

LESSON 20 (Second Epistle of Peter - Lesson 4). – November 17, 1888.

2 PETER 1:7-15.

I. REPEAT the list of virtues sometimes called "Peter's ladder." 2 Peter 1 : 5-7.

2. What is the crowning grace? Verse 7, last part.

3. What is charity? Col. 3 : 14

4. What other very common word is equivalent to charity? See Col. 3 : 14, and other texts in Revised Version.

5. What is the end or object of the commandment, or law, of God? I Tim. 1 : 5.

6. What, indeed, is Bible charity or love? Rom. 13 : 10; I John 5 : 2, 3.

7. What is the Whole duty of man? Eccl. 12 : 13.

8. Then since the keeping of the commandments is charity, how does charity compare with the other graces? I Cor. 13 : 13.

9. Into how much of our actions should charity enter? I Cor. 16 :14.

10. Without charity, what is the most eloquent man like? I Cor. 13 : 1.

11. Will-the possession of great faith and deep knowledge of the mysteries of God, make up in any degree for lack of charity? Verse 2.

12. Show that charity does not consist simply in making great sacrifices and giving to the poor. Verse 3.

13. Tell what are the characteristics of charity. Verses 4-6.

14. If all these graces abound in any person what will be his condition? 2 Peter 1:8.

15. Name some of the fruits that are equivalent to the above graces. Gal. 5 : 22, 23.

16. What is the condition of one who lacks these things ? 2 Peter 1 :9.

17. Then what should we do? Verse 10.

18. What glorious reward awaits those in whom "these things" abound? Verse 11.

19. What must be the nature of those who inherit that eternal kingdom? Titus 2 :13, 14; Rev. 21 : 27.

20. Is the fact that we know these things any reason why we should not study them diligently? 2 Peter 1:12.

21. Why was the apostle so zealous in stirring up the minds of the people concerning these great truths? Verses 13, 14.

22. What had the Lord shown him concerning his death? John 21 :18, 19.

23. What was Peter's earnest desire that we should do? 2 Peter I : 15.

24. If these things are always in our mind, what prayer may we offer? Ps. 5 : 1.

NOTES.

CHARITY, or love, is "the bond of perfectness." This may readily be understood when we remember that "love is the fulfilling of the law," and that the whole law of God, including every duty that can be required of man, is summed up in the two precepts, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The love which is the bond of perfectness is not a mere emotion, but is a living, active principle, manifest in every deed and thought of one's life. Of course it is understood that love is the bond of perfectness only when there is underlying faith, for faith works by love, and love is the product of faith.

"GIVE diligence, to make your calling and election sure." Many are called, but few are chosen. How many are called? All. Here is the call: "Ho, every one that thirsteth,' come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." 4a. 55: 1. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22 : 17. But not all will heed the call; and of those who listen to it, very few comparatively will gain the final inheritance, because the great majority will not agonize to enter in. "Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:24. A man may even be one of the elect, one of the specially loved of God, yet if he does not give diligence to make his election sure, he will certainly fall. The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints" is an excellent one, if the saints only persevere; but they must not imagine that because they have tasted that the Lord is precious, and have felt the power of the world to come, therefore they are bound to be kept to the end, regardless of their own actions. Only those who patiently continue in well-doing can have eternal life. To each Christian the warning is given, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev. 3 : 11.

Ellen White Notes Compiled:

#1 I have before spoken to you of the plan of addition--Peter's ladder of eight rounds. "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." {RH, January 4, 1887 par. 9}

#2 In order to be a blessing to your people, you need to improve in many things. You should cultivate courtesy and cherish a tender sympathy for all. You should have the crowning grace of God, which is love. You criticize too much and are not so forbearing as you must be if you would win souls. You could have much more influence if you were less formal and rigid, and were actuated more by the Holy Spirit. Your fear of being led by men is too great. God uses men as His instruments and will use them as long as the world shall stand. {3T 418.3}

#3, #4 No provision has been made for Christians to draw apart from one another. By our unity and love we are to reveal the character of Christ. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." "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. . . . Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." {RH, April 27, 1897 par. 7}

#5 "Rebuke not an elder [a man older than yourself], but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren, the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity. Honor widows that are widows indeed." "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." "Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." {SpTA03 15.2}

The greatest obstruction to your work will be the disregard of the tenderness of Christ in dealing with one another, because self is seeking the supremacy. Self loves to vaunt itself, and those who possess a spirit unlike Christ's, cannot discern what manner of spirit controls them. They speak and act like sinners, while they profess to be Christians. They more readily express their own will than the will of God, yet they are very strenuous to have their will regarded as the will of God. Satan is urging his attributes into the very midst of us; he is seeking to destroy our love for, and confidence in, each other; and the lack of confidence which brethren in the ministry repose in their fellow-laborers, is easily read in the rules and regulations concerning even the details of the work which they seek to impose upon them. {SpTA03 15.3}

#6 The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and his law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and man. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." [Romans 13:10.] The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of his law. Says the psalmist, "Thy law is the truth;" "all thy commandments are righteousness." [Psalm 119:142, 172.] And the apostle Paul declares, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." [Romans 7:12.] Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author. {GC88 466.4}

There is no argument in favor of the unchangeable character of God's law, so forcible as that presented in the cross of Calvary. If God could have altered one precept of his law to meet man in his fallen condition, then Christ need not have died. But the fact that the Son of God must become man's substitute and sacrifice, in order to atone for his transgression, proves the immutable nature of the law of Jehovah. Do you believe in Jesus as the Saviour of the world? Do you believe in him as your Saviour? He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. He came to "save his people from their sins;" and "sin is the transgression of the law." "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in 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." "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." {RH, October 9, 1888 par. 13}

