

Sabbath School Lesson #9 – Turn Their Hearts – 20-26 November 2021

Christ seeks to turn our hearts to God. Said Moses, “But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Deuteronomy 4:29). “We need an abiding, heartfelt dependence upon the Son of God for salvation and for all wisdom and spiritual influences. Unless there is much more love to God and to man, and a continual dependence upon the renewing, sanctifying grace of Christ to work a transformation of character by a divine change in the heart, which will be manifestly seen in word, spirit, and action, we shall fail in our work...” {UL 333.2}.

Sunday: *Mi-Yitten* – “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29). On this verse, suffice to quote what Ellen White wrote: “God stands toward His people in the relation of a father, and He has a father’s claim to our faithful service. Consider the life of Christ. Standing at the head of humanity, serving His Father, He is an example of what every son should and may be. The obedience that Christ rendered God requires from human beings today. He served His Father with love, in willingness and freedom. “I delight to do Thy will, O My God,” He declared; “yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. Christ counted no sacrifice too great, no toil too hard, in order to accomplish the work which He came to do. At the age of twelve He said, “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” Luke 2:49. He had heard the call, and had taken up the work. “My meat,” He said, “is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.” John 4:34.” {COL 282.3}. “Thus we are to serve God. He only serves who acts up to the highest standard of obedience. All who would be sons and daughters of God must prove themselves co-workers with God and Christ and the heavenly angels. This is the test for every soul. Of those who faithfully serve Him the Lord says, “They shall be Mine... in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” Malachi 3:17.” {COL 283.1}. “God’s great object in the working out of His providences is to try men, to give them opportunity to develop character. Thus He proves whether they are obedient or disobedient to His commands. Good works do not purchase the love of God, but they reveal that we possess that love. If we surrender the will to God, we shall not work in order to earn God’s love. His love as a free gift will be received into the soul, and from love to Him we shall delight to obey His commandments.” {COL 283.2}.

Monday: *Seek Me and Find Me* – “And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). Of all our examples in seeking the Lord, none is better than the example of Jesus – being at His Father’s Business. When Joseph and Mary, after three days of searching, found Jesus in the temple, “sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions,” and reproveth Him for not being with them, He replied, “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:46-49). What was He doing? He was not teaching, not disputing, for to attempt either would have been most unseemly in a child of twelve; but He was simply listening to the teaching of the doctors of the law, and asking them questions in order to help them get a more perfect understanding. He was, in short, endeavouring to increase in the knowledge of God; and this was the doing of His Father’s business. The one thing required of God’s children is to know Him. The real business of life is to learn to know God. It is for this that God has placed us here. Are we attending strictly to business, or are we idling away our time in other things that we make ourselves think are more important? God is to come first in all our considerations; we are to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). We are to return to the Lord: “When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them” (Deuteronomy 4:30-31).

Tuesday: *Teshuvah* – “If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul” (Deuteronomy 30:10). We are told: “People are suffering for want of the knowledge of truth. They do not understand

what they must do to be saved. Unless the gospel is preached clearly, simply, over and over again, line upon line, precept upon precept, Satan will cast his shadow between the sinner and God. God will be represented as a stern, unforgiving judge. Christ did not sermonize. He gave instruction as a divine Teacher. He taught in simplicity, and thus His ambassadors are to present the truth, making everything connected with the salvation of the soul plain and easy to be understood. The message must be given to the world that the way of repentance and faith is now made plain through Him who had power to lay down His life and to take it again. "He that believeth on me," Christ declared, "though he were dead, yet shall he live." [John 11:25.] {12LtMs, Ms 147, 1897, par. 35}. "The conflict between good and evil will continue till the close of time. Satan, the first great rebel, inspires his followers with hatred against God. His warfare is not carried on in subordination to established law, but in positive disobedience to the God of heaven. He works with malice to destroy souls, but eternal vigilance, laying hold of the promises of God, will raise up a standard for us against the enemy for the tempted soul." {12LtMs, Ms 147, 1897, par. 36}. May we return to the Lord and allow the Lord to have full control of our lives and use us to take the gospel to the world.

Wednesday: With All Your Heart – Let us whole heartedly come to God and He will save us. When we pray, let us not think that 'perhaps' He will forgive us. God encourages all who are sick of sin to come to Him. Says the beloved disciple, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). He promises that He will "have mercy" upon and "abundantly pardon" those who turn to Him confessing and forsaking their sins. There is no such thing as 'perhaps' with God. His promises to the penitent, and His threats to the impenitent, are equally positive. "He that believeth and is baptized *shall be saved*; but he that believeth not *shall be damned*" (Mark 16:16). To the straying He says: "Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:12-13). Again, He says: "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain; I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right" (Isaiah 45:19). Christ says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28, 19). There is no 'perhaps' about this. "God is love;" He has revealed Himself to us as a God that "delighteth in mercy." The surety of this is found in the fact that Jesus died for us. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). And "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). Since He came for this express purpose, how can there be any doubt about His receiving those who come humbly to Him?

Thursday: Repent and Be Converted – The power of the word of God to save us is best appreciated in the work of creation. "For He spake, and it was done" (Psalm 33:6-9). It is the Gospel to those who believe, which power of God *is* revealed in the things that are made (see Romans 1:16, 20). It is the power of redemption, which is also the power of creation, for redemption is creation. Thus, the Psalmist prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Psalm 51:10). The apostle Paul says that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The word of the Lord is right. He speaks righteousness. So just as He spoke to emptiness and there the earth was, so He speaks to the soul that is destitute of righteousness, and if that word is received, the righteousness of that word is upon that man. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:23-25). To declare is to speak; and so when God declares His righteousness in Christ for the remission of sins, righteousness is spoken into and upon that man, to take the place of his sins, which are taken away. And it is not simply a passive righteousness that is thus declared upon the man, but a real, active righteousness, for the word of the Lord is alive, and God's righteousness is real and active.