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Sabbath School Lessons

ON THE

First Epistle of John

FOR SENIOR CLASSES.

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INTRODUCTORY.

Analysis of the First Epistle of John.

It may assist to a clearer understanding of the portion of Scripture selected for study during this quarter if a general view of it as a whole can be obtained. The following analysis, taken from the "Cambridge Bible for Schools," may prove of some help in this direction:—

Chapter 1 : 1-4.—Introduction.

1. The subject matter of the gospel employed in the epistle. Chapter 1 : 1-3.
2. The purpose of the epistle. Chapter 1 : 4.

Chapter 1 : 5 to 2 : 28.—God Is Light.

a. **Chapter 1 : 5 to 2 : 11.**—What walking in the light involves; the condition and conduct of the believer.

1. Fellowship with God and with the brethren. Chapter 1 : 5-7.
2. Consciousness and confession of sin. Chapter 1 : 8-10.
3. Obedience to God by imitation of Christ. Chapter 2 : 1-6.
4. Love of the brethren. Chapter 2 : 7-11.

b. **Chapter 2 : 12-28.**—What walking in the light excludes,—the things and persons to be avoided.

1. Threefold statement of reasons for writing. Chapter 2 : 12-14.
2. The things to be avoided,—the world and its ways. Chapter 2 : 15-17.
3. The persons to be avoided,—antichrists. Chapter 2 : 18-26.
4. (Transitional) the place of safety,—Christ. Chapter 2 : 27, 28.

Chapter 2 : 29 to 5 : 12.—God Is Love.

c. **Chapter 2 : 29 to 3 : 24.**—The evidence of sonship,—deeds of righteousness before God.

1. The children of God and the children of the devil. Chapter 2 : 29 to 3 : 12.
2. Love and hate; life and death. Chapter 3 : 13-24.

d. **Chapter 4 : 1 to 5 : 12.**—The source of sonship—possession of the Spirit as shown by confession of the incarnation.

1. The Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Chapter 4 : 1-6.
2. Love is the mark of the children of Him who is love. Chapter 4 : 7-21.
3. Faith is the source of love, the victory over the world, and the possession of life. Chapter 5 : 1-12.

Chapter 5 : 13-21.—Conclusion.

1. Intercessory love the fruit of faith. Chapter 5 : 13-17.
2. The sum of the Christian's knowledge. Chapter 5 : 18-20.
3. Final injunction. Chapter 5 : 21.

Perhaps our first impression on looking at the headings of the smaller sections would be that these subjects have not much connection with one another, and that the order in which they come is more or less a matter of accident. This impression would be erroneous. Fellowship with God involves consciousness of sin, and its confession with a view to its removal. This implies obedience to God, which finds its highest expression in love. Love of God and of the brethren excludes love of the world, which is passing away, as is shown by the appearance of antichrists. He who would not pass away must abide in Christ. With the idea of sonship, introduced by the expression "begotten of God," the epistle takes a fresh start. This divine sonship implies mutual love among God's children and the indwelling of Christ, to which the Spirit testifies. The mention of the Spirit leads on to the distinction between true and false spirits. By a rather subtle connection this once more leads to the topic of mutual love, and to faith as the source of love, especially as shown in intercessory prayer. The whole closes with a summary of the knowledge on which the moral principles inculcated in the epistle are based, and with a warning against idols.

The main characteristics of this epistle, says Barnes, are these: 1. It is full of love. The writer dwells on it; places it in a variety of attitudes; enforces the duty of loving one another by a great variety of considerations, and shows that it is essential to the very nature of religion. 2. The epistle abounds with statements on the evidences of piety, or the characteristics of true religion. . . . A large part of the epistle is occupied with this, and there is perhaps no portion of the New Testament which one could study to more advantage who is desirous of ascertaining whether he himself is a true Christian. An anxious inquirer, a man who wishes to know what true religion is, could be directed to no portion of the New Testament where he would more readily find the instruction that he needs, than to this portion of the writings of the aged and experienced disciple whom Jesus loved. A true Christian can find nowhere else a more clear statement of the nature of his religion, and of the evidences of real piety, than in this epistle.

NOTE.

The portion of Scripture designated for each lesson should be so thoroughly studied that every question can be answered *in the exact words of the text*. The questions are framed with the purpose to make this possible. It is hoped that the notes will be found suggestive and helpful in the further development of the thought of the lesson. Teachers should encourage a careful study of *the ideas* presented, and, above all, should seek to make such a practical application of the subject matter as will be a help in personal experience.

LESSONS
ON THE
FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN,
FOR SENIOR CLASSES.

OCTOBER 7 TO DECEMBER 30, 1893.

LESSON I.—October 7, 1893.

WALKING IN THE LIGHT. 1 John 1.

1. IN what ways had the beloved disciple learned of the Word of Life?
2. What does John say of this life?
3. What kind of life was it?
4. Where was this life?
5. What does the apostle declare?
6. For what purpose?
7. With whom was his fellowship?
8. Why does he write these things?
9. What message does he declare?
10. From whom did he receive this message?
11. What is said of those who profess fellowship with God, but walk in darkness?
12. What experience do those have who walk in the light?
13. What is the result of claiming to have no sin?
14. What promise is made to those who confess their sins?
15. What is said of those who claim that they have not sinned?

NOTES.

1. VERSES 1-4.—Christ is the Word (John 1:1) and the life (John 14:6), and hence he is the Word of Life. The life was manifested in flesh (Rom. 8:3), and can be known to us only as an experience (John 1:12). When our eyes have been anointed (Rev. 3:18; 2 Kings 6:17) and our ears wakened (Isa. 50:4) so that we can hear aright (Mark 4:24), then we must testify (Acts 4:20), and our words will have effect (Acts 4:33). Fellowship with Christ is the experience of every Christian (1 Cor. 1:9), and this extends to his sufferings (Phil. 3:10; 1:29), as well as to the joy (1 Peter 4:13).

