

Lesson 10
Sabbath Afternoon, May 30
Repentance and Forgiveness

He who has the spotless robe of righteousness, woven in the loom of heaven, in which is not a thread that sinful humanity can claim, is at the right hand of God, to clothe His believing children in the perfect garment of His righteousness. Those who are saved in the kingdom of God will have nothing of which to boast in themselves; the praise and the glory will all flow back to God. . . .

It is not now the work of the sinner to make peace with God, but to accept Christ as his peace and righteousness. Thus man becomes one with Christ and one with God. There is no way by which the heart may be made holy, save through faith in Christ. Yet many think that repentance is a kind of preparation which men must originate themselves before they can come to Christ. They must take steps themselves in order to find Christ a mediator in their behalf. It is true that there must be repentance before there is pardon, but the sinner must come to Christ before he can find repentance. It is the virtue of Christ that strengthens and enlightens the soul, so that repentance may be godly and acceptable. . . . Repentance is as certainly a gift of Jesus Christ as is forgiveness of sins. Repentance cannot be experienced without Christ, for it is the repentance of which He is the author that is the ground upon which we may apply for pardon. It is through the work of the Holy Spirit that men are led to repentance. It is from Christ that the grace of contrition comes, as well as the gift of pardon, and repentance as well as forgiveness of sins is procured only through the atoning blood of Christ. Those whom God pardons He first makes penitent. —*That I May Know Him*, p. 109.

Like Nicodemus, we must be willing to enter into life in the same way as the chief of sinners. Than Christ, "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) Through faith we receive the grace of God; but faith is not our Saviour. It earns nothing. It is the hand by which we lay hold upon Christ, and appropriate His merits, the remedy for sin. And we cannot even repent without the aid of the Spirit of God. The Scripture says of Christ, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5:31.) Repentance comes from Christ as truly as does pardon.

How, then, are we to be saved? "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," so the Son of man has been lifted up, and everyone who has been deceived and bitten by the serpent may look and live. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God." Psalm 40:8. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 175.

Sunday, May 31
The Rush of Life

The parable of the wedding garment [Matthew 22:1-14] opens before us a lesson of the highest consequence. . . . By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. . . . The fine linen, says the Scripture, "is the righteousness of saints." It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour.

The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. . . . A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. . . . But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering.

We cannot provide a robe of righteousness for ourselves, for the prophet says, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). There is nothing in us from which we can clothe the soul so that its nakedness shall not appear. We are to receive the robe of righteousness woven in the loom of heaven, even the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness.

God has made ample provision that we may stand perfect in His grace, wanting in nothing, waiting for the appearing of our Lord. Are you ready? Have you the wedding garment on? That garment will never cover deceit, impurity, corruption, or hypocrisy. The eye of God is upon you. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We may conceal our sins from the eyes of men, but we can hide nothing from our Maker. —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 24.

The Lord Jesus Christ has prepared a covering—the robe of His own righteousness—that He will put on every repenting, believing soul who by faith will receive it. Said John, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Sin is the transgression of the law. Christ died to make it possible for every man to have his sins taken away.

A fig-leaf apron will never cover our nakedness. Sin must be taken away, and the garment of Christ's righteousness must cover the transgressor of God's law. Then when the Lord looks upon the believing sinner, He sees, not the fig leaves covering him, but Christ's own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. Man has hidden his nakedness, not under a covering of fig leaves, but under the robe of Christ's righteousness. —*The Upward Look*, p. 378.

Monday, June 01
Holy Spirit Promptings

God will move upon those in humble positions to declare the message of present truth. Many such will be seen hastening hither and thither, constrained by the Spirit of God to give the light to those in darkness. The truth is as a fire in their bones, filling them with a burning desire to enlighten those who sit in darkness. Many, even among the uneducated, will proclaim the Word of the Lord. Children will be impelled by the Holy Spirit to go forth to declare the message of heaven. The Spirit will be poured out upon those who yield to His promptings. Casting off humanity's binding rules and cautious movements, they will join the army of the Lord.

In the future, those in the common walks of life will be impressed by the Spirit of the Lord to leave their ordinary employment and go forth to proclaim the last message of mercy. As rapidly as possible they are to be prepared for labor, that success may crown their efforts. They cooperate with heavenly agencies, for they are willing to spend and be spent in the service of the Master. No one is authorized to hinder these workers. They are to be bidden Godspeed as they go forth to fulfill the great commission. No taunting word is to be spoken of them as in the rough places of the earth they sow the gospel seed.

Life's best things—simplicity, honesty, truthfulness, purity, unsullied integrity—cannot be bought or sold; they are as free to the ignorant as to the educated, to the black person as to the white person, to the humble peasant as to the king upon his throne.

Humble workers, who do not trust in their own strength, but who labor in simplicity, trusting always in God, will share in the joy of the Savior. Their persevering prayers will bring souls to the cross. In cooperation with their self-sacrificing efforts Jesus will move upon hearts, working miracles in the conversion of souls. Men and women will be gathered into church fellowship. Meetinghouses will be built and schools established. The hearts of the workers will be filled with joy as they see the salvation of God. —*To Be Like Jesus*, p. 225.

When sincere desire prompts people to pray, they will not pray in vain. The Lord will fulfill His word, and will give the Holy Spirit to lead to repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. They will pray and watch, and put away their sins, making manifest their sincerity by the vigor of their endeavor to obey the commandments of God. With prayer they will mingle faith, and not only believe in but obey the precepts of the law. They will announce themselves as on Christ's side of the question. They will renounce all habits and associations that tend to draw the heart from God.

