father and we will be satisfied.” Jesus replied, “Have I been with you so long Philip, and you don’t know me?”

Philip replied, as it were, “We aren’t asking about you. We worship you as the Son of God. And to our great surprise we are not afraid of you. What we want to know about is the Father. We want to know about the one who drowned all but eight and said, ‘if you disobey me, I will kill you.’ We want to know about the God who killed the firstborn in Egypt and the 185,000 Assyrians, and killed Uzzah when he touched the Ark and turned Lot’s wife into a pillar of salt, and swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and burned up Nadab and Abihu, and sent the she-bears,” you remember. And so on down the list. “Jesus, could the Father be like you?” And Jesus said, as in the scripture John 14:8, 9: “Philip said, ‘Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.’ Jesus answered: ‘Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.’”

“And Philip, as for those difficult stories in the Old Testament, don’t misunderstand them to mean that the Father is less gracious and less approachable than you have found me to be. It so happens that I am the one who led Israel in the wilderness. The command to stone Achan was mine. Philip, why don’t you ask me *why*? I’d love to tell you. I would almost put off the crucifixion if you disciples would only ask me.” And they never asked him.

He even went further to say something extraordinary to them in John 16:26, words which most Christians have not yet incorporated into the good news. Jesus said, “Let me tell you plainly about my Father.” And the words that follow are the ones on the sheet; John 16:26: “I do not promise to intercede with the Father for you, for the Father loves you himself.” (Goodspeed). The most astonishing words in the Bible; we will spend much time on them later. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #6, “Evaluating The Evidence” recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/6MMCAG>*

Some derive comfort from the thought and the fact, as the Bible says, that God has given all judgment to the Son. Look at John 5:22: “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.” (RSV) And many find that much more comforting, because you are much more likely to receive merciful treatment at the hand of the Son than of the Father? Is that true? I’ve heard some say with real gratitude, “I have no fear of the judgment because I know I have a friend in court.”

And I ask, “Who is that friend?”

Then comes the warm response, “Why, Jesus, of course.”

“You mean the Father is no friend of yours?”

“Oh, I didn’t mean that.”

“Then what did you mean when you said that you were happy to have a friend in court and Jesus is your friend? Is the Father no friend? What of the Holy Spirit?”

You remember Jesus’ words to Philip in John 14:7, 9: “If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. . . . He who has seen me has seen the Father.” (RSV) If you knew this to be true, you would never say, “I am grateful that I have a friend in court and I mean Jesus and not the Father.” You couldn’t say that, could you?

Some derive comfort from the thought—as they face the final judgment at the hands of one who knows us in such detail—that when their cases come up for consideration, Jesus will be there interceding with the Father in our behalf. Does that mean that because gentle Jesus is pleading with the Father, we are more likely to receive merciful treatment? Think what that implies about the Father! Is the Father less loving and less forgiving than the Son? Who says that he is exacting, unforgiving, and severe? Are we even going to, in expressing our doctrines, seem to support Satan’s charges against our God? Remember Jesus’ words in John 16:26: “I need make no promise to plead to the Father for you [or, as we had in an earlier Bible Reference Sheet, Goodspeed’s translation; there is no need for me to intercede with the Father for you. Why not?] For the Father himself loves you.” (Phillips)

The Son does not love us more than the Father, or understand us better than the Father, or is more sympathetic than the Father. If we have seen the *Son* we have seen the *Father*.

According to Romans 8, all three members of the Godhead are for us; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Who is the one who is against us? Against whose charges do we need to be defended? You see, whether we are judged by Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, we have no need to be afraid of God. Now further than this, understanding how the judgment is conducted and what determines whether we are saved or lost, gives us further evidence as to why we have no need to be afraid. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #9, "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>

Lou: This very important text— John 16:26—that you referred to as perhaps the most misunderstood or . . .

Graham: Ignored.

Lou: Ignored text. "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you." There are so many texts, though, about intercession, and then here's this one that seems clear the *other way*. We don't need an intercessor. You talked about the principle of understanding in the light of all of the texts. What would you say to that, if I would say, "Look, let's take all of these texts that talk about intercession and understand this one in the light of all these texts."

Graham: Yes. We so often say that if it's a difficult verse, it should be understood in the light of all the clear ones.

Lou: Right.

Graham: Well, what's so interesting about that is that Jesus labeled this verse "plain and clear." He didn't say it was difficult.

Lou: So we really didn't need any other.