2. VERSES 5-7.—God is light and dwells in light (1 Tim. 6:16), and, as he was in Christ (2 Cor. 5:19), so Christ in his life (John 1:4) was the true light (verse 9), and his followers become light (Eph. 5:8; Matt. 5:14) if they walk in the light (John 8:12), and are to shine (Isa. 60:1); but this is done by the life (Matt. 5:16). "What is light?—It is piety, goodness, truth, mercy, love; it is the revealing of the truth in the character and life." We cannot have fellowship with light and darkness at the same time. 2 Cor. 6:14. "Sin and Jesus are never in copartnership." "The Lord Jesus will accept of no compromise." A lie may be spoken or acted, and those whose life is not in harmony with their profession do both. "A profession of piety is not enough. If religion is not brought into practical service, and does not produce good works, it is valueless." A Christian "is justified by faith but judged by his works." "Only the love which is shown by works is counted genuine."

3. VERSES 8, 10.—God has said that we are sinners (Rom. 3:23), and so we make him a liar by saying that we are not sinners. But while there is no good thing in us (Rom. 7:18), and we are poor and miserable (Rev. 3:17), we can boast of the Lord (Ps. 34:2; 1 Cor. 1:31), in whom there is no unrighteousness (Ps. 92:15), and who is made righteousness unto us (1 Cor. 1:30). "He was condemned for our sins,

in which he had no share, that we might be justified by his righteousness, in which we had no share." The only way by which we may be "made free from sin" is to confess that we are full of sin.

"Are you in Christ?—Not if you do not acknowledge yourselves erring, helpless, condemned sinners; not if you are exalting and glorifying self. If there is any good in you, it is wholly attributable to the mercy of a compassionate Saviour." "There can be no self-exaltation, no boastful claim to freedom from sin, on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary's cross." "And the claim to be without sin is, in itself, evidence that he who makes this claim is far from holy."

4. VERSE 9.—There are some notable examples of confession on record for our instruction. Daniel (Dan. 9:3-20), Ezra (Ezra 9:5; 10:1), and David (Ps. 51:1-4) are familiar cases. "True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins." "Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation." "Whatever the character of your sin, confess it. If it is against God only, confess only to him. If you have wronged or offended others, confess also to them, and the blessing of the Lord will rest upon you." "Sins that are not confessed will never be forgiven."

"Our past sins will sometimes come to mind and cast a shadow over our faith, so that we can see nothing but merited punishment in store for us. But at such times, while we feel sorrow for sins, we should look to Jesus, and believe that he has pardoned our transgressions." "If you believe the promise—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it." But "it is not faith that claims the favor of heaven without complying with the conditions upon which mercy is to be

granted. It is presumption." "We are to believe that God accepts us when we fulfill his conditions, simply because he has said that he would."

LESSON II.—October 14, 1893.

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE. 1 John 2:1-8.

1. How are the readers of the epistle addressed?
2. For what purpose are these things written?
3. What provision has been made for one who fails into sin?
4. What is the name and character of the advocate?
5. What relation does he sustain to sin?
6. For whom?
7. By what evidence may we be assured that we really know God?
8. What charge is made against those professing to know him, in whom this proof is lacking?
9. In whom is the love of God perfected?
10. Of what is this the proof?
11. What should be the daily walk of the Christian?
12. Is this a new conception of the Christian life?
13. How old is it?
14. How long since it has been made known?
15. Although old, is it still new?
16. In whom is it true?
17. For what reason?

NOTES.

I. VERSES 1-3.—Christ came to save, not *in* sin, but *from* sin. Matt. 1:21. He redeems from *all* iniquity (Titus 2:14), and delivers from the power of evil (Col. 1:13); but God remembers our weakness (Ps. 103:13, 14), and has adapted

his plan of salvation to the weakest one. "The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, but he will maintain a constant warfare against it. Here is where Christ's help is needed. Human weakness becomes united to divine strength."

"There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ, and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes; but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Said the beloved John, 'These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' And do not forget the words of Christ, 'The Father himself loveth you.' He desires to restore you to himself, to see his own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you but yield yourself to him, he that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ. Pray more fervently, believe more fully. As we come to distrust our own power, let us trust the power of our Redeemer, and we shall praise him who is the health of our countenance."

We each have a case pending in the court of heaven, but we have an Advocate there watchful of our interest (Heb. 7: 25). "He asks for his people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in his glory and a seat upon his throne." "The law was there [within the veil], but it was concealed under the golden mercy seat, and its voice was hushed by the blood of the atonement. The propitiation, or mercy seat, was there, and on it sat the glory of God, whose anger had been turned away by the voice of the blood."—*Rodgers*.

“Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship,” but “it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience.”

2. VERSES 4-6.—“Though John in his epistles dwells so fully upon love, yet he does not hesitate to reveal the true character of that class who claim to be sanctified while living in transgression of the law of God.” “God is love, and his law is love,” and so “the love of God hath been perfected,” or fully wrought out, in the one whose life is in harmony with his word. We are called to holiness (1 Thess. 4:7), which is agreement with God, and “the command, ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,’ would never have been given if every provision had not been made whereby we could obey the requirement,—be as perfect in our sphere as God is in his.” “It is not Christ walking upon the sea, but his ordinary walk, that we are called upon to imitate.”—*Luther*. Love to God (Deut. 6:5) and love to man (Lev. 19:18) was not a “new commandment” in fact, but to many it was “a new commandment” in experience.

LESSON III.—October 21, 1893.

TRUE LOVE. 1 John 2:9-17.

1. Can one be in the light and hate his brother?
2. What is the condition of him who loves his brother?
3. What is sufficient proof that a man is in darkness?
4. In what does such an one walk?
5. Does he know whither he goes?
6. Why not?
7. Why does John write to children?
8. Why to fathers?

