Covenantal Love

Lesson 2, 1st Quarter January 4-10, 2025

Sabbath Afternoon, January 4

Memory Text:

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." KJV — John 14:23

"Those who humbly and prayerfully search the Scriptures, to know and to do God's will, will not be in doubt of their obligations to God. For "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17). If you would know the mystery of godliness, you must follow the plain word of truth—feeling or no feeling, emotion or no emotion. Obedience must be rendered from a sense of principle, and the right must be pursued under all circumstances. This is the character that is elected of God unto salvation. BLJ 45.3

"The test of a genuine Christian is given in the Word of God. Says Jesus, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.... If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (Verses 21-24). BLJ 45.4

"Here are the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life. Your obedience to God's commandments will prove your right to an inheritance with the saints in light. God has elected a certain excellence of character; and everyone who, through the grace of Christ, shall reach the standard of His requirement will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of glory.—Christian Education, 117, 118." BLJ 45.5

Sunday, January 5

The Everlasting Love of God

Read Psalm 33:5 and Psalm 145:9. What do these verses teach about how far God's loving-kindness, compassion, and mercy extend?

"God speaks to us through His providential workings and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart. In our circumstances and surroundings, in the changes daily taking place around us, we may find precious lessons if our hearts are but open to discern them. The psalmist, tracing the work of God's providence, says, 'The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.' 'Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.' Psalm 33:5; 107:43." SC 87.2

"The Lord God of heaven claims from us the highest reverence. We are to fear God, to love God, and be obedient to all His precepts. He is perfect in His goodness, and full of mercy and compassion, always working for the good and happiness of the human family; but their own plans, their own imaginings, are contrary to the will and way of God, and of a character to destroy the way of His paths, and make their own finite wisdom prominent in choosing their way and their will. The result is unhappiness, suffering, and eternal disappointment. 'The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works.' He openeth His hand, and 'satisfiest the desire of every living thing.' He is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. 'The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.'" 19MR 323.1

Read 2 Peter 3:9, 1 Timothy 2:4, and Ezekiel 33:11. What do these texts teach about God's desire to save everyone?

"God's servants are to make use of every resource for enlarging His kingdom. The apostle Paul declares that it is "good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." 1 Timothy 2:3, 4, 1. And James says: "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James 5:20. Every believer is pledged to unite with his brethren in giving the invitation, "Come; for all things are now ready." Luke 14:17. Each is to encourage the others in doing wholehearted work. Earnest invitations will be given by a living church. Thirsty souls will be led to the water of life. 7T 14.3

"Do not look to men nor hang your hopes upon them, feeling that they are infallible; but look to Jesus constantly. Say nothing that would cast a reproach upon our faith. Confess your secret sins alone before your God. Acknowledge your heart wanderings to Him who knows perfectly how to treat your case. If you have wronged your neighbor, acknowledge to him your sin and show fruit of the same by making restitution. Then claim the blessing. Come to God just as you are, and let Him heal all your infirmities. Press your case to the throne of grace; let the work be thorough. Be sincere in dealing with God and your own soul. If you come to Him with a heart truly contrite, He will give you the victory. Then you may bear a sweet testimony of freedom, showing forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. He will not misapprehend or misjudge you. Your fellow men cannot absolve you from sin or cleanse you from iniquity. Jesus is the only one who can give you peace. He loved you and gave Himself for you. His great heart of love is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities?" What sins are too great for Him to pardon? what soul too dark and sin-oppressed for Him to save? He is gracious, not looking for merit in us, but of His own boundless goodness healing our backslidings and loving us freely, while we are yet sinners. He is 'slow to anger, and of great kindness;' 'ong-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'" 5T 649.1

Monday, January 6

Covenantal Love

Read Deuteronomy 7:6–9. What do these verses teach about the relationship between God making covenants and God's lovingkindness?

"'Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? or hath God assayed to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord He is God; there is none else beside Him.' PP 463.4

"The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that Jehovah thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations." Deuteronomy 7:7-9. PP 464.1

The people of Israel had been ready to ascribe their troubles to Moses; but now their suspicions that he was controlled by pride, ambition, or selfishness, were removed, and they listened with confidence to his words. Moses faithfully set before them their errors and the transgressions of their fathers. They had often felt impatient and rebellious because of their long wandering in the wilderness; but the Lord had not been chargeable with this delay in possessing Canaan; He was more grieved than they because He could not bring them into immediate possession of the Promised Land, and thus display before all nations His mighty power in the deliverance of His people. With their distrust of God, with their pride and unbelief, they had not been prepared to enter Canaan. They would in no way represent that people whose God is the Lord; for they did not bear His character of purity, goodness, and benevolence. Had their fathers yielded in faith to the direction of God, being governed by His judgments and walking in His ordinances, they would long before have been settled in Canaan, a prosperous, holy, happy people. Their delay to enter the goodly land dishonored God and detracted from His glory in the sight of surrounding nations. PP 464.2

Tuesday, January 7

Conditional Relationship

Read Hosea 9:15, Jeremiah 16:5, Romans 11:22, and Jude 21. What do these texts teach about whether the benefits of God's love can be rejected—even forfeited?

