

LESSON 19 (Second Epistle of Peter - Lesson 3). – November 10, 1888.

2 PETER 1 : 6, 7.

1. WHAT grace in Peter's list follows next after temperance? 2 Peter 1 : 6.

2. How are we to inherit the promises of God? Heb. 6: II, 12.

3. How alone can we inherit eternal life? Rom. 2 : 7.

4. Under what circumstances must we be patient? Rom. 12 : 12.

5. What alone can produce patience? Rom. 5: 3; James I :2, 3.

6. If we are to glory in tribulation, and rejoice in the midst of trials, what time shall we take for doubting, fears, and discouragement? 1 Thess. 5 : 16 ; Phil. 4 4.

7. If we have the grace of patience in perfection, what shall we lack that is necessary to a perfect character? James 1:4.

8. When trials shall have perfected patience in us, what will await us? James 1 : 12; Heb. 10 :36.

9. What does Peter mention next after patience? 2 Peter 1 : 6

10. What is declared to be "great gain"? 1 Tim. 6 : 6.

11. What follows godliness? 2 Peter 1 : 7

12. What commandment have we received that shows the fitness of saying that brotherly kindness must be added to godliness? 1 John 4 : 21.

13. How alone may we know how we ought to love one another? 1 John 4 : 7-11.

14. What is the evidence that one has been converted? 1 John 3 : 14.

15. Is the measure of love that the new convert feels for the brethren sufficient for all time? 1 Thess. 3:12; 4 : 9,10.

16. How should we love one another? John 15: 12; 13 : 34.

17. What is the greatest measure of love that a man can possess? John 15 : 13.

18. Ought we to love the brethren to that extent? I John 3 : 16.

19. What state of mind will render this less difficult than it would naturally be? Phil. 2 : 3.

20. Repeat the apostle Paul's specific description of perfect brotherly kindness? Eph. 4 : 31, 32.

NOTES.

"TRIBULATION worketh patience." Nothing but tribulation can develop patience. When everything goes smoothly, there is no call for patience, and the person who has none can get along very well. And when there is no demand for patience, it is certain that none can be developed. Some people say that it is not true that tribulation works patience; they say that trials and difficulties make them impatient. But that is an error. It is impossible that trials should plant impatience in the heart. All they do in the case of one who manifests ill-temper, is to bring to light the fact that he is destitute of patience, and to develop impatience into greater magnitude. But then why does his patience increase rather than diminish with the continuance of trials? Simply because he has not the foundation upon which to build patience. Without a groundwork of faith, it is impossible that tribulation should work patience. And the Bible does not say that they will do so under any other circumstances. See Rom. 5 : 1-5. But the one who has firm faith will believe, and believing will realize that "all things work together for good to them that love God," and so he will gladly endure trials.

"AND we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." This is literally true, not of a few persons merely, but of all who are followers of Christ, and not simply in times of persecution, but all the time. This does not mean that we shall all or any of us be called to go to the stake, the block, or the gallows for the brethren; it means that our lives should be considered as not belonging to us, but to the Lord, and that therefore they should be used in his service. Christ is the great Example. He "went about doing good." When he was weary with toil, and faint with hunger, he found rest and refreshment in laboring to lift up the fallen. He "pleased not himself." He sought only the welfare and pleasure of others. It is such service as this that calls for self-denial of the same class as that which would lead one actually to lay down his

life for another. Without such a self-sacrificing spirit as the ruling principle of one's life, one would not actually lay down his life for another, if it were required; or if he should do so, the sacrifice would not be acceptable to God. See Cor. 13 : 3. Daily dying is the order with one who is a true follower of Christ. This does not mean self-denial that is accompanied by a wry face, it means service of which no one is cognizant—necessary labor performed when weary, with the same cheerfulness as when fresh. It is that quiet service which finds its reward in the fact that God knows.