9. Why to young men?
10. What is the second reason given for writing to children?
11. Why to young men?
12. Upon what are Christians exhorted not to bestow their affection?
13. Can love of the world and love of God dwell in the same heart?
14. What are the characteristics of the world?
15. From what source do these come?
16. What will happen to the world?
17. Who will abide forever?

NOTES.

1. VERSES 9-11.—Love for the brethren is an evidence of conversion (1 John 3:14), and no one can be in the light (John 8:12) and not have this love. Christ identifies himself with his followers, and counts every service rendered to them as though done to him. Matt. 25:40. There are only two classes. All are either “in the light” or “in darkness.” Love is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), by which it is shed abroad in the heart (Rom. 5:5). When man sinned, “selfishness took the place of love,” but “in the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action.” God loved us when we were sinners (Rom. 5:8), and Christians must not limit this love to their brethren (Matt. 5:44-46). “The Spirit of Christ’s self-sacrificing love is the spirit that pervades heaven, and is the very essence of its bliss. This is the spirit that Christ’s followers will possess, the work that they will do.”

Christians are to love one another (John 15:12, 17), which is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:10). “We should love and respect one another, notwithstanding the faults and imperfections that we cannot help seeing.” “We are to stand under the shadow of the cross of Calvary, humbling our

hearts, confessing our sins, and entreating the Lord to pardon our defects of character, and strengthen our love for the brethren."

It is dangerous to trifle with light, for light rejected will bring darkness (John 12: 35), and this is the greatest darkness of all (Matt. 6: 23). When minds are blinded by Satan (2 Cor. 4: 4), the people are in the deepest darkness (Isa. 60: 2), and do not perceive the snares of the devil.

2. VERSES 15-17.—Our thoughts are to be above (Col. 3: 2), where our citizenship is (Phil. 3: 20, R. V.), and our love cannot be divided (Matt. 6: 24). Enmity between Christians and the world is of long standing (Gen. 3: 15), and is really the hope of the race. "It is the grace that Christ implants in the soul which creates in man enmity against Satan." We may be friends of God (John 15: 15), as Abraham was (Isa. 41: 8), or friends of the world; but we cannot be both at the same time (James 4: 4). "Conformity to the world will never be the means of converting the world to Christ." The world passes away, but character endures. The will of God is his law (Rom. 2: 18), which is everlasting righteousness (Ps. 119: 172, 144; Isa. 51: 6-8).

LESSON IV.—October 28, 1893.

ANTICHRISTS. 1 John 2: 18-25.

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1. To what time does our lesson especially apply?
 2. Whose coming is foretold?
 3. How fully has this prediction been fulfilled?
 4. Of what is this the proof?
 5. With whom have these antichrists been nominally connected?
 6. Was the fellowship real?

7. What makes this plain?
8. Why do they withdraw?
9. What is given to the believers?
10. With what result?
11. What was the real reason for writing the epistle?
12. Who is a liar?
13. Who is antichrist?
14. How close is the relationship between the Father and the Son?
15. What is to abide in the believers?
16. What experience will follow?
17. What has been promised to them?

NOTES.

1. VERSES 18-20.—Apostasy is a characteristic of the last time (or hour, R. V.). The Saviour predicted this (Matt. 24:11, 12), and the church had been warned of it more than once (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5). The incarnation is the testing truth (2 John 7), and this really means the union of divinity and humanity in the believer (Col. 1:27). This experience involves the death of self (Rom. 6:6), and giving up all things temporal (Luke 14:33), and hence many, like Demas (2 Tim. 4:10), fail to endure the test. The power of God in the church is the best agency for relieving it of unworthy members (Isa. 52:1), as is shown in the early church (Acts 5:1-14). Jesus was anointed by the Father (Acts 10:38), and so are his followers (2 Cor. 1:21), and they are thus enabled to comprehend the things of God (Eph. 1:17-19), which are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:12-14).

2. VERSES 22, 23.—Christ being the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4), one with the Father (John 10:30), through whom alone the Father could be known (Matt. 11:27), to see one was to see the other (John 12:45), and a denial of one includes the rejection of the other (compare 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4).

3. VERSES 24, 25.—Love to one another was the command

from the beginning (2 John 5), and this involves the new birth (1 John 4:7), which results in the indwelling presence of both the Father and the Son (John 14:23). Christ is the life (John 11:25), and is from eternity (Micah 5:2, margin), and so is called the eternal life (1 John 1:2), which was promised before man fell (Titus 1:2), and announced to him before he was driven from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15). To believe on Christ is to receive him (John 1:12), who is life (Col. 3:4), and so believers have everlasting life (John 3:36). When God gave Christ to the world, he poured out all the treasure of heaven in one gift (Col. 2:9), and it will be our constant study to all eternity to learn what we have in Christ.

LESSON V.—November 4, 1893.

ABIDING IN CHRIST. 1 John 2:26-29; 3:1-3.

1. Concerning whom has this instruction been given?
2. What abides in the believers?
3. Of what have they no need?
4. What teaches them?
5. What will they do as a consequence of this teaching?
6. To what are the "little children" exhorted?
7. What will be the result of thus abiding in him?
8. What is the character of Christ?
9. What is true of everyone who does righteousness?
10. To what is especial attention now directed?
11. How is this love manifested?
12. What follows from this relationship?
13. When is this relationship entered upon?
14. What doth not yet appear?
15. What change will take place "when he shall appear"?
16. What effect does this hope have upon its possessor?
17. What is the true standard of purity of character?

