

Growing in Understanding

MEMORY VERSE: “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

“As we appropriate the blessing of God, we shall be able to receive greater measures of His grace. As we learn to endure as seeing Him who is invisible, we shall become changed into the image of Christ. . . . “Growth in grace will not lead you to be proud, self-confident, and boastful, but will make you more conscious of your own nothingness, of your entire dependence upon the Lord.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 296.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 321-327. (At the bottom of this page)

1. ALWAYS GROWING

Sunday, February 4

a. What is written about Jesus in His childhood? Luke 2:40.

Luke 2:40

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

“The Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, became a babe in Bethlehem, and for a time represented the helpless infant in its mother’s care. In childhood He spoke and acted as a child, honoring His parents, and carrying out their wishes in helpful ways. But from the first dawning of intelligence He was constantly growing in grace and in a knowledge of truth.”—*Education*, p. 106.

b. How about the child John, the cousin of Jesus? Luke 1:80. In fact, what is God’s plan for all His children? 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24.

Luke 1:80

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

“Sanctification—how many understand its full meaning? The mind is befogged by sensual malaria. The thoughts need purifying. What might not men and women have been had they realized that the treatment of the body has everything to do with the vigor and purity of mind and heart.

“The true Christian obtains an experience which brings holiness. He is without a spot of guilt upon the conscience, or a taint of corruption upon the soul.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments]*, vol. 7, p. 909.

2. THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

Monday, February 5

a. What is the fearful condition of those who once enjoyed light from Heaven, yet later rejected it? Hebrews 6:4–6.

Hebrews 6:4-6

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, **5** And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, **6** If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

b. What serious warning did Jesus give to the Jews who rejected Him? Matthew 12:31, 32.

Matthew 12:31-32

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. **32** And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

“No one need look upon the sin against the Holy Ghost as something mysterious and indefinable. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of persistent refusal to respond to the invitation to repent.

“There is no . . . hope of the higher life, but through the submission of the soul to Christ.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 58.

“Those who had spoken against Jesus Himself, not discerning His divine character, might receive forgiveness; for through the Holy Spirit they might be brought to see their error and repent. Whatever the sin, if the soul repents and believes, the guilt is washed away in the blood of Christ; but he who rejects the work of the Holy Spirit is placing himself where repentance and faith cannot come to him. It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare It to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 321.

c. What influence do our words have upon our character? Matthew 12:36.

Matthew 12:36

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

“Closely connected with Christ’s warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. ‘Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’ But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words. . . . Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are. It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character, in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit.”—*Ibid.*, p. 323.

3. GOD LOVES OUR UNSELFISH WORKS

Tuesday, February 6

a. How does Paul write about the way God sees our activities in behalf of our neighbors? Hebrews 6:10.

Hebrews 6:10

For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

“Our spiritual strength and blessing will be proportionate to the labor of love and good works which we perform. The injunction of the apostle is, ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ’ (Galatians 6:2). Keeping the commandments of God requires of us good works, self-denial, self-sacrifice, and devotion for the good of others, not that our good works alone can save us, but that we surely cannot be saved without good works. After we have done all that we are capable of doing we are then to say, We have done no more than our duty, and at best are unprofitable servants, unworthy of the smallest favor from God. Christ must be our righteousness. . . .

“All around us there are those who have soul hunger and who long for love expressed in words and deeds. Friendly sympathy and real feelings of tender interest for others would bring to our souls blessings that we have never yet experienced, and would bring us into close relation to our Redeemer, whose advent to the world was for the purpose of doing good, and whose life we are to copy. What are we doing for Christ?”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 334.

b. Even though we are not saved by our own works, how important are they in our Christian journey? Titus 2:13, 14; 3:8.

Titus 2:13-14

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; **14** Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Titus 3:8

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

“Genuine faith always works by love. When you look to Calvary it is not to quiet your soul in the nonperformance of duty, not to compose yourself to sleep, but to create faith in Jesus, faith that will work, purifying the soul from the slime of selfishness. When we lay hold of Christ by faith, our work has just begun. Every man has corrupt and sinful habits that must be overcome by vigorous warfare. Every soul is required to fight the fight of faith. If one is a follower of Christ, he cannot be sharp in deal, he cannot be hardhearted, devoid of sympathy. He cannot be coarse in his speech. He cannot be full of pomposity and self-esteem. He cannot be overbearing, nor can he use harsh words, and censure and condemn. . . . We are to be zealous of good works, be careful to maintain good works. And the true Witness says: ‘I know thy works’ (Revelation 2:2).”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 20.

