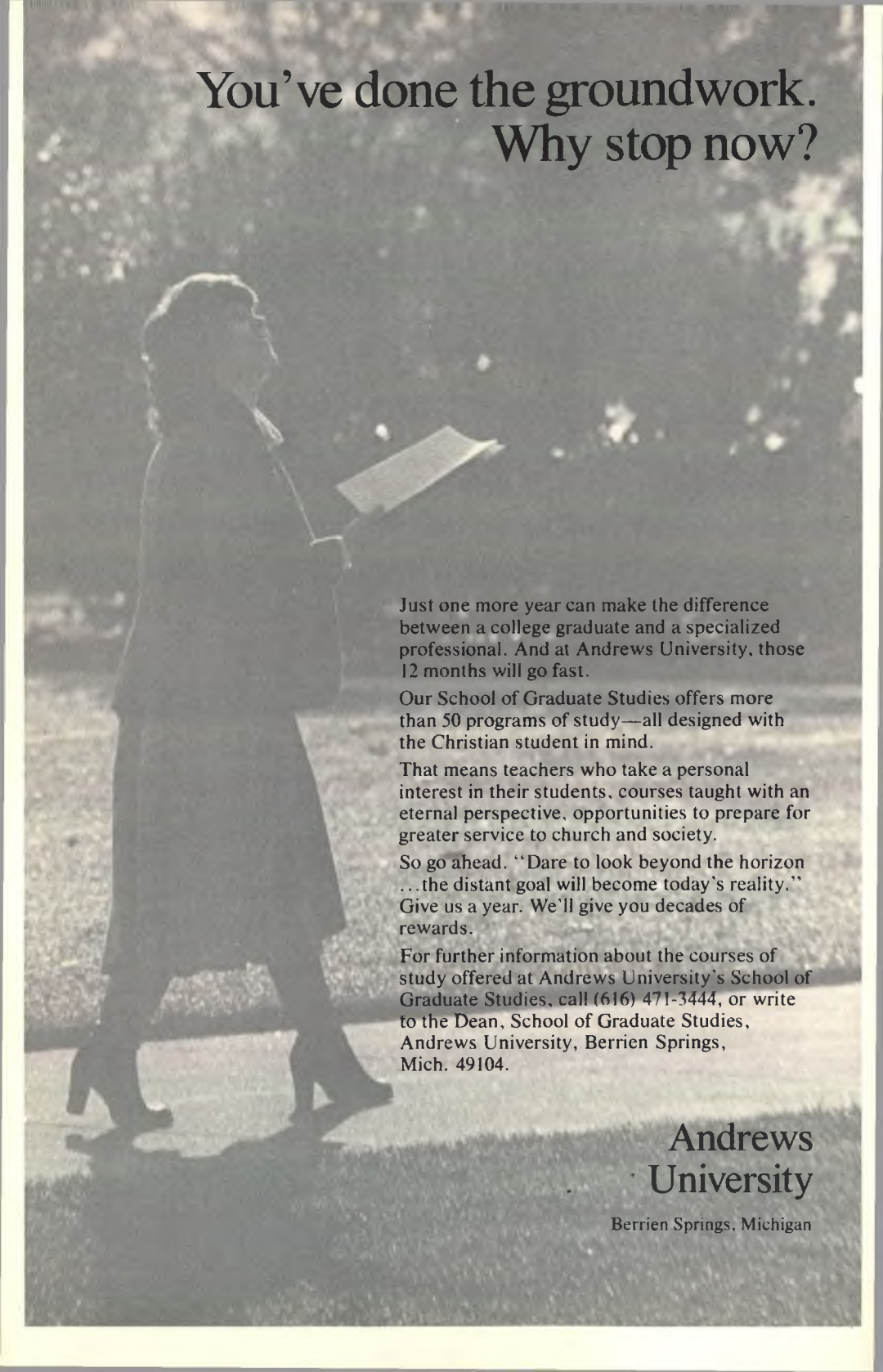


Collegiate Quarterly

October-December 1979



God Revealed



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CAMPUS MINISTRY

"In the last days . . . young men shall see visions . . ."

The young men and women of the twelve Adventist colleges and universities across North America had a vision in the spring of 1979 to see a collegiate Sabbath School quarterly written for the college world by those involved in it. And you hold in your hands the first realization of that dream.

This project began on the Union College Campus in the spring of 1978 with a one-week prototype of a college quarterly. During the fall of 1978 Union College faculty and students prepared the first collegiate quarterly for the first quarter of 1979. Excitement for this project grew and in April of 1979 it was voted by the delegates of the Youth Ministries Seminar to publish three collegiate quarterlies for the 1979-1980 school year. It was decided that these collegiate lessons would use the same themes and objectives as the adult Sabbath School quarterlies in order to maintain the worldwide study plan. By preparing a quarterly that views a theme from six different perspectives (illustration, Bible, spirit of prophecy, scientific, how to and opinion articles) we hope to have produced a publication that is not only a Sabbath School study guide, but a resource storehouse of spiritual information to be used presently and to be kept for future reference.

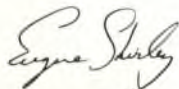
As you may see by thumbing through the pages, the Collegiate Quarterly is a joint effort. Faculty and students from all thirteen colleges and universities in North America have written the quarterly, a committee