NOTES:

1. VERSES 26-29.—Paul warned the church of future trouble (Acts 20:29), and this apostasy began in his day (2 Thess. 2:7). Jude writes very strongly concerning these deceivers (Jude 4, 10-13), who abounded before John's death (2 John 7). The Holy Spirit, which was promised by Christ (John 16:7), and had been poured upon them (Acts 2:33), would teach them the truth (John 16:13), and would protect them from deceivers (Acts 10:19, 20). Jesus says, "Abide in me." These words convey the idea of rest, stability, confidence. See the lesson in John 15:4-7. Such a life brings conformity to the divine character (2 Cor. 3:18) and confidence at his coming (Isa. 25:9). "God is righteous: . . . And if so, then the source of righteousness. When, therefore, a man doeth righteousness, *we know* . . . that the source of his righteousness is God: that in consequence he has acquired by new birth from God that righteousness which he had not by nature. We argue from his *doing righteousness* to his *having been begotten of God*. . . . The whole mass of Socinian and Pelagian commentators have reversed the members of the argument, and made it conclude that *doing righteousness* is the condition, on our part, of *becoming* a child of God. Roman Catholic expositors . . . go equally wrong, in understanding *hath been begotten*, not as the statement of a past abiding fact, but as the ground of a confidence as to the future."—*Alford, Lee & Shepard, edition 1883.*

2. VERSES 1-3.—"It would require the language of the Infinite to express the love that has made it possible for us to be called the sons of God. Faith makes us children of God (Gal. 3:26), and this is a present experience. The Holy Spirit belongs to the sons of God (Gal. 4:6), who are also heirs (Rom. 8:17) of the inheritance. In fact, "all things" belong to them (1 Cor. 3:21). The world knew not Christ (John 1:10) nor the father (John 17:25), and for this reason (John 16:3) will persecute true Christians (John 15:18-20).

This present life is the time for the perfect character. "If you give yourself to him and accept him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for his sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in the place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned." The character is fixed at the coming of Christ (Rev. 22:11), who "shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3:21, R. V), and thus shall we "appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4). So shall we be satisfied. Ps. 17:15. Holiness is required of those who shall see God (Heb. 12:14), and this privilege is promised to the pure in heart (Matt. 5:8); but "who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Prov. 20:9. It is by faith (Acts 15:9) which works (Gal. 5:6) in obedience (1 Peter 1:22) that we are purified. "He who hath this hope in him learns from the Scriptures that he must be a worker together with God."

LESSON VI.—November 11, 1893.

SIN AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1 John 3:4-15.

1. What is the sinner's attitude toward the law?
2. What is the definition of sin?
3. For what purpose was Christ manifested?
4. From what is he free?
5. What insures freedom from sin?
6. What is the sinner's relation to Christ?
7. What is the character of the one who "doeth righteousness"?
8. What is the character of the one who "committeth sin"?
9. How long has the devil continued in sin?

10. For what purpose was Christ manifested?
11. What course of life results from the new birth?
12. What reason is given for this statement?
13. How are the "children of God" distinguished from the children of the devil?
14. What message has been heard from the beginning?
15. Whose case is cited as an illustration?
16. Why did he kill his brother?
17. What should cause no astonishment to the brethren?
18. What is an evidence of the change from death to life?
19. Who abides in death?
20. How broad is the meaning of the sixth commandment?
21. What character does not possess eternal life?

NOTES.

I. VERSES 4-6.—Unrighteousness and sin are the same (1 John 5: 17), and both are the result of being out of harmony with God's law, which is righteousness (Ps. 119: 172). "The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of his law." The law detects sin (Rom. 3: 20), and drives to Christ for justification (Gal. 3: 24). "A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon." Christ came to take away sin and abolish death (2 Tim. 1: 10), but not the law. "Had it been possible for the law to be changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died to save man from the penalty of sin." "A wrong conception of the character, the perpetuity, and obligation of the divine law, has led to errors in the relation to conversion and sanctification, and has resulted in lowering the standard of piety in the church." "It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among his professed people;" Christ bore the sins of the world (John 1: 29, margin) in the sinner's place (Gal. 3: 13); and, although free from sin (1 Peter 2: 22), and "hating sin with a perfect hatred, he yet gathered to his

soul the sins of the whole world." "Under the mighty impulse of his love, he took our place in the universe, and invited the Ruler of all things to treat him as a representative of the human family." "Though the guilt of sin was not his, his Spirit was torn and bruised by the transgressions of men." It was at such cost as this that "he was manifested to take away our sins." That vital union with Christ which imparts his nature (2 Peter 1:4) enables us to realize the fulfillment of "God's mighty emancipation proclamation" (Rom. 6:14).

2. VERSES 7-9.—Righteousness must be within before it can be manifested in outward works. "Genuine Christlikeness cannot be manifested in the character until Christ is received by faith and formed within the hope of glory." "The tree that bears good fruit is a good tree and has a living root; not that the fruit *makes* the tree and its fruit to be good, but it *shows* that they are so."—*Fausset*. God condemned sin in the flesh once (Rom. 8:3), and "the union of divinity with humanity in Christ was to reveal to us God's purpose to bring men into the closest connection with himself." "He who lays hold upon the righteousness of Christ may become a perfect man in Christ Jesus." "The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts." Christ prayed in behalf of all his disciples that the Father might "keep them from the evil one" (R. V.), and that prayer avails now.

3. VERSES 12-15.—The cause assigned for the murder of Abel is really at the root of all the injuries inflicted upon the righteous by evil men, and was illustrated in the death of Christ. "It was not so much because he appeared without worldly wealth, pomp, or grandeur, that the Jews were led to reject him. They saw that he possessed power which could more than compensate for the lack of these outward advantages. But the purity and holiness of Christ called forth against him the hatred of the ungodly. His life of

self-denial and sinless devotion was a perpetual reproof to a proud, sensual people. It was this that evoked enmity against the Son of God." "So in all ages the wicked have hated those who were better than themselves." "It is the spirit that through all the ages has set up the stake and kindled the burning pile for the disciples of Christ." The world hated Christ (John 15:24), and so would naturally hate his followers. "Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it; it is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns."