4. THE CERTAINTY OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

Wednesday, February 7

a. What can we learn regarding the assurance of God’s promises? Hebrews 6:13–15.

Hebrews 6:13-15

For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, **14** Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. **15** And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

b. What does God declare about His promises? Hebrews 6:16–18.

Hebrews 6:16-18

For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. **17** Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: **18** That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

“God is able and willing ‘more abundantly’ (Hebrews 6:17) to bestow upon His servants the strength they need for test and trial. The plans of the enemies of His work may seem to be well laid and firmly established, but God can overthrow the strongest of these. And this He does in His own time and way, when He sees that the faith of His servants has been sufficiently tested.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 164.

c. Where is our anchor of the soul? Hebrews 6:19, 20.

Hebrews 6:19-20

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; **20** Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

“Our faith must pierce beyond the veil, seeing things that are invisible. No one else can look for you. You must behold for yourself. In the place of murmuring for blessings that are withheld, let us remember and appreciate the blessings already bestowed.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 930.*

“We cannot with safety accept the opinions of any man, however learned, unless they are in harmony with the words of the Great Teacher. The opinions of erring men will be presented for our acceptance, but God’s Word is our authority, and we are never to accept human teaching without the most conclusive evidence that it agrees with the teaching of God’s Word. We are to know that we do know that we are standing on the platform of eternal truth—the Word of the living God.

“Truth, precious truth from the Word of God is to be presented, both in public and in families. We have a message that is to prepare a people to stand amid the perils of the last days. . . . Truth will stand every test that is brought to bear upon it. It cannot be overthrown by the sophistries of Satan. The more it is assailed the more bright and clear it will shine out. As we see indications of the active, earnest efforts of the enemy, shall we not make determined efforts to give the message in clear, decided lines? Shall we not stand forth in the power and Spirit of God, and receive and impart lessons from the Great Teacher? . . . ‘O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth’ (Isaiah 25:1). . . . Let us anchor ourselves to the words of the Lord God of Israel.”
—*That I May Know Him, p. 210.*

5. THE PRIESTHOOD AS A SYMBOL OF CHRIST

Thursday, February 8

a. Which family had been chosen by God for the priesthood in the earthly sanctuary—and why? Exodus 28:1, 2; 32:7, 8, 25, 26.

Exodus 28:1-2

And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. **2** And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty.

Exodus 32:7-8

And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: **8** They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Exodus 32:25-26

And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) **26** Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

“By divine direction the tribe of Levi was set apart for the service of the sanctuary. In the earliest times every man was the priest of his own household. In the

days of Abraham the priesthood was regarded as the birthright of the eldest son. Now, instead of the firstborn of all Israel, the Lord accepted the tribe of Levi for the work of the sanctuary. By this signal honor He manifested His approval of their fidelity, both in adhering to His service and in executing His judgments when Israel apostatized in the worship of the golden calf. The priesthood, however, was restricted to the family of Aaron. Aaron and his sons alone were permitted to minister before the Lord; the rest of the tribe were entrusted with the charge of the tabernacle and its furniture, and they were to attend upon the priests in their ministrations, but they were not to sacrifice, to burn incense, or to see the holy things till they were covered.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 350.

b. Why was this plan replaced by another priesthood which prefigured Christ? Hebrews 7:11, 15–17, 21–23.

Hebrews 7:11

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

Hebrews 7:15-17

And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, **16** Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. **17** For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Hebrews 7:21-23

(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) **22** By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. **23** And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

c. Contrast the earthly priesthood with that of Christ and explain how effective Christ’s priesthood is for our salvation. Hebrews 7:25–28.

Hebrews 7:25-28

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. **26** For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; **27** Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. **28** For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

“Christ is able to save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us. All that man can possibly do toward his own salvation is to accept the invitation, ‘Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely’ (Revelation 22:17). No sin can be committed by man for which satisfaction has not been met on Calvary.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 343.

1. How can the education of Jesus and John the Baptist be an inspiration to us?
2. Explain the downhill process of the sin against the Holy Spirit.
3. How are genuine good works motivated?
4. What evidence have I seen in my life that God's promises are true?
5. In seeking salvation, why is the priesthood of Christ important for me?

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 321-327.

