

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Third Quarter 2020: *Making Friends for God: The Joy of Sharing in His Mission*

#### Lesson 4 “Prayer Power: Interceding for Others”

#### Read for this week’s study

Revelation 12:7–9; Ephesians 6:12; Hebrews 7:25; Ephesians 1:15–21; Daniel 10:10–14;  
1 John 5:14–16.

#### Memory Text

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Cosmic Struggle
- III. Jesus: The Mighty Intercessor
- IV. Paul’s Intercessory Prayers
- V. Unseen Powers at Work
- VI. Prayer Focus
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read James 5:13-16. What do you make of this passage? Why is it necessary to call the elders? What is the purpose of anointing with oil? Why is it important to use the name of the Lord? Read Acts 4:31. What happened when the disciples prayed after Pentecost? Should we expect similar things as a result of prayer today? What is the relationship between prayer and healing? When there is a relationship, why does healing occur? Why are miraculous healings so rare in today’s world? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Compare Revelation 12:7-9, Ephesians 6:12 and 2 Corinthians 10:4. How do these passages influence our understanding of intercessory prayer? Does God work more powerfully when people pray than when they don’t? Why would that be the case? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Luke 3:21, 5:16 and 9:18. What do these texts tell us about the relationship between Jesus’ prayer life and His effectiveness in ministry? Read Luke 22:31-34 and

- Hebrews 7:25. What assurance did Jesus give Peter to prepare him for the temptations he would face in the near future? What is the meaning of intercession in Hebrews 7:25? Does God need the intercession of Jesus in order to treat us kindly and fairly? If not, what purpose does intercession serve? (Monday's lesson)
4. Read Ephesians 1:15-21. Notice the various requests Paul made to God for the Ephesians. What specific things did he ask God to give them? Read Philippians 1:3-11 and note the tone of Paul's prayer. What promises are found in the wording of this passage? What admonitions are there in the passage as well? In verse 7 it speaks about being partakers of grace, what exactly is grace? (Tuesday's lesson)
  5. Read Daniel 10:10-14. When were Daniel's prayers heard and what temporarily hindered them? Who is the prince of Persia? Could any human being truly be said to hinder the work of God? Read Revelation 12:4, 7-11. When it speaks about a war in heaven, what kind of war is this? How do you see the reality of the Great Controversy playing out in your own life? (Wednesday's lesson)
  6. Read 1 Samuel 12:22-24 and Job 16:21. What do these two passages have in common? What do they tell us about intercessory prayer? How is it a sin not to pray for someone? Read 1 John 5:14-16. What happens when we intercede for others? Read Matthew 18:18-19. What relationship does this passage have to intercessory prayer? Does the power of prayer really increase when more people pray about the same matter? (Thursday's lesson)
  7. Read Philippians 1:19, Colossians 4:2-3 and 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2. How did the prayers of the Philippians encourage Paul during his imprisonment? What did he ask the Colossians and the Thessalonians to pray for in his behalf? (Friday's lesson)
  8. Why do most Christians seem to believe that God is more willing to find them a parking space than to heal someone of cancer? (Friday's lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: In this matter of praying for others, the matter of intercessory prayer, does that really do any good?

Graham: That's an interesting phrase, "Does it do any good?" That's a good way to put it. See, we don't want to miss out on any good thing. We want to get our money's worth here, you know!

Lou: Isn't that the wrong way to understand that. Did I put it poorly?

Graham: Well, it doesn't seem like prayer is conversation with God as with a friend. To be specific, here's a mother with a son who has chosen to go his own way. She loves her son. And so every night she talks to God about her son. If she didn't, she wouldn't be normal. She loves her son. So you talk with God about the things that are on your mind, and we don't say, "God,

force my boy back.” And we know that if God would pour out his Holy Spirit with one hundred-fold greater intensity on the son, it would not make him a Christian. He could still say, “No.” So we’re still saying, “God, you choose the time. You choose the way. Help me to be patient. Help me to do what I can do, and maybe bring every influence possible to bear, but I know my son can still say ‘No,’ as Lucifer said ‘No’ to your very face.” See, we understand that as we pray, but I’m not going to say it does no good to talk to God. I’m going to talk to him anyway. This is my son, and I’m going to talk to him about my son.