Christ explained the spiritual nature of the sixth commandment (Matt. 5:21, 22), showing that it is "exceeding broad." If it were the duty of the civil power to enforce the law of God, there would not be a sufficient number of innocent persons to inflict the penalty upon those who are really guilty of murder. The spirit that leads to murder is not in harmony with the Spirit of Christ (Luke 9:56), and so shuts its possessor out of heaven (Rom. 8:9).

LESSON VII.—November 18, 1893.

LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER. 1 John 3:16-24.

1. How is the love of God shown?
2. How far ought the spirit of self-sacrifice to be carried?
3. What gives evidence of a lack of this love?
4. To what kind of love are the believers exhorted?
5. What will be known as a consequence?
6. When the heart condemns, can it be expected that God will commend?
7. What follows when the heart does not condemn?
8. Then how much is received?
9. For what reason?

10. What is his commandment?
11. What union is predicated of commandment keepers?
12. How may we know that he abideth in us?

NOTES.

I. VERSES 16-18.—The Revised Version renders the first clause of verse 16 thus: "Hereby know we love, because," etc. The cross of Calvary is the grandest display of love which the universe has ever seen. John 3:16. "Jesus died because God loved the world. The channel had to be made whereby the love of God should be recognized by man and flow into the sinner's heart in perfect harmony with truth and justice." "The resources of infinite love have been exhausted in devising and executing the plan of redemption for man." It is love which draws man to God (Jer. 31:3) and leads him to repentance (Rom. 2:4), and "the Lord has no reserve power with which to influence men. He can give no greater manifestation of his love than that which he has given." "Oh, what a God have we! What a Benefactor! What claims has he upon our love! Having collected all the riches of the universe and laid open all the resources of infinite power, he gave all the heavenly treasure into the hands of Christ, and said: 'All these are for man. Use them to convince him that there is no love greater than mine in earth or heaven. His greatest happiness consists in loving me, and giving his heart to me, who hath loved him with an infinite love.'" "He who has shared in the grace of Christ is thereby placed under obligation to others (Rom. 1:14), and this grace is more sacred to him than life (Acts 20:24)." "The plan of salvation was laid by a sacrifice, a gift" (2 Cor. 8:9), and the same spirit should characterize all Christians (Matt. 10:8) as was shown by the Macedonians (2 Cor. 8:3-5). "Thus while our gifts cannot recommend us to God, or earn his favor, they are an evidence that we have received the grace of Christ. They are a test of the

sincerity of our profession of love." "He tests the love of his professed followers by committing to their tender mercies the afflicted and bereaved ones, the poor and the orphan." Deeds should accompany words in order to make them effective. James 2:15, 16.

2. VERSES 19-24.—*A clear conscience* is a good thing (2 Cor. 1:12), but God is the final judge (Rom. 2:16), and the life record determines the result (Rev. 20:12). "Believers, as such, ask only what is in accordance with God's will; or if they ask what God wills not, they bow their will to God's will, and so God grants them either their request or something better than it."—*Fausset*.

God can bestow special blessings upon those only who will use them to his glory, which is always for their good. Deut. 6:24. The obedience of faith is evidence of such a purpose. As Christ pleased not himself (Rom. 15:3) but the Father (John 8:29), so we are to do; but this is not natural to man (Rom. 8:8), and is accomplished only through faith (Heb. 11:6). Belief in Christ insures salvation (Acts 16:31), and is the work of God (John 6:29). Love to man is the outgrowth of this experience. Christ dwells in genuine Christians (2 Cor. 13:5), as in Paul (Gal. 2:20), and works in us through his power (Phil. 2:13) to obedience (Rom. 5:19).

LESSON VIII.—November 25, 1893.

TEST OF FALSE TEACHERS. 1 John 4:1-6.

1. Is every spirit to be believed?
2. What point should be settled by investigation?
3. For what reason?
4. How can the Spirit of God be known?
5. What spirit is not of God?
6. What is such a spirit?

7. What prediction had been made concerning i :
8. Had the prediction been fulfilled?
9. Who had "overcome them"?
10. What had enabled them to do this?
11. Of what are "they"?
12. Of what do they speak?
13. What heareth them?
14. Of what are "we"?
15. Who heareth "us"?
16. Who "heareth not us"?
17. What is determined by this means?

NOTE.

"The connection of the visible with the invisible world, the ministration of angels of God, and the agency of evil spirits, are plainly revealed in the Scriptures, and inseparably interwoven with human history." "Evil spirits, in the beginning created sinless, were equal in nature, power, and glory with the holy beings that are now God's messengers. But fallen through sin, they are leagued together for the dishonor of God and the destruction of men." These evil spirits work "in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2), who yield themselves as servants (Rom. 6:16), in marvelous ways (Matt. 24:24), and more and more as time advances (2 Tim. 3:13), until fire is brought down from heaven (Rev. 13:13), and "as the crowning act in the great drama of deception Satan himself will personate Christ." "The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as the safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness." Isa. 8:20. "Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures." Error is not to be countenanced, although preached by an angel (Gal. 1:8); neither, because we despise the messenger (Mark

6:3), are we to reject truth (John 10:37, 38). The incarnation is the "secret of piety" (1 Tim. 3:16, Young's translation), the fellowship of which is to be made known to all (Eph. 3:9), and that as a personal experience (Col. 1:27). Christ was born of the Spirit (Luke 1:35), and dwelt in the flesh (John 1:14), and so he must dwell in our flesh (Eph. 3:17), living in us (Gal. 2:20), to give us victory (2 Cor. 2:14) in the conflict with unseen powers (Eph. 6:12). Anyone who presents any other hope of salvation is a deceiver and an anti-christ. 2 John 7. "Jesus fought all our battles during his life upon earth" (John 16:33), and "we each have a battle to fight *with a fallen foe.*" "The hand of the Infinite is stretched over the battlements of heaven to grasp your hand in its embrace. The mighty Helper is nigh to help the most erring, the most sinful and despairing." God and the world, the followers of Christ and the servants of Satan, "the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error," are in marked contrast. All are found in one of two classes (Matt. 12:30), and the same person cannot be found in both (Matt. 6:24).