Graham: I will accept the Son of God's evaluation as a statement. It is one of the only ones in the whole Bible designated as "plain and clear." And I will understand all the other verses in the Bible in the light of this one. However, one should never leave the others out. We must build a model of understanding based on everything in the Bible. We must be able to put that precious verse in, and all the others, too. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #11 with Lou Venden, "God's Emergency Measures" recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/11MMCAG>

Lou: You referred to Romans 8 in the Bible Reference Sheet. That goes on to say something about how the Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words, or I noticed in the *New International Version*, “With groans that words cannot express.” What’s happening there? What is the Spirit doing with God on our behalf?

Graham: Well, immediately we need to remember John 16:26. If there is no need for the Son to intercede with the Father for us, there’s no need for the Holy Spirit to intercede with the Father for us. They’re all Three on our side. And I’m impressed that Bible students through the years have agreed on what this means. That the Holy Spirit of truth comes and helps us to pray by bringing us the truth about God, that we might be encouraged to pray. He also brings us the truth about ourselves and helps us be honest and tell the truth. He helps us tell the truth in prayer, to God as he really is, and that’s prayer that makes a difference. So in a way, the Holy Spirit “through our groans,” in a way, he is inspiring us to desire these things very much. He’s the one who guides us into true conversation with God as with a friend. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #15 with Lou Venden, “Talking To God as A Friend” recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>

Lou: What about the Holy Spirit?

Graham: The same way there. I think the devil has perverted that, that the Holy Spirit is a shortcut. You don’t need the truth; you just need the Spirit. And when you have this indwelling, this feeling that comes up through your body—and unfortunately, it is often described as starting with the feet and ending with the head. If it would only go down the other way, it might filter out some things on the way! And that if the Holy Spirit comes, he will take over, and he will take charge, and God will run you. It sounds so good. It’s a devilish perversion.

The Bible says, “When the Holy Spirit comes, he will guide you into truth.” He will help you investigate, and he will give you the gift of self-control. So, all of these doctrines can be used both ways. We’ve got to present the Spirit as bringing independence, teaching us self-control, things like that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #18 with Lou Venden, “God Waits for His Children to Grow Up” recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG>

To see and to present the plan of salvation in the larger setting of the great controversy over the character and government of God is, I believe, the highest privilege of God’s friends on this planet today.

It's perhaps understandable that as beginners, (recognizing that we're sinners and we need to be saved) at first we should tend to be preoccupied with what God has done for you and me that we might be saved. But then as we grow up, and we learn to take the Bible as a whole, it becomes apparent that our own personal salvation (important as that is) is only a small part of the far larger plan that involves the peace and security of the whole vast universe; the confirmation of the truth about our God himself.

Now it is true, we recognize that not all Christians have understood the plan of Salvation in this larger view. Even the great theologians of the Reformation—and how we should be grateful for them and what they dared to do! But even the great reformers did not see it this way. Even Luther, maybe the greatest hero of the Reformation and so admired by many of us—even he was more preoccupied with God's gracious provisions to save you and me. But even that is understandable for Luther was unable to make much use of the sixty-sixth book, the book of Revelation. Much as Luther correctly insisted that we should use "the Bible and the Bible only"; you know that Latin phrase, *Sola Scriptura*. Even though he urged that, he himself was not able to use all sixty-six books. He particularly regarded Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation as inferior to the other books in the New Testament. {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>*

Our question this evening is "What really went wrong in God's universe?" Because I believe that to understand what went wrong helps us to understand the methods God used to put right the things that had gone wrong. These methods we often call the plan of salvation. And as we discussed last week, we're accustomed to thinking of the plan of salvation as God's gracious provisions to save you and me, and other sinners on this planet. But in the larger view of the great controversy, the plan of salvation is God's way of setting right what went wrong, and setting it right in such a way that it will never go wrong again. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #2, "What Went Wrong In God's Universe?" 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/2MMCAG>*

I would want to be careful not to make light of those who are still preoccupied with their own salvation and what God has done for them. That's where we begin. That's where children begin. And it's perfectly proper. And we all grow up at different rates, you know. And we all have different backgrounds. To many people, in our fear of God, we are preoccupied with our legal standing with our sovereign master. To such people, sin is breaking his rules. And sin is

dangerous because it offends the lawmaker. And so when we have broken the rules, and have angered him, we become preoccupied with forgiveness, that we may escape the penalty. Now how the sacrifice of an innocent party makes it possible for God, justly, to forgive, is not the servants' concern. All he's concerned about is, "is the master satisfied?" I'm sure you've seen that happen, and there's not much discussion about how that could be a just thing, a right thing to do. Don't discuss it. The question is, is God satisfied? The basic premise of many, and it was particularly mentioned during the reformation period, but it is as old as the Jews in the Old Testament: God is required by law, by justice, and by the holiness of his own character and government, not only to execute those who disobey him, but, and this is where the variations come, the most common view is, to torment them for eternity. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Atonement and Your Picture of God, recorded May, 1993, San Diego, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMAANDP> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMAANDP> (Part 2)