Lou: But for example, if there is a particular need. I remember from years ago when there was a situation in one of the countries of Europe where people were suffering persecution and doors were being closed to churches. And we had a day of fasting and prayer.

Graham: I remember that.

Lou: Now if we were to join together to pray, does our joining in a kind of special movement of prayer, does that mean special power to bring about?

Graham: So long as it wouldn’t mean the more of us twist God’s arm, the more likely we are to get what we want. The time that this occurred, a whole group of theology majors at PUC—I was still up there in the 1950s when this occurred. They said, “Let’s meet for lunch every Monday noon and discuss this until we’re satisfied.” And we agreed finally that within the limitations of the great controversy, with an enemy there accusing God of interfering and manipulating things, and with angels desiring to understand, I believe our united requests set God free to do things he had been longing to do. Because when we all together said, “Please, will you open the churches in Romania,” or wherever it was, God could say to the adversary, “Step aside. I’m on my way.” And he could say to the angels, “Is this interference? Is this manipulation? Do you hear them all asking me?” I think the great controversy is very much involved here, and I wonder then, if more of us would unite in asking God for these things, if we might not set him free more frequently to be able to say to the adversary, “Step aside, I’m being asked to do this.” And he could do it. So I believe our prayers set him free to do this.

Lou: They do make a real difference.

Graham: Yes. We should do it anyway.

Lou: But what about an individual? If we were to join together and pray for the conversion of an individual, you referred to this earlier, but could we compel; would God have to answer that prayer so this person would, in fact, be converted?

Graham: See immediately what that would say about God. If God by force can keep his family together, how did he lose one third of the angels?

Lou: It really gets at the whole issue, doesn’t it?

Graham: Absolutely. God will not bring such pressure on my son.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15, "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>*

COMMENT: That reminds me of a discussion we had about the effect of praying for someone. If, for example, you had a lot of family members, or a lot of friends, or something, praying for a particular person, and maybe another person in a similar situation didn't have any friends praying for him, did the person who had all these prayers going up in his behalf stand a better chance than the poor guy who maybe wanted to do what was right but didn't have as many people praying for him? That puts God in a bad light!

Graham: Ellen White has a beautiful comment. "If the Holy Spirit were poured out upon you with a one-hundredfold greater intensity, it would not make you a Christian." You cannot force, anyway. So if we all united in praying for, who should we pick? See, you can't pick anyone bad enough that he couldn't come across. If Manasseh could make it, so could Idi Amin. So who can we pick, in the world today? If we all united in prayer, every last one of us, and God emptied heaven of all the angels to work on that character, would that necessarily bring him across? If it could, then how come God lost Lucifer and one third of the angels? They lived in his very presence, and he couldn't keep them. They were free to leave. And you know he did everything he could to win them back. And Christ led the angels, the loyal angels, in an endless campaign to win the disloyal angels back, and they could not do it. Nor could Jesus win Judas. Think how Jesus prayed for his disciples, and he could not win Judas.

So sometimes we put God in a very bad light. In fact, it then rolls back on him the total responsibility for there being any lost. He just didn't work hard enough. I think the best thing to do is what you've done, consider the implications of this. And when the implications run so directly counter to the clearest truths of scripture, then they can't be so. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1&2 Peter and James, recorded July 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/75MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/76MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

But if as Jesus said, God already knows our needs before we ask him, why should we take time to pray at all? Of course, that assumes that the primary purpose of prayer is to lodge our requests with the Lord. But there are others who prefer to understand prayer as conversation with God as with a friend. It's in the biblical record that the Son of God himself engaged in many such conversations with his Father. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series,

Conversations About God, #15, "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>

What would we talk about? Could you on such a precious occasion say, "Thank you, God, for today's groceries and here is my list for tomorrow, amen," and then go on about your business? Or more seriously, right there with the Father, might you say, "Bless the missionaries as they carry the truth to the far-flung corners of the earth." The Lord might say, "How sweet. How is it that you only think of these things when you are at the time of prayer?" Of course, if you are the mother of a missionary, how appropriate for you to talk to God about your loved ones. And missionaries, above all people, deserve and need our prayers. But if we are not thinking about them the rest of the time, just that when we talk to God, we feel that we should only mention the most lofty themes and not the things we have been really thinking about all day?