LESSON IX.—December 2, 1893.

THE SOURCE OF LOVE. 1 John 4:7-14.

1. What are the "beloved" urged to do?
2. Who is the source of love?
3. Of what is the manifestation of love in an individual the proof?
4. Of what is the lack of it evidence?
5. What proves this to be true?
6. How has the love of God been manifested toward us?
7. On whose part was this love shown?
8. In what way?

9. On what basis is brotherly love urged?
10. Has God been seen by mortal eyes?
11. What shows his indwelling presence and the perfecting of his love?
12. How may we know we are in union with him?
13. To what is testimony borne?

NOTES.

I. VERSES 7-11.—“Whenever the life of God is in the hearts of men, it will flow out to others in love and blessing.” “Of God he hath been begotten and doth know God,” is Dr. Young’s rendering of the last clause of verse 7. The new birth is a past experience, but knowing God is always a present experience. It is not only true that God loves and is the source of love, but “God is love,” and this is the essence of the whole gospel. There can be no discord in the home, the church, or the community when the love of God abides in all hearts. God’s love to us is not simply an abstract thing, but it was shown in a most practical way. John 3:16. Man lost his life by sin (Gen. 2:17), and Christ came to restore life (John 10:10), which is wholly the gift of God (Rom. 6:23). “Had not God specially interposed, Satan and man would have entered into an alliance against heaven, and, instead of cherishing enmity against Satan, the whole human family would have been united in opposition to God.” “The reconciliation of mercy and justice did not involve any compromise with sin, or ignore any claim of justice; but, by giving to each divine attribute its ordained place, mercy could be exercised in the punishment of sinful, impenitent man without destroying its clemency or forfeiting its compassionate character, and justice could be exercised in forgiving the repenting transgressor without violating its integrity.” “Said the angel, Think ye that the Father yielded up his beloved Son without a struggle? No, no. It was even a struggle with the God of heaven,

whether to let guilty man perish, or to give his beloved Son to die for him."

2. VERSES 12-14.—Men cannot see God with the natural eye, but they ought to see his character wrought out in Christians. "Perhaps they do not read the Bible, or do not hear the voice that speaks to them in its pages; they do not see the love of God through his works. But if you are a true representative of Jesus, it may be that through you they will be led to understand something of his goodness, and be won to love and serve him." The Spirit is given to those who ask for it (Luke 11:13), but the asking must be in the name of Jesus (John 16:23, 24). "But to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe his promises, rely upon his grace, and work his works." The purpose of Christ in coming to this world was to save (Luke 19:10), not to judge (John 12:47); but rejection of his work results in condemnation (John 3:18). The price paid was sufficient to redeem the world, but no man is saved contrary to his own will and choice. We *can* do nothing without him (John 15:5), and he *will* do nothing without us. Christ sends his followers on the same errand which brought him to earth (John 20:21), and has promised his presence to them (Matt. 28:20). "As Jesus has revealed to us the true character of the Father, so we are to reveal Christ to a world that does not know his tender, pitying love."

LESSON X.—December 9, 1893.

THE INFLUENCE OF LOVE. 1 John 4:15-21.

1. What relationship exists between God and him who confesses that Jesus is his Son?
2. What have we known and believed?
3. What is God?

4. What follows as a result of this truth?
5. What is the result of this union?
6. What confidence will perfect love give us?
7. What does perfect love exclude?
8. Of what does the presence of fear give evidence?
9. Why do believers love?
10. What charge is made against him who professes love to God but hates his brother?
11. What is the basis of this charge?
12. What commandment has been received?

NOTES.

1. VERSES 15, 16.—When Peter confessed that Jesus was the Son of God, the reply of Christ indicated that this truth cannot be discerned by the natural man (Matt. 16:16, 17), and it is only when Christ, in whom God dwelt (2 Cor. 5:19), is revealed in us (Gal. 1:16) that we can confess this truth in the sense of the scripture. Thus the Spirit which is to testify of him (John 15:26) witnesses through us to his divinity (1 Cor. 12:3). The love of God can be known only by experience, as it is poured out in the heart. Rom. 5:5. "Human language can never explain how the love of Christ can take possession of the soul, and lead captive every power of the mind; but you will know it by personal experience." Since God is love, and all love is of God, no one can be in love and separated from God at the same time.

2. VERSE 17.—The result aimed at in all God's love to us is that we may be restored to his favor and dwell in his presence (1 Tim. 2:4), but this involves a testing of the character (2 Cor. 5:10), and the law demands perfection (James 2:10). No righteousness of our own (Phil. 3:9) will give confidence in that day. Those who have "had a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah, and felt the terror of appearing in their guilt and uncleanness before the Searcher

of hearts," will desire a robe of righteousness (Isa. 61:10) as a wedding garment (Matt. 22:11, 12), clean and white (Rev. 19:8). "None are so sinful that they cannot find strength, purity, and righteousness in Jesus, who died for them. He is waiting to strip them of their garments, stained and polluted with sin, and to put upon them the white robes of righteousness."

Our likeness to Christ must begin here. "We must perfect a Christlike character, or we shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven." "The saints in heaven will first have been saints on earth."

3. VERSE 18.—Although there is a certain fear (1 Peter 1:17) in which we are to live (Phil. 2:12), yet "not in distrust of the grace of God, but in fear that self shall gain the supremacy. We are not to fear that there will be any failure on the part of God, but fear lest because of our own sinful inclinations any of us should seem to come short of the promise." "Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master, for we are always free to do this."