There is one truth, then, that one must say "yes" to in order to view the future unafraid, and that's the truth about God. That's the only thing Jesus was left with on the cross as the devil tempted him to doubt his father. Remember that whole record? He feared for awhile that their separation was to be eternal. Who tempted him to fear such a thing? The devil was tempting Jesus to doubt his testimony about his father. He was tempting Jesus to believe that God maybe was vengeful and severe. "But no," he said, "I've taught all my life the truth about my heavenly Father. I can't see any confirming evidence right now, but all the weight of evidence from the Old Testament confirmed by my experience with my Father for these thirty-some years, I will not deny what I have known to be true for so many years." And though he could not see through the portals of the tomb he said, "I commit myself into the hands of my Father" and it says by faith Christ died a victor. Though the only assurance he had that all would be well was the Old Testament that he would rise again and the Old Testament that his Father was an infinitely gracious God. He died in faith in that. I believe our confidence for the future lies in whether or not we accept the truth about our gracious heavenly Father. And to this Hebrews bears witness. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Hebrews, chapter 3, recorded October, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/3MMHEBREWS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMHEBREWS66> (Part 2)

Not the obedience that springs from law, but the obedience that springs from faith. Now, what produces this obedience that springs from faith? Is it not the good news about our God, the kind of person he is, what he wants of us, and how infinitely worthy he is of our love and trust? And how highly he values our freedom? This leads us to a willingness to listen, the meaning of

obedience. It leads to loyalty. It leads to Revelation 14:12: “Here are they who keep God’s commandments and maintain their loyalty to him and to his Son.”

So the first angel comes with the everlasting gospel, the everlasting good news. What is it? Well, everyone ought, perhaps, to state his own version. I had the privilege of putting it on the back of the invitation to these conversations about God:

The Good News is God is not the kind of person his enemies have made him out to be; arbitrary, unforgiving, and severe. Jesus said, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” God is just as loving and trustworthy as his Son; just as willing to forgive and heal. Though infinite in majesty and power, our Creator is an equally gracious person who values nothing higher than the freedom, the dignity, and the individuality of his intelligent creatures, that their love, their faith, their willingness to listen and obey may be freely given.

This is the truth revealed through all the books of Scripture. This is the everlasting good news that wins the trust and admiration of God’s loyal children throughout the universe.

Could you be dogmatic about that? That’s the only truth that is safe to be dogmatic about. To be like Paul and say, “Even if an angel came with a different picture of God, it is wrong, and I will not believe it.” To me, this is not a negotiable position. You see one can be adamant, immovable, and dogmatic about freedom, because you never hurt anybody with that view. You are immovably committed to freedom, and to the picture of God as valuing nothing higher than the freedom of his children. To me, that is the essence of the message of the first angel. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #16, “God’s Last Pleading with His Children” recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, veiling His glory and humbling Himself, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed in unfolding its record of His own condescending grace. In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. But language seems to be so feeble! I refrain, and with John exclaim, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not” [1 John 3:1].—Letter 83, 1895.

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character are revealed. By the marvelous display of His love in giving “His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” the character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. Through Christ our heavenly Father is made known as the God of love. {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 5}

The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour’s life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man’s redemption. {SC 21.2}

“I and My Father are one,” Christ declared. “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” John 10:30; Matthew 11:27. {MH 419.2}

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men. {SC 10.3}

Having undertaken the work of man’s redemption, the Father would spare nothing, however dear, which was essential for the completion of His work. He would make opportunities for men; He would pour upon them His blessings; He would heap favor upon favor, gift upon gift, until the whole treasury of heaven was open to those whom He came to save. Having collected all the riches of the universe, and laid open all the resources of His divine nature, God gave them all for the use of man. They were His free gift. What an ocean of love is circulating, like a divine atmosphere, around the world! What manner of love is this, that the eternal God should adopt human nature in the person of His Son, and carry the same into the highest heaven! {TMK 19.2}

All the heavenly intelligences were watching with intense interest the warfare that was going on upon the earth—the earth that Satan claimed as his dominion. Every moment was big with eternal realities. How would the conflict end? The angels looked for the justice of God to be revealed, His anger to be aroused against the prince of darkness and his sympathizers. But lo,

mercy prevailed. When the Son of God might have come to the world to condemn, He came as righteousness and peace, to save not merely the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but all the world—every son and daughter of Adam who would believe on Him, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. What an exhibition of the love of Jehovah! This is love without a parallel.