How may we esteem others better than ourselves? Easily enough; simply by looking only at the good qualities of others, and by seeing ourselves just as God sees us. The Holy Spirit, by means of its sword, the word of God, lays bare our own deceitful hearts, and lets us see them just as they appear to God. To be sure, for the sins that we find there we may readily secure pardon; nevertheless having seen what manner of actions our hearts naturally produce, and knowing that but for the grace of God they would never produce any other, we should learn humility. Now our brother may be in reality as bad as we, or even worse; but since it is not given us to know the secrets of his heart, the things which we can see in our own hearts—that is, the evil passions which, if not repressed, would result in the wickedest acts—are far worse than what we can see in our brother's actions. And so we can, in lowliness of mind, esteem others better than ourselves.

WITHOUT godliness, there can be no brotherly kindness. For (1) we must first be adopted into the family of God before we can have brethren to whom to exercise Christian kindness. And (2) it is from the love of God that we learn to love one another; and we cannot know the love of God except as it becomes a part of our being. Brotherly kindness is simply the natural outflow of the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit—that Spirit whose presence in us marks us as children of God.

THE measure of love which the newly converted man feels, is only a sample of the love which he ought to feel after he has been a long time in the way. Brotherly love which grows less after the beginning of one's Christian experience, is not such love as will give an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That is not an instance of progress toward Heaven, but of having one's feet set in the right way and then turning around and going back toward the world. The Christian should "abound yet more and more" in faith and love and every grace.

Ellen White Notes Compiled:

#1 "And to temperance, patience." The need of becoming temperate is made manifest as we try to take this step. It is next to an impossibility for an intemperate person to be patient. We should make decided efforts to be on the right side in every matter. We are on a battle ground, and Satan is striving for our souls. No impatient man or woman will ever enter into the courts of heaven. We must not allow the natural feelings to control our judgment. Many are quickly irritated, and their words are sharp and bitter. They wound the hearts of those about them, and make it apparent that the Spirit of Christ is not abiding in their souls. The grace of Christ will bring the peace of God into your homes; but many who profess the truth, do not seem to realize that it is an essential part of religion to become meek and lowly, tender-hearted and forbearing. {RH, February 21, 1888 par. 10}

Is there anything desirable in impatience? The loud, harsh complaint, the fretful, fault-finding spirit, are evidences of a narrow, conceited mind. Impatience brings strife and accusation and sorrow; but patience pours the balm of peace and love into the experiences of the home life. When we exercise the precious grace of patience toward others, they will reflect our spirit, and we shall gather with Christ. Patience will seek for unity in the church, in the family, and in the community. This grace must be woven into our lives. Every one should mount this round of progress, and add to faith, virtue, and temperance, the grace of patience. {RH, February 21, 1888 par. 11}

#2 Our God weighs the actions of men. Paul says, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name." The Lord rewards fruitfulness and spiritual growth. "He that hath, to him shall be given." He will not fail to reward the act of faith and love. The grace of Christ cherished in the heart is always progressive, leading to an increase of knowledge, an ability to acquire a larger, deeper conception of divine things, until the words are traced in the books of heaven, Ye are complete in Him. Then in the place of the curse pronounced upon the barren fig tree, there is commendation and blessing. "And we desire of you that every one of you show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end, that ye be not slothful, but followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." {Ms164-1899}

#3 In these last days of the world's history, when self-indulgence and pleasure seem to be the objects for which men live, the followers of Christ must strive to become like him in character, that they may not be ashamed to meet their record in the books of heaven, when every man will be rewarded according to his deeds. "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God." {RH, October 27, 1896 par. 1}

#4 Let us be found "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer." The Lord has made every provision that we shall have strong hope. If we are true to our covenant with God, the blessing is certain,--as certain as God's promise can make it. And so great is the blessing that it will be a full and sufficient reward for all the self-denial and self-sacrifice that for Christ's sake we have shown here below. {RH, November 24, 1904 par. 24}

#5 True laborers, co-workers with God, have a sense of the sacredness of the work, and the severe conflicts they must meet in order to carry it forward successfully. They will not faint and despond in view of the labor, arduous though it may be. In the epistle of Paul to the Romans he says: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but

we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. We are without excuse if we fail to avail ourselves of the ample provisions made for us that we may be wanting in nothing. The shrinking from hardships, the complaints while suffering under tribulation, make the servants of God weak and inefficient in bearing responsibilities and burdens. {RH, August 17, 1886 par. 9}