God has given us every reason for assurance (Heb. 6:17, 18) that he will carry us through (Phil. 1:6) and enable us to pass the test (Jude 24), if we believe in him (2 Chron. 20:20).

4. VERSES 19-21.—"We love, because He first loved us," is the Revised Version of verse 19. We should never have known the meaning of love, and never have exercised it toward anyone, if God had not first loved us. If we love God, whom we have not seen (1 Peter 1:8), then we shall surely love all the objects of his love about us whom we can see. This love is a proof to the world of our discipleship (John 13:35). Love to God and love to man are inseparably connected (Matt. 22:37-40), and both will be manifested by the follower of Christ. "There has been too much of a spirit to ask, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Said the angel, 'Yea, *thou art* thy brother's keeper. Thou

shouldst have a watchful care for thy brother, be interested for his welfare, and cherish a kind, loving spirit toward him.'” “While we cannot fellowship those who are the bitter enemies of Christ, we should cultivate that spirit of meekness and love that characterized our Master,—a love that thinketh no evil, and is not easily provoked.”

LESSON XI.—December 16, 1893.

THE NEW BIRTH. 1 John 5:1-6.

1. Who is born of God?
2. Can one love the Father and not love the Son?
3. How is it known that one loves the children of God?
4. What is the love of God?
5. What is the nature of his commandments?
6. Who overcomes the world?
7. What is the victory?
8. On what point must faith be exercised in order to overcome the world?
9. How did Christ come?
10. What bears witness?
11. For what reason?

NOTES.

I. VERSES 1-3.—The new birth is the condition of entrance to the kingdom (John 3:3), and it is a spiritual birth (verse 5). Man “must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth.” To thus become children of God is granted to believers (John 1:12, 13) in Christ (Gal. 3:26). Such are children of promise (Gal. 4:28), being born of the word (James 1:18): Love to the brethren is a proof of conversion (1 John 3:14), and obedience to God is proof of love

to the brethren, hence obedience is proof of conversion. There can be no true love apart from obedience (John 14:23), which is the highest form of worship. "If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new covenant promise is fulfilled, 'I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.' Heb. 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life?" "If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our purposes, our actions will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of his holy law." God is love, and his law, "being an expression of the mind and will of God," "the transcript of the character of God," is founded upon love (Matt. 22:40) and fulfilled in love (Rom. 13:10). His commandments "are not burdensome" (Matt. 11:30) to those who have been set free from the bondage of sin (John 8:34-36), but rather a delight (Ps. 1:2). "The truth a bondage?—Yes, in one sense; it binds the *willing* souls in captivity to Jesus Christ."

2. VERSES 4, 5.—The greatest victories of the world have been gained through *faith* (Heb. 11:32-34) in Christ (1 Cor. 15:57), who was an overcomer (John 16:33), and "has given us the advantage of his victory, that we may be able to resist the temptations of the evil one." "We gain the victory through *faith* in Christ's power to save us." "This is the victory that *hath overcome* the world," is the reading of the Revised Version, thus making the victory an accomplished fact.

"The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of his mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all his triumphant boasting, with all his confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of his government, stands

viewing them as a fortress impregnable to his sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery. The angels of God, seraphim and cherubim, the powers commissioned to coöperate with human agencies, look on with astonishment and joy that fallen men, once children of wrath, are, through the training of Christ, developing characters after the divine similitude, to be sons and daughters of God, to act an important part in the pleasures and occupations of heaven." Only in him who "believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" can such a work as this be wrought.

3. VERSE 6.—Jesus came by water and by blood (John 19:34). "In the shed blood we see the sacrificed life of Christ, and in the water we see the Word and the Spirit of Christ. In the blood we see expiation made for sin, and through the blood we get remission of sins. Then comes the water to sanctify and cleanse us."—*Rodgers*.

Blood and water were both used in the typical service (Lev. 14:6, 8) as symbols of cleansing. So we are cleansed by the blood (1 John 1:7), and by water which is explained to be the word (Eph. 5:26, compare with John 15:3).

LESSON XII.—December 23, 1893.

ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST. 1 John 5:8-15.

1. How many bear witness?
2. What are they?
3. How are they related to each other?
4. How does the testimony of God compare with that of men?
5. Concerning whom has God borne testimony?
6. Who has this testimony in himself?

7. What does the unbeliever declare God to be?
8. In what way?
9. What is this record or testimony?
10. In whom is this life?
11. Who has life?
12. Who has not life?
13. To whom have these things been written?
14. For what purpose?
15. What confidence do believers have in God?
16. When God hears prayer, then what follows?

NOTES.

I. VERSES 8-10.—Verse 7 of this chapter is omitted from these lessons, as it rests upon insufficient authority, and is not found in the Revised Version. The words “in earth” are also omitted in the Revised Version, thus making the statement of verse 8 general. In ancient times two or three witnesses were required (Deut. 19:15), and this custom is continued by our Saviour’s express command (Matt. 18:16), and referred to in other places (2 Cor. 13:1; Heb. 10:28). The Spirit witnesses to our sonship (Rom. 8:16), as it speaks through the word (Acts 28:25; 2 Peter 1:21) (which is represented by the water, Eze. 36:25; John 15:3; Eph. 5:26), of the efficacy of the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14). Those who bear witness against Christ cannot agree (Mark 14:55, 56), but there is always harmony in the truth. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), even when he calls things that be not as though they were (Rom. 4:17), because his word, when spoken, has power to produce the thing or situation mentioned. “In his dealing with sin God could employ only righteousness and truth. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit.” The closing clause of the ninth verse is made clearer by the Revised Version: “For the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son.” God has borne witness concerning his

Son by audible voice (Matt. 3:17; 17:5) and by the works wrought through him (John 10:37, 38). It is a serious thing to charge God with being a liar; but when he states a thing and we do not believe him, that is what we do, yet he remains the same. 2 Tim. 2:13. Though all men deceive (Rom. 3:4), God does not (Num. 23:19).