You see, for some of us, those well-worn phrases about the missionaries and other sorts of things we understand we *ought* to mention when we pray, might seem rather empty when we are talking face to face with God as with a friend. Or, if we should leave the meeting and walk through a garden in the community, wouldn't it be natural, walking with God, to comment with admiration on the beauty and fragrance of a rose, and the beautiful sounds of the mockingbirds? Aren't they magnificent right now? And then that lovely, lonely sound of the mourning dove. Why couldn't we tell him how beautiful it was to create things that way? Or walking through the garden, would we simply say, "We thank thee, Lord, for the beauties of nature that surround us," and move on to some other topic? We do have well-worn phrases to cover these things. It seems to me that if God really were our Friend, we would take time to talk about these things and to be more specific about them, as we would with other members of the family. We might even venture to ask him about the thorns on the rose. "Did you put them there? If so, why?" Or is it all right to ask questions of our God? Job did, and he honored God with his confidence. You remember how boldly, but reverently, Job agonized with God—to the consternation of his friends. They worried that God would surely smite Job for daring to talk to the Father like this.

The whole book of Job is on this subject. I have picked just one place. Look at Job 29:2-4 and 30:20. Job cries to God:

If only my life could once again be as it was when God watched over me. God was always with me then . . . and the friendship of God protected my home . . . [But now] I call to you, O God, but you never answer, and when I pray, you pay no attention. (GNB)

How that worried Job's friends! But was God offended? No, look at our next verse, Job 42:7. God said to the three friends, who were so worried: "You did not speak the truth about me the

way my servant Job did.” (GNB) You see, Job knew God, and he honored God with those cries. God was not talking to him just then. And Job was deeply upset because their friendship seemed to be at an end. So what upset the friends complemented God, and spoke well of their relationship. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15, “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>*

### Further Study with Ellen White

The teaching of this parable is illustrated in God’s own dealing with men and angels. Satan is a deceiver. When he sinned in heaven, even the loyal angels did not fully discern his character. This was why God did not at once destroy him. Had He done so, the holy angels would not have perceived the justice and love of God. A doubt of God’s goodness would have been as evil seed that would yield the bitter fruit of sin and woe. Therefore the author of evil was spared, fully to develop his character. {UL 77.5}

Christ came to this earth in human form that He might stand as the Captain of our salvation, so that we should not be overcome by Satan’s power. And when the enemy has seemed to be gaining a signal victory over righteousness, God has been working in mercy and power to counteract his designs. {TDG 308.4}

God has angels whose whole work is to draw those who shall be heirs of salvation. Whenever one takes a step toward Jesus, Jesus is taking steps toward him. The angels’ work is to keep back the powers of Satan (MS 17, 1893). {7BC 922.5}

Holy, ministering agencies of heaven are cooperating with human agencies to lead into safe paths all who love truth and righteousness. It is the greatest joy of the angels of heaven to spread the shield of their tender love over souls who turn to God; . . . {7BC 922.9}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly

present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. {TMK 57.2}

God had power to hold Adam back from touching the forbidden fruit; but had He done this, Satan would have been sustained in his charge against God’s arbitrary rule. Man would not have been a free moral agent, but a mere machine (RH June 4, 1901). {1BC 1084.2}

Today the truths of Scripture are to be brought before the great men of the world in order that they may choose between obedience to God’s law and allegiance to the prince of evil. God sets everlasting truth before them—truth that will make them wise unto salvation, but He does not force them to accept it. If they turn from it, He leaves them to themselves, to be filled with the fruit of their own doings. {AA 241.2}

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. {MB 142.1}

It is not the plan of God to compel men to yield their wicked unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which to accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture (*Redemption: or the Miracles of Christ*, pp. 112, 113). {1BC 1120.5}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. {MB 127.1}

Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. They are invited by the Saviour, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." Isaiah 27:5. The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion, but angels of God will contend for that soul with prevailing power. The Lord says, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? . . . Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children." Isaiah 49:24, 25. {DA 258.6}