Trials and temptations may come; but the child of God, whether minister or layman, knows that Jesus is his helper. Although we may be weak and helpless in ourselves, all the forces of heaven are at the command of the believing child of God, and the hosts of hell cannot make him depart from the right course if he will cling to God by living faith. Temptation is no sin; the sin is in yielding to temptation. "Count it all joy," says the apostle James, "when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." God permits us to be placed under circumstances that will test us, to increase our love and to perfect our trust in him. Through self-denial and suffering with Christ, we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. Trials will come, but they are an evidence that we are children of God. Paul passed through great trials, but he did not despair as though his Father in heaven were dead. He rejoiced in tribulation; for he desired, through participations in the sufferings of Christ, to be conformed to his image. Let this hero of faith speak for himself. He says, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." [2 Corinthians 12:10.] {GW92 441.2}

#6 "Rejoice in the Lord always," the apostle Paul exhorts, "and again I say, Rejoice." Philippians 4:4. Whatever your disposition may be, God is able so to mold it that it will be sweet and Christlike. By the exercise of living faith you can separate from everything that is not in accordance with the mind of God, and thus bring heaven into your life here below. Doing this, you will have sunshine at every step. When the enemy seeks to enshroud the soul with darkness, sing faith and talk faith, and you will find that you have sung and talked yourself into the light. { Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, page 233.3}

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#8 Can we look to the cross of Calvary, and then question the love of Jesus? The stone is rolled away from the sepulcher; Christ has risen. Rejoice, O rejoice, that there is hope for you. Pray to the Lord Jesus that a holy influence may be brought into your life, an influence which shall subdue every passion, hush

every murmuring thought, exalt your affections, and purify your heart. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life," or the crown of righteousness. Look up, look up, come out of the cave of unbelief, and stand with God. If you dwell upon your trials, you will have a hopeless life. If you look beyond the shadow to Jesus, your only hope, you will see the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness. {RH, September 1, 1891 par. 6}

It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Verses 35-37. Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:7, 8. {9T 287.2}

#9 "And to patience, godliness." Godliness is the fruit of Christian character. If we abide in the Vine, we shall bear the fruits of the Spirit. The life of the Vine will manifest itself through the branches. We must have a close and intimate connection with heaven, if we bear the grace of godliness. Jesus must be a guest in our homes, a member of our households, if we reflect his image and show that we are sons and daughters of the Most High. Religion is a beautiful thing in the home. If the Lord abides with us, we shall feel that we are members of Christ's family in heaven. We shall realize that angels are watching us, and our manners will be gentle and forbearing. We shall be fitting up for an entrance into the courts of heaven, by cultivating courtesy and godliness. Our conversation will be holy, and our thoughts will be upon heavenly things. {RH, February 21, 1888 par. 12}

#10 In Paul's charge to Timothy he warns him of a class who will not consent to wholesome words, and who place a wrong estimate on riches. He says: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness. From such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." {ST, March 22, 1883 par. 11}

#11 Enoch walked with God. He honored God in every affair of life. In his home and in his business, he inquired, "Will this be acceptable to the Lord?" And by remembering God, and following his counsel, he

was transformed in character, and became a godly man, whose ways pleased the Lord. We are exhorted to add godliness, brotherly kindness. O how much we need to take this step, to add to this quality to our characters! In many of our homes there is a hard, combative spirit manifested. Critical words and unkind actions are offensive to God. Dictatorial commands and haughty, overbearing manners are not acceptable to Heaven. The reason there are so many differences existing between brethren is that they have failed to add brotherly kindness. We should have that love for others that Christ has had for us. A man is estimated at his true value by the Lord of heaven. If he is unkind in his earthly home, he is unfit for the heavenly home. If he will have his own way, no matter whom it grieves, he would not be content in heaven, unless he could rule there. The love of Christ must control our hearts, and the peace of God will abide in our homes. Seek God with a broken and contrite spirit, and you will be melted with compassion toward your brethren. You will be prepared to add to brotherly kindness, charity, or love. Without charity we will become "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Our highest professions are hollow and insincere; but "love is the fulfilling of the law." We shall be found wanting, if we do not add charity that suffereth long and is kind; that vaunteth not itself, that seeketh not her own. {RH, February 21, 1888 par. 13}