The sons of Joseph were far from being in sympathy with Jesus in His work. The reports that reached them in regard to His life and labors filled them with astonishment and dismay. They heard that He devoted entire nights to prayer, that through the day He was thronged by great companies of people, and did not give Himself time so much as to eat. His friends felt that He was wearing Himself out by His incessant labor; they were unable to account for His attitude toward the Pharisees, and there were some who feared that His reason was becoming unsettled. **(DA 321.1)**

His brothers heard of this, and also of the charge brought by the Pharisees that He cast out devils through the power of Satan. They felt keenly the reproach that came upon them through their relation to Jesus. They knew what a tumult His words and works created, and were not only alarmed at His bold statements, but indignant at His denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees. They decided that He must be persuaded or constrained to cease this manner of labor, and they induced Mary to unite with them, thinking that through His love for her they might prevail upon Him to be more prudent. **(DA 321.2)**

It was just before this that Jesus had a second time performed the miracle of healing a man possessed, blind and dumb, and the Pharisees had reiterated the charge, "He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils." Matthew 9:34. Christ told them plainly that in attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, they were cutting themselves off from the fountain of blessing. Those who had spoken against Jesus Himself, not discerning His divine character, might receive forgiveness; for through the Holy Spirit they might be brought to see their error and repent. Whatever the sin, if the soul repents and believes, the guilt is washed away in the blood of Christ; but he who rejects the work of the Holy Spirit is placing himself where repentance and faith cannot come to him. It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare It to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. **(DA 321.3)**

The Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke this warning did not themselves believe the charge they brought against Him. There was not one of those dignitaries but had felt drawn toward the Saviour. They had heard the Spirit's voice in their own hearts declaring Him to be the Anointed of Israel, and urging them to confess themselves His disciples. In the light of His presence they had realized their unholiness, and had longed for a

righteousness which they could not create. But after their rejection of Him it would be too humiliating to receive Him as the Messiah. Having set their feet in the path of unbelief, they were too proud to confess their error. And in order to avoid acknowledging the truth, they tried with desperate violence to dispute the Saviour's teaching. The evidence of His power and mercy exasperated them. They could not prevent the Saviour from working miracles, they could not silence His teaching; but they did everything in their power to misrepresent Him and to falsify His words. Still the convicting Spirit of God followed them, and they had to build up many barriers in order to withstand its power. The mightiest agency that can be brought to bear upon the human heart was striving with them, but they would not yield. **(DA 322.1)**

It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul. Thus it had been with these Jewish leaders. They were convinced that a divine power attended Christ, but in order to resist the truth, they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. In doing this they deliberately chose deception; they yielded themselves to Satan, and henceforth they were controlled by his power. **(DA 322.2)**

Closely connected with Christ's warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Matthew 12:34. But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; but the expression reacts on the thoughts. They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan's instigation. Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are. It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character, in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matthew 12:36, 37. **(DA 323.1)**

Then He added a warning to those who had been impressed by His words, who had heard Him gladly, but who had not surrendered themselves for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is not only by resistance but by neglect that the soul is destroyed. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man," said Jesus, "he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there." Matthew 12:43-45. **(DA 323.2)**

There were many in Christ's day, as there are today, over whom the control of Satan for the time seemed broken; through the grace of God they were set free from the evil spirits that had held dominion over the soul. They rejoiced in the love of God; but, like the stony-ground hearers of the parable, they did not abide in His love. They did not surrender themselves to God daily, that Christ might dwell in the heart; and when the evil spirit returned, with "seven other spirits more wicked than himself,"(Matthew 12:45) they were wholly dominated by the power of evil. **(DA 323.3)**

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end. **(DA 324.1) 20 I**

"The last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so," said Jesus, "shall it be also unto this wicked generation." Matthew 12:45. There are none so hardened as those who have slighted the invitation of mercy, and done despite to the Spirit of grace. The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven's invitation to repent. Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit. **(DA 324.2)**

In rejecting Christ the Jewish people committed the unpardonable sin; and by refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error. We offer insult to the Prince of life, and put Him to shame before the synagogue of Satan and before the heavenly universe when we refuse to listen to His delegated messengers, and instead listen to the agents of Satan, who would draw the soul away from Christ. So long as one does this, he can find no hope or pardon, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God. **(DA 324.3)**

While Jesus was still teaching the people, His disciples brought the message that His mother and His brothers were without, and desired to see Him. He knew what was in their hearts, and "He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and

said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.” Matthew 12:48-50. **(DA 325.1) 2 I**