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8. {SC 34.2}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "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}

I saw that the angels of God are never to control the will. God sets before man life and death. He can have his choice. {EW 221.1}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP 34.3}

God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve. {PK 510.4}

In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Romans 14:12, 5. In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to the earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to co-operate with men in uplifting humanity. {DA 550.6}

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 (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 42, 43). {LHU 19.6}

Satan's policy in this final conflict with God's people is the same that he employed in the opening of the great controversy in heaven. He professed to be seeking to promote the stability of the divine government, while secretly bending every effort to secure its overthrow. And the very work which he was thus endeavoring to accomplish he charged upon the loyal angels. {GC 591.1}

God never forces the will or the conscience; but Satan's constant resort—to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise seduce—is compulsion by cruelty. Through fear or force he endeavors to rule the conscience and to secure homage to himself. To accomplish this, he works through both religious and secular authorities, moving them to the enforcement of human laws in defiance of the law of God. {GC 591.2}

It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, that seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederate with evil angels bring suffering upon their fellow men, in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. {DA 487.3}

God has given us the power of choice; it is ours to exercise. We cannot change our hearts, we cannot control our thoughts, our impulses, our affections. We cannot make ourselves pure, fit for God's service. But we can choose to serve God, we can give Him our will; then He will work in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus our whole nature will be brought under the control of Christ. {MH 176.2}

And the same compassion that reached out to rescue Peter is extended to every soul who has fallen under temptation. It is Satan's special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon. But why should we fear, when God has said, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me?" Isaiah 27:5. Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ. {COL 156.1}

In the whole Satanic force there is not power to overcome one soul who in simple trust casts himself on Christ. {COL 157.3}

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. {FE 179.3}

As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a "God of gods," able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him. {PK 513.1}

In the day of affliction, when the enemy presses us, we shall walk among the angels. They will be like a wall of fire about us; and we shall one day walk with them in the city of God. . . . {LHU 341.4}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. Since sin brought separation between man and his Maker, no man has seen God at any time, except as He is manifested through Christ. {MH 419.1}

Christ is your Advocate. In this powerful, hearty recognition of God's love, take the hand of Christ, and hold it fast. His hand holds you much firmer than you can hold His hand. {SD 22.6}

In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but God's can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hidden desires and longings to the Father of infinite pity, and in the hush and silence of the soul that voice which never fails to answer the cry of human need will speak to our hearts. {Pr 182.6}

We may commune with God in our hearts; we may walk in companionship with Christ. When engaged in our daily labor, we may breathe out our heart's desire, inaudible to any human ear; but that word cannot die away into silence, nor can it be lost. Nothing can drown the soul's

desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the noise of machinery. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard. {Pr 188.1}

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. {Pr 8.4}

Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, "Ye shall receive." {AA 564.1}

There is a mighty power in prayer. Our great adversary is constantly seeking to keep the troubled soul away from God. An appeal to Heaven by the humblest saint is more to be dreaded by Satan than the decrees of cabinets or the mandates of kings. {HP 82.5}

It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask. {ML 15.5}

Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. The very highest angels in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage. . . . {4BC 1173.5}

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}

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. . . [N]ot 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}

That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. . . The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. . . The plan of salvation,

making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 4}

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. {5T 738.1}

Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,—to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections 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." When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 9}

If you ask the help of God, you will not ask in vain. The Lord is at work in many ways to win your hearty confidence. In nothing does He take more delight than to have you unburden, come to Him for light and strength, and He has promised that you shall find rest to your soul. If you will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to hear, and an arm will be reached down to save you. There is a God that hears prayer, and when all other resources fail, He is your refuge, a very present help in time of trouble. . . . {TDG 184.4}

The character of God as revealed by Christ invites our faith and love, for we have a Father whose mercy and compassion fail not. At every step of our journey heavenward He will be with us to guide in every perplexity, to give us help in every temptation. {HP 16.4}

The religion of Jesus Christ is not merely to prepare us for the future immortal life; it is to enable us to live the Christ life here on earth. Jesus is not only our pattern, He is also our friend and our guide, and by taking hold of His strong arm and partaking of His Spirit, we may walk "even as he walked." {TMK 298.6}