{TMK 19.3}

Christ had been sent to earth to represent God in character. Jesus was the Life giver, the Teacher sent of God to provide salvation for a lost world, and to save men in spite of all Satan's temptations and lying deceptions. He himself was the gospel. In his teachings he clearly presented the great plan devised for the redemption of the race. Divinity had united with humanity for the purpose of uniting humanity with divinity, that through Christ man might become a partaker of the divine nature. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

{RH, July 7, 1896 par. 5}

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ's own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world. {6T 55.1}

Jesus came into the world to illustrate the character of God in His own life, and He swept back the misrepresentations that Satan had originated, and revealed the glory of God. It was only by living among men that He could reveal the mercy, compassion, and love of His heavenly Father; for it was only by actions of benevolence that He could set forth the grace of God. The unbelief of men was deep seated, and yet they could not resist the testimony of His God-like example, and His deeds of love and truth. {SD 139.3}

Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which the flesh is heir. He has represented him as a God who delights in the sufferings of his creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone the human reason. {RH, November 17, 1891 par. 5}

Heaven, looking down, and seeing the delusions into which men were led, knew that a divine Instructor must come to earth. Men in ignorance and moral darkness must have light, spiritual light; for the world knew not God, and he must be revealed to their understanding. Truth looked down from heaven, and saw not the reflection of her image; for dense clouds of moral darkness and gloom enveloped the world, and the Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds; for he was the light of the world. By his presence he could dissipate the gloomy shadow that Satan had cast between man and God. Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Through the accumulated misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived

that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character.
{RH, November 17, 1891 par. 6}

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship him in spirit and in truth. Christ revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature. Christ came to the world to sow it with truth. He held the keys to all the treasures of wisdom, and was able to open doors to science, and to reveal undiscovered stores of knowledge, were it essential to salvation. He presented to men that which was exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the paternal love of the Father, who “so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love, not only those who loved them, but those who hated them, who treated them spitefully. In this he was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. Those who accepted his teaching were under the guardian care of angels, who were commissioned to strengthen, to enlighten, that the truth might renew and sanctify the soul.
{RH, November 17, 1891 par. 7}

From the beginning it has been Satan’s studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will. {5T 738.1}

It was by falsifying the character of God and exciting distrust of Him that Satan tempted Eve to transgress. By sin the minds of our first parents were darkened, their natures were degraded, and their conceptions of God were molded by their own narrowness and selfishness. And as men became bolder in sin, the knowledge and the love of God faded from their minds and hearts. “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God,” they “became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” {5T 738.2}

At times Satan’s contest for the control of the human family appeared to be crowned with success. During the ages preceding the first advent of Christ the world seemed almost wholly under the sway of the prince of darkness, and he ruled with a terrible power as though through the sin of our first parents the kingdoms of the world had become his by right. Even the

covenant people, whom God had chosen to preserve in the world the knowledge of Himself, had so far departed from Him that they had lost all true conception of His character. {5T 738.3}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life. {5T 738.4}

Man's need for a divine teacher was known in heaven. The pity and sympathy of God were aroused in behalf of human beings, fallen and bound to Satan's chariot car; and when the fullness of time was come, He sent forth His Son. The One appointed in the councils of heaven came to this earth as man's instructor. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world, and to meet the necessities of human nature He took humanity upon Himself. To the astonishment of the heavenly host the eternal Word came to this world as a helpless babe. Fully prepared, He left the royal courts and mysteriously allied Himself with fallen human beings. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14. {CT 259.2}

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. {RH, July 17, 1900 par. 7}

The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his

personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high. {DA 669.2}

When Christ ascended to the Father, He did not leave His followers without help. The Holy Spirit, as His representative, and the heavenly angels, as ministering spirits, are sent forth to aid those who against great odds are fighting the good fight of faith. Ever remember that Jesus is your helper. No one understands as well as He your peculiarities of character. He is watching over you, and if you are willing to be guided by Him, He will throw around you influences for good that will enable you to accomplish all His will for you. {MYP 17.1}

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}

Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through cooperation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {ML 49.4}

The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. We do not see Christ and speak to Him, but His Holy Spirit is just as near us in one place as in another. It works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of the Spirit reveal the fruits of

the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (MS 41, 1897).
{6BC 1112.1}

It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil and to impress His own character on His church. . . .
{ML 46.2}

Recommended Reading: “God Made Manifest in Christ” – *Signs of the Times* January 20, 1890

“The Purpose and Plan of Grace” – *Signs of the Times* April 25, 1892

“Surpassing Love Revealed in His Plan” – *Signs of the Times* December 15, 1914

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