All who would receive Christ by faith were united to Him by a tie closer than that of human kinship. They would become one with Him, as He was one with the Father. As a believer and doer of His words, His mother was more nearly and savingly related to Him than through her natural relationship. His brothers would receive no benefit from their connection with Him unless they accepted Him as their personal Saviour. **(DA 325.2)**

What a support Christ would have found in His earthly relatives if they had believed in Him as one from heaven, and had co-operated with Him in doing the work of God! Their unbelief cast a shadow over the earthly life of Jesus. It was a part of the bitterness of that cup of woe which He drained for us. **(DA 325.3)**

The enmity kindled in the human heart against the gospel was keenly felt by the Son of God, and it was most painful to Him in His home; for His own heart was full of kindness and love, and He appreciated tender regard in the family relation. His brothers desired that He should concede to their ideas, when such a course would have been utterly out of harmony with His divine mission. They looked upon Him as in need of their counsel. They judged Him from their human point of view, and thought that if He would speak only such things as would be acceptable to the scribes and Pharisees, He would avoid the disagreeable controversy that His words aroused. They thought that He was beside Himself in claiming divine authority, and in placing Himself before the rabbis as a reprover of their sins. They knew that the Pharisees were seeking occasion to accuse Him, and they felt that He had given them sufficient occasion. **(DA 326.1)**

With their short measuring line they could not fathom the mission which He came to fulfill, and therefore could not sympathize with Him in His trials. Their coarse, unappreciative words showed that they had no true perception of His character, and did not discern that the divine blended with the human. They often saw Him full of grief; but instead of comforting Him, their spirit and words only wounded His heart. His sensitive nature was tortured, His motives were misunderstood, His work was uncomprehended. **(DA 326.2)**

His brothers often brought forward the philosophy of the Pharisees, which was threadbare and hoary with age, and presumed to think that they could teach Him who understood all truth, and comprehended all mysteries. They freely condemned that which they could not understand. Their reproaches probed Him to the quick, and His soul was wearied and distressed. They avowed faith in God, and thought they were vindicating God, when God was with them in the flesh, and they knew Him not. **(DA 326.3)**

These things made His path a thorny one to travel. So pained was Christ by the misapprehension in His own home that it was a relief to Him to go where it did not exist. There was one home that He loved to visit,—the home of Lazarus, and Mary, and Martha; for in the atmosphere of faith and love His spirit had rest. Yet there were none on earth who could comprehend His divine mission, or know the burden which He bore

in behalf of humanity. Often He could find relief only in being alone, and communing with His heavenly Father. **(DA 326.4)**

Those who are called to suffer for Christ's sake, who have to endure misapprehension and distrust, even in their own home, may find comfort in the thought that Jesus has endured the same. He is moved with compassion for them. He bids them find companionship in Him, and relief where He found it, in communion with the Father. **(DA 327.1) 2 I**

Those who accept Christ as their personal Saviour are not left as orphans, to bear the trials of life alone. He receives them as members of the heavenly family; He bids them call His Father their Father. They are His "little ones," dear to the heart of God, bound to Him by the most tender and abiding ties. He has toward them an exceeding tenderness, as far surpassing what our father or mother has felt toward us in our helplessness as the divine is above the human. **(DA 327.2)**

Of Christ's relation to His people, there is a beautiful illustration in the laws given to Israel. When through poverty a Hebrew had been forced to part with his patrimony, and to sell himself as a bondservant, the duty of redeeming him and his inheritance fell to the one who was nearest of kin. See Leviticus 25:25, 47-49; Ruth 2:20. So the work of redeeming us and our inheritance, lost through sin, fell upon Him who is "near of kin" unto us. It was to redeem us that He became our kinsman. Closer than father, mother, brother, friend, or lover is the Lord our Saviour. "Fear not," He says, "for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." "Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." Isaiah 43:1, 4. **(DA 327.3)**

Christ loves the heavenly beings that surround His throne; but what shall account for the great love wherewith He has loved us? We cannot understand it, but we can know it true in our own experience. And if we do hold the relation of kinship to Him, with what tenderness should we regard those who are brethren and sisters of our Lord! Should we not be quick to recognize the claims of our divine relationship? Adopted into the family of God, should we not honor our Father and our kindred? **(DA 327.4) 2 I**