#7 In the Bible the whole duty of man is defined. Solomon says, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." The will of God is revealed in his written word, and this is the essential knowledge. Human wisdom, familiarity with the languages of different nations, is a help in the missionary work. An understanding of the customs of the people, of the location and time of events, is practical knowledge; for it aids in making the figures of the Bible clear, in bringing out the force of Christ's lessons; but it is not positively necessary to know these things. The way-faring man may find the pathway cast up for the ransomed to walk in, and there will be no excuse found for any one who perishes through misapprehension of the Scriptures. {RH, December 1, 1891 par. 3}

#8, #9 Please read the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of 1 Corinthians. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Let us wash our robe of character. Let us no longer bite and devour one another. Let those who claim to be Christians practise Christ's words. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men. . . . Let all your things be done with charity." {RH, October 17, 1899 par. 12}

#10 Christ prayed that his disciples might be one, even as he is one with the Father. Every one who claims to be a child of God should labor for this oneness. When the union exists for which Christ prayed, his followers will be a holy and powerful people. But if they let love die out of their souls, and accept the accusations of Satan's agents against the children of God, they will become servants of sin and allies of the adversary of God and of man. Let them heed the instruction of the apostle and cultivate the love of which he speaks. He says: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. . . . Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth." {RH, May 14, 1895 par. 13}

#11, #12 And then, in words which from that day to this have been to men and women a source of inspiration and encouragement, Paul set forth the importance of that love which should be cherished by the followers of Christ: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." {AA 318.1}

#13 Again, he sets forth the fruits of true charity: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth." If we would be accepted as the followers of Christ, we must bring forth the fruits of his Spirit; for our Saviour himself declares, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." {RH, February 9, 1886 par. 12}

#14 "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." But a profession of faith without corresponding works is nothing. "He that lacketh these things is blind, and can not see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." This is a description of a professed Christian who lives a life of sin. He grieves the Lord Jesus, and puts him to open shame because he manifests a character after the similitude of Satan. He retains the same objectionable traits of character that he had before he claimed to have received Christ. Indulging his corrupt tendencies, he forgets to be a doer of the Word. He does not eat the flesh nor drink the blood of the Son of God. He does not practice Christ's words nor do his works. {RH, May 1, 1900 par. 2}

#15 What is the fruit we should bear? The fruit of kindly words and deeds. In God's Word we are told what are the works of the flesh and what the fruits of the Spirit. "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Is not this sufficiently plain? None of us need walk in uncertainty. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." {1888 132.3}

#16 "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and can not see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." May it never be said of us that we were so blind in this life that we could never see beyond the enjoyment of the pleasures of sin for a season! {The Canadian Union Messenger, September 3, 1907 par. 18}

#17, #18 "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). We need not have a supposed hope, but an assurance. To make our calling and election sure is to follow the Bible plan to closely examine ourselves, to make strict inquiry whether we are indeed converted, whether our minds are drawn out after God and heavenly things, our wills renewed, our whole souls changed. To make our calling and election sure requires far greater diligence than many are giving to this important matter. "For if ye do these things"--live on the plan of addition, growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ--ye shall mount up, step by step, the ladder Jacob saw, and "ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." {19MR 351.4}

#19 Those who labor for souls must attain to a deeper, fuller, clearer knowledge of God than can be gained by ordinary effort. They must throw all their energies into the work of the Master. They are engaged in a high and holy calling, and if they gain souls for their hire they must lay firm hold upon God, daily receiving grace and power from the Source of all blessing. "For the grace of God that bringeth

salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 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 2:11-14. {AA 205.3}

Jesus has gone to prepare mansions for those who are waiting and watching for his appearing. There they will meet the pure angels and the redeemed host, and will join their songs of praise and triumph. There the Saviour's love surrounds his people, and the city of God is irradiated with the light of his countenance--a city whose walls, great and high, are garnished with all manner of precious stones, whose gates are pearls, and whose streets are pure gold, as it were transparent glass. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." The shadows of night never fall on that city; it has no need of the sun, neither of the moon; its inhabitants rejoice in the undimmed glory of the Lamb of God. {RH, June 3, 1880 par. 19}

#20 "Wherefore," the apostle Peter continues, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." No matter how long the Christian pilgrim may have been traveling in the way of life eternal, he needs often to recount the mercies of his heavenly Father, and gather hope and courage from the promises of the Word. Daily he is to remember that an eternal life insurance policy is offered to every one who gives diligence to do those things that will bring growth in grace and in a knowledge of the truth. Laying aside all manner of foolishness and unprofitable conversation, he is to seek to come into right relationship with God, that he may reveal the fruits of the Spirit. {North Pacific Union Gleaner, March 9, 1910 par. 7}

#21 The apostle Peter realized the value of constant vigilance in the Christian life, and he felt impelled by the Holy Spirit to urge upon the believers the importance of exercising great carefulness in the daily life. "Yea," he writes, "I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." {NPU Gleaner, March 9, 1910 par. 8}

#22 Since his reinstatement after his denial of Christ, Peter had unflinchingly braved danger and had shown a noble courage in preaching a crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour. As he lay in his cell he called to mind the words that Christ had spoken to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." John 21:18. Thus Jesus had made known to the disciple the very manner of his death, and even foretold the stretching of his hands upon the cross. {AA 537.2}

#23 (See quote for question #21)

#24 "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God; for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." "For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass him as with a shield." {Ms144-1897}

This will be the experience of the sons and daughters of God who receive and believe in Christ as their Redeemer. What does the world's Redeemer say? "The words of the Lord are as pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever." The children of Christ heed the words, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." {Ms144-1897}