All sinners who would become children of God must receive the truth that repentance and forgiveness are to be obtained through nothing less than the atonement of Christ. Assured of this, they must put forth an effort in harmony with the work done for them, and with unwearied entreaty they must supplicate the throne of grace, that the renovating power of God may come into their souls.

Christ pardons none but the penitent, but whom He pardons He first makes penitent. The provision made is complete, and the eternal righteousness of Christ is placed to the account of every believing soul. The costly, spotless robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has been provided for the repenting, believing sinner, and everyone may say: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10). —*To Be Like Jesus*, p. 382.

Tuesday, June 02
Real Repentance

There are many who have erroneous ideas in regard to the nature of repentance. They think that they cannot come to Christ unless they first repent, and that repentance prepares them for the forgiveness of their sins. It is true that repentance does precede the forgiveness of sins; for it is only the broken and contrite heart that will feel the need of a Savior.

But must sinners wait until they have repented before they can come to Jesus? Is repentance to be made an obstacle between the sinner and the Savior? Jesus has said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Christ is constantly drawing people to Himself, while Satan is as diligently seeking by every imaginable device to draw them away from their Redeemer. Christ must be revealed to sinners as the Savior dying for the sins of the world; and as they behold the Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary, the mysteries of redemption begin to unfold to the mind, and the goodness of God leads to repentance.

Although the plan of salvation calls for the deepest study of the philosopher, it is not too deep for the comprehension of a child. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and in beholding this love the heart is impressed, the conscience is aroused, and the soul is led to inquire, "What is sin, that it should require such a sacrifice for the redemption of its victim?" . . . The apostle Paul gave instruction in regard to the plan of salvation. He declares, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." John, speaking of the Savior, says, "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." . . .

Sinners must come to Christ because they see Him as their Savior, their only helper, that they may be enabled to repent; for if they could repent without coming to Christ, they could also be saved without Christ. It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ that leads to genuine repentance. . . . Repentance is as much the gift of Christ as is forgiveness, and it cannot be found in the heart where Jesus has not been at work. We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ. Christ draws the sinner by the exhibition of His love upon the cross, and this softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition and repentance in the soul. —*To Be Like Jesus*, p. 372.

Wednesday, June 03
Sufficient Grace

Like the Savior of mankind, of whom he was a type, Elisha in his ministry among men combined the work of healing with that of teaching. Faithfully, untiringly, throughout his long and effective labors, Elisha endeavored to foster and advance the important educational work carried on by the schools of the prophets. . . . It was on the occasion of one of his visits to the school established at Gilgal that he healed the poisoned pottage. . . .

At Gilgal, also, while the dearth was still in the land, Elisha fed one hundred men with the present brought to him by "a man from Baalshalisha," "bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof." . . .

What condescension it was on the part of Christ, through His messenger, to work this miracle to satisfy hunger! Again and again since that time, though not always in so marked and perceptible a manner, has the Lord Jesus worked to supply human need. . . .

It is the grace of God on the small portion that makes it allsufficient. God's hand can multiply it a hundredfold. From His resources He can spread a table in the wilderness. By the touch of His hand He can increase the scanty provision and make it sufficient for all. It was His power that increased the loaves and corn in the hands of the sons of the prophets. . . .

When the Lord gives a work to be done, let not men stop to inquire into the reasonableness of the command or the probable result of their efforts to obey. The supply in their hands may seem to fall short of the need to be filled; but in the hands of the Lord it will prove more than sufficient. The servitor "set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord." . . .

The gift brought to Him with thanksgiving and with prayer for His blessing, He will multiply as He multiplied the food given to the sons of the prophets and to the weary multitude. —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 244, 245.

Thursday, June 04
The Most Expensive Robe

When a man turns away from human imperfections and beholds Jesus, a divine transformation takes place in his character. He fixes his eye upon Christ as on a mirror which reflects the glory of God, and by beholding he becomes changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. . . .

Turn your eyes from the imperfections of others and fix them steadfastly on Christ. With a contrite heart, study His life and character. You need not only to be more enlightened, but quickened, that you may see the banquet that is before you, and eat and drink the flesh and blood of the Son of God, which is His Word. By tasting the good Word of Life, by feeding on the Bread of Life, you may see the power of a world to come, and be created anew in Christ Jesus. If you receive His gifts you will be renewed unto holiness, and His grace will bring forth in you fruit unto the glory of God.

The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the mind, and faith takes hold of Him. If you accept Christ as your personal Saviour, you will know by experience the value of the great sacrifice made in your behalf upon the cross of Calvary. The Spirit of Christ working upon the heart conforms it to His image, for Christ is the model upon which the Spirit works. By the ministry of His Word, by His providences, by His inward working, God stamps the likeness of Christ upon the soul.

To possess Christ is your first work, and to reveal Him as One who is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him is your next work. To serve the Lord with full purpose of heart is to honor and glorify His name by dwelling upon holy things, by having a mind filled with the vital truths revealed in His Holy Word. . . .

Goodness, meekness, gentleness, patience, and love are the attributes of Christ's character. If you have the spirit of Christ, your character will be molded after His character. —*That I May Know Him*, p. 94.

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another.

The qualities which it is essential for all to possess are those which marked the completeness of Christ's character—His love, His patience, His unselfishness, and His goodness. . . .

It is the greatest and most fatal deception to suppose that a man can have faith unto life eternal, without possessing Christlike love for his brethren. He who loves God and his neighbor is filled with light and love. God is in him and all around him. Christians love those around them as precious souls for whom Christ has died. There is no such thing as a loveless Christian, for "God is love." —*This Day With God*, p. 272.

Friday, June 05
For Further Reading

The Faith I Live By, "The Test of Character," April 23, p. 119.

The Faith I Live By, "The First Steps in Justification," April 14, p. 110.