"Paul likens the remnant in Israel to a noble olive tree, some of whose branches have been broken off. He compares the Gentiles to branches from a wild olive tree, grafted into the parent stock. "If some of the branches be broken off," he writes to the Gentile believers, "and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." AA 377.1

"Through unbelief and the rejection of Heaven's purpose for her, Israel as a nation had lost her connection with God. But the branches that had been separated from the parent stock God was able to reunite with the true stock of Israel—the remnant who had remained true to the God of their fathers. "They also," the apostle declares of these broken branches, "if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again." "If thou," he writes to the Gentiles, "wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." AA 377.2

"God is no respecter of persons. Those that honor him he will honor. Of those who obey his commandments it is written, 'Ye are complete in him.' They co-operate with him in the work of soul saving. God says to them. 'But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.'" RH July 1, 1902, Art. A, par. 9

Wednesday, January 8

Mercy Fortified

Read 1 John 4:7–20, with specific emphasis on verses 7 and 19. What does this tell us about the priority of God's love?

"The grace of God is the chief theme of the Gospel. God's grace is the manifestation of His love—a love that makes it possible, thru Christ, for fallen man to be saved, makes possible the union and cooperation of humanity with divinity. ST August 12, 1908, par. 1

"Not because we first loved Him did Christ love us; but "while we were yet sinners," He died for us. He does not treat us according to our desert. Altho our sins have merited condemnation, He does not condemn us. Year after year He has borne with our weakness and ignorance, with our ingratitude and waywardness; notwithstanding our wanderings, our hardness of heart, our neglect of His Holy word, His hand is stretched out still. ST August 12, 1908, par. 2

"At what infinite cost to the Father and to the Son was the merciful, wondrous provision made for our redemption! Christ stepped down from His high estate as Commander in the heavenly courts; and laying aside His royal robe and kingly crown, clothed His divinity with humanity, and came to this earth, that He might dwell with us and give to men and women grace to overcome as He overcame. The disobedience of Adam in believing the falsehood of Satan cost the life of the Son of God; but notwithstanding the great and immeasurable cost, the love and goodness of God shine forth brighter than even at the first creation. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." ST August 12, 1908, par. 3

"The Lord God thru Jesus Christ holds out His hand all the day long in invitation to the sinful and the fallen. He will receive all. He welcomes all. It is His glory to pardon the chief of sinners. He will take the prey from the mighty; He will deliver the captive; He will pluck the brand from the burning; He will lower the golden chain of His mercy to the lowest depths of human wretchedness and woe, and lift up the debased soul defiled with sin. ST August 12, 1908, par. 4

"Every human being is the object of loving interest to Him who gave His life that He might bring men back to God. Souls guilty and helpless, liable to be destroyed by the arts and snares of Satan, are cared for as a shepherd cares for the sheep of his flock." ST August 12, 1908, par. 5

Thursday, January 9

You Have Freely Received; Freely Give

Read John 15:12, 1 John 3:16, and 1 John 4:7–12. What do these passages teach about the relationship between God's love, our love for God, and love for others?

"Christ had bidden the first disciples love one another as He had loved them. Thus they were to bear testimony to the world that Christ was formed within, the hope of glory. "A new commandment I give unto you," He had said, "That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34. At the time when these words were spoken, the disciples could not understand them; but after they had witnessed the sufferings of Christ, after His crucifixion and resurrection, and ascension to heaven, and after the Holy Spirit had rested on them at Pentecost, they had a clearer conception of the love of God and of the nature of that love which they must have for one another. Then John could say to his fellow disciples: AA 547.1

"'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' AA 547.2

"After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the disciples went forth to proclaim a living Saviour, their one desire was the salvation of souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth's sake. In their daily association with one another, they revealed the love that Christ had enjoined upon them. By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love in other hearts. AA 547.3

Such a love the believers were ever to cherish. They were to go forward in willing obedience to the new commandment. So closely were they to be united with Christ that they would be enabled to fulfill all His requirements. Their lives were to magnify the power of a Saviour who could justify them by His righteousness." AA 547.4

Friday, January 10

Further Thought

Ezekiel 36:17-31 (KJV)

17.Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman.

18.Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted:

19.And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.

20.And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.

21.But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went.

22.Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.

23.And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

24.For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

25.Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26.A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

28.And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

29.I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

30.And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.

31.Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. KJV — Ezekiel 36:Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.

For further studies, feel free to contact:
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