2. VERSES 11, 12.—The Lord had given the land to the Israelites (Josh. 1:3) as soon as he had made provision for its conquest by them, but not in their own strength (Ps. 44:3); so all blessings (Eph. 1:3), even eternal life, have been bestowed upon us, and it only remains for us to accept them upon the stated conditions. "Prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse." "There must be a power working from within, a *new life* from above, before we can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ." "But it is *the life of Jesus Christ* in the soul, it is the active principle of love imparted by the Holy Spirit, that alone will make the soul fruitful unto good works." "Before works we must have eternal life; but when we are born again, and made children of God by the word of grace, then we perform good works."—*Luther.*

3. VERSES 13-15.—Those who believe "may know" these things (Heb. 11:1), not through faith in a creed, but by receiving Him (John 1:12) who is the life (John 14:6). It is God's will that we should be saved from sin (Gal. 1:4) and be sanctified (1 Thess. 4:3), not that we should perish (Matt. 18:14); and so we know that he hears the requests of his children when they ask for these experiences. So the Christian can wait patiently (Ps. 40:1-3) for the Lord to work in his own way. "But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption." "We should be willing to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us." "The prayer of the sincere heart offered in faith will be heard in heaven. It may not be grammatical, but

if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary, where Jesus ministers, and he will present it to the Father, with the fragrant incense of his own perfection, without our awkward, stammering word, graceful and perfect through his merit, for his righteousness refines and ennobles it, and makes it acceptable before the Father. The Lord accepts the prayer of the sincere heart, and will answer it out of his abundant fullness."

LESSON XIII.—December 30, 1893.

KNOWING THE TRUE GOD. 1 John 5:16-21.

1. What instruction is given for the benefit of those who sin not unto death?
2. What is said concerning a sin that is unto death?
3. How is unrighteousness defined?
4. Is there a sin not unto death?
5. Who does not sin?
6. What is his experience?
7. What contrast is drawn between believers and the world?
8. What do we know of the Son of God?
9. What has he given us?
10. For what purpose?
11. In whom are the believers?
12. Who and what is he?
13. What closing admonition is given?

NOTES.

I. VERSES 16-18. It is evident from many scriptures that the prayers of the righteous avail in behalf of the sinner who has not entirely cut himself off from God (Job 42:7, 8), and this intercession brings a blessing to him who prays (verse

10). Thus a soul is saved from death. James 5:20. Sin ends in death (James 1:15) unless repentance has been granted to life (Acts 11:18); but "it is the Holy Spirit that draws men to Christ;" and so when this means of grace is refused, there is no way by which the sinner may be reached. "There is a terrible danger—a danger not sufficiently understood—in delaying to yield to the pleading voice of God's Holy Spirit, in choosing to live in sin; for such this delay really is." "Every act of transgression, every neglect or rejection of the grace of Christ, is reacting upon yourself; it is hardening the heart, depraving the will, benumbing the understanding, and not only making you less inclined to yield, but less capable of yielding, to the tender pleading of God's Holy Spirit." (There is a sin which is not pardoned (Matt. 12:31, 32) here or hereafter. "What constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost?—It is willfully attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit. . . . It is through the medium of his Spirit that God works upon the human heart; and 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. . . . For a time persons who have committed this sin may appear to be children of God; but when circumstances arise to develop character, and show what manner of spirit they are of, it will be found that they are on the enemy's ground, standing under his black banner.") The Lord is righteous (Ps. 119:137), and his commandments are righteousness (verse 172). Anything out of harmony with his character, as expressed in his law, is unrighteousness, or sin, but it is by faith that our hearts are purified (Acts 15:9) and that we attain to righteousness (Rom. 9:30-32); thus it is that whatever is not done through faith in the merit of Christ is sin (Rom. 14:23). Christ's petition (John 17:15) and the statement of Scripture (2 Thess. 3:3) both show that it is God who keeps us from "the evil one" (both texts are so translated in the Revised Version), "but he can do nothing for us

without our coöperation." It is so arranged in the plan of salvation that its great object cannot be consummated without human coöperation. "All the power is of God, and all the glory is to redound to God, and yet all the responsibility rests with the human agent." Satan was permitted to tempt Christ (Matt. 4:1), but according to the prophecy (Gen. 3:15) he did not touch any vital part. So with the Christian. Angels will give strength to us (Heb. 1:14), "but the ministry of angels will not insure us against sorrow and trial. Angels ministered to Jesus; but their presence did not make his life one of ease, nor free him from conflict and temptation."

2. VERSES 19-21.—"The whole world lieth *in the evil one*," says the Revised Version; but Christians have been delivered. Col. 1:13.

The Christian experience set forth in this epistle is a very positive one. Fifteen times occurs the statement "we know," or "know we," or "we have known," and by other expressions it is clearly shown that positive knowledge concerning the things of God is the privilege of the Christian. 1 Cor. 2:12. One does not need to bow down to a visible image in order to be an idolater. Eph. 5:5. "It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theories as to fashion an idol of wood or stone. By misrepresenting the attributes of God, Satan leads men to conceive of him in a false character. With many, a philosophical idea is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God, as he is revealed in his word, in Christ, and in the works of creation, is worshiped by but few. Thousands deify nature, while they deny the God of nature. Though in a different form, idolatry exists in the Christian world to-day as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The god of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists,—the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, even of some theological institutions,—is little better than Baal, the sun-god of Phœnicia."

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| 67. | 3c | 90. | 2c |
| 68. | 3c | 92. | 1c |
| 69. | 1c | 93. | 15c |
| 70. | 4c | 95. | 1c |
| 71. | 1c | 97. | 10c |
| 72. | 15c | 99. | 2c |
| 73. | 2c | 100. | 1c |
| | | 101. | 1c |
| | | 103. | 3c |
| | | 104. | 2c |
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