#12 "We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? and this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." The will of God is expressed in these words in a most decided manner, and the question is, Are we obeying the voice of God to the very letter? We can never attain perfection of character if we do not hear the voice of God and obey his counsel. This instruction does not apply simply to those who have had no trials to meet which would create dislike to their brethren; but it applies to those who have been injured, who have suffered from financial wrong, from reproach and criticism, from misapprehension and misjudgment. These must not allow hatred to enter the heart, or permit unkind feelings to arise when they look upon those who have injured them. {YI, January 13, 1898 par. 1}

#13 That which is most prized by the world's Redeemer, most sought for in His representatives, is purity and charity that suffereth long and is kind. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." This is sanctified knowledge. If we love one another as Christ has loved us, His love is perfected in us. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." The coldness and lack of sympathy that has come into our ranks is not of God. It is of the wicked one. How few really believe that the law of God is comprehended and fulfilled by him who loves God supremely and his neighbor as himself. This is indeed honoring God in the highest, and bringing peace on earth, good will toward men. {20MR 247.1}

#14 Let us not flatter ourselves that we are the children of God, when our lack of Christ's love is made manifest by our indifference to the souls for whom he died. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. . . .We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. 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. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." {RH, February 10, 1891 par. 11}

#15 How can we do this great work, how can we represent Christ to the world, if our lives are inconsistent? The divine must be blended with all our work in the cause of our Master. If Christ is not abiding in us, the Satanic will appear in our words or actions. Selfishness should have no place in our intercourse with others. We must be pure in heart, having an eye single to the glory of God. Paul manifests the most tender solicitude for his Thessalonian brethren: "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you." Brethren, we fail to give a correct example to others, because we are not sufficiently in earnest ourselves. We may reach higher; we may conform to the divine Model; we may be channels to communicate the living water to thirsting souls; we may so build that neither storm nor tempest can move us from the foundation, for we are united to the Eternal Rock. {RH, December 22, 1885 par. 13}

One of the strongest evidences of true conversion is love to God and man. Those who accept Jesus as their Redeemer have a deep, sincere love for others of like precious faith. Thus it was with the believers at Thessalonica. "As touching brotherly love," the apostle wrote, "ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." {AA 262.3}

#16 He who died to redeem man from death, loves with a divine love; and he says to his followers: "This is my commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you." Christ showed his love for the fallen race by his actions. The true child of God will be Christlike; and as he grows in the knowledge of the truth, and is sanctified through the truth, he will be more and more like Christ, and more desirous to save souls, and purchase of his blood. {ST, September 16, 1886 par. 1}

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}

#17 "Love one another," says our Saviour, "as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Christ has given us an example of pure, disinterested love. You have not as yet seen your deficiency in this respect, and your great need of this heavenly attainment, without which all your good purposes, and your zeal, even if it be of that nature that you could give your goods to feed the poor and your body to be burned, is nothing. You need that charity which suffereth long, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Without the spirit of love, no one can be like Christ. With this living principle in the soul, no one can be like the world. {2T 169.3}

#18 Christ came to do His Father's will. Are we following in His steps? All who have named the name of Christ should be constantly seeking for a more intimate acquaintance with Him, that they may walk even

as He walked, and do the works of Christ. We should appropriate the lessons of His life to our lives. Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "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." Here is the work of self-denial upon which we must enter with cheerfulness, in imitation of the example of our Redeemer. The Christian's life must be one of conflict and of sacrifice. The path of duty should be followed, not the path of inclination and choice. {3T 538.1}

#19 You need to cultivate courtesy and true Christian politeness. "In honor preferring one another." "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." {2T 162.2}

#20 Contemplating the intimacy of the relation between the followers of Christ, Paul writes: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." {ST, May 18, 1888 par. 2}