

Sabbath School Lesson #13 – “Let Brotherly Love Continue” – 19-25 March 2022

Christ would have us love one another. “Let brotherly love continue” (Hebrews 13:1). What a heaven there would be on earth, if such a love existed among those who profess the name of Christ. Many wonder how it is to be attained. It is the man who is “carnal, sold under sin,” who is obliged to say, “To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Romans 7:18). God is just and kind. He is not a tyrant, and He does not set tasks before His people without supplying the power to do them; the trouble is with our reading of His commands and exhortations. Let us read a few and see if that does not begin to suggest a way out of the difficulty. “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye faithful” (Colossians 3:15). Surely, we cannot control the peace of God. We cannot manufacture it and put it within our hearts. No; only God can supply peace, and this He has already done. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you” (John 14:27). “I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints” (Psalm 85:8). The fact that only God can put His peace into the heart, and cause it to rule there, should indicate to us that it is He who is to fulfil those other exhortations in us. Once more we read, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly with all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16). This, together with the text quoted just before, tells us the whole secret. It is by the word of God that these things are to be done. “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). The word of the Lord, which sets before us these desirable attainments of thought and speech, is the agency by which they are supplied. What can the word of the Lord do? Read Psalm 33:6, 9: “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.” “For He spake, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast.” “And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you” (1 Peter 1:25). The earth could not make a mighty exertion, and send forth the trees laden with fruit. But at the word of God, saying, “Let it be,” everything came into being. The thing required was in the words requiring its production. Now “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). And “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). We are to remember that the exhortations that we read at first are not the exhortations of a man, but that they are the words of God to us. The same One in the beginning said, “Let there be light,” and “Let the earth bring forth grass,” says to us, “Let all bitterness and wrath... be put away from you” (Ephesians 4:31). Just as the first was done, so must this be accomplished. “For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations” (Isaiah 61:11). Thus, when we read the exhortations to let certain evil things be put away from us, and to let certain graces appear, we are not to regard them as commands for us to put them away, but as the agency by which that very task is to be done.

Sunday: Caring for God’s People – “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2). In 2 Kings 4:25-37 we read of the hospitality shown by the Shunammite woman to Elisha and the blessed results. While journeying from place to place, Elisha had frequent occasion to pass through the town of Shunem, where he received much hospitality at the hands of one of the prominent residents. The Shunammite woman is spoken of as being “great,” and the narrative shows that her husband possessed servants, land and cattle in plenty, but when Elisha first made her acquaintance she was without the blessing counted chief of all among the women of Israel, the possession of a son. Instead, however, of giving way to bitterness and repining, she seems to have set herself to the work of helping others. Seeing that Elisha was a man of God, she proposed to her husband that they should build him a room in their house, and furnish it, so that he might regard it as his own home, whenever he should pass that way. We remember the words of our Lord, “Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me” (Matthew 25:40). Elisha was much touched by this unusual evidence of kindly consideration, and God, regarding the attention and honour as paid unto Himself, moved the prophet to declare unto his hostess that her

own darling wish was granted, and that she should at last embrace a son. Anyone would be glad to entertain a stranger if they believed him to be a prophet, who would reward them with the bestowal of some much-desired blessing, but the opportunity of doing what the Shunammite woman did is offered to all even now. Christ says, Whose shall receive a little child in My name receiveth Me. "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42). "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

Monday: Covetousness and Sexual Immorality – Paul says the Corinthian brethren that "it is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 5:1). Someone must have told Paul, for he says, "it is reported." The reporter was not just gossiping, else would have been rebuked by Paul who warns them of "backbitings" (2 Corinthians 12:20) but must have had the interest of the church at heart to report the matter to Paul. "A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Ecclesiasts 3:7). The reporter must have believed Paul was appointed by the Lord. Paul himself says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). That the report was accurate, Paul acted upon it, "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed" (1 Corinthians 5:3).

Tuesday: Remember Your Leaders – "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation ... Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:7, 17). Let us "remember" the past leaders, our Adventist pioneers, let us "repeat the words of the pioneers in our work, who knew what it cost to search for the truth as for hidden treasure, and who labored to lay the foundation of our work" (RH, May 25, 1905). What about our present leaders who have since departed from "words of the pioneers," who have counted as error "the fundamental principles that sustained the work" and who with "God being removed, they place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless" {1SM 204.2}, must we "obey them"? Only if they speak "the word of God" and not theories they have learnt from theological schools, but "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 4:11; 5:2-4). Paul says, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:27-28).

Wednesday: Beware of Diverse and Strange Teachings – "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace" (Hebrews 13:9). The platform of Bible truth is sufficiently broad for everyone to be fully rooted and grounded thereupon. To stand in uncertainty and doubt regarding *where* and *what* present, sanctifying, saving truth is, not only robs us of our happiness, but of our usefulness and prevents our growth in grace. No progress either in usefulness or happiness, can be made while we stumble balancing between error and truth, at every Satanic evil suggestion, and "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8).

Thursday: Go to Jesus Outside the Camp – Let the church learn lessons in Revelation 2 and "let the members hear and receive and show a faith corresponding to their profession by a sanctified activity in the Lord's work. Let not ministers hover over the churches, but go outside the camp to warn unbelievers. Let young men, going forth into the harvest field, prove themselves to be called and chosen and faithful" {15LtMs, Ms 78, 1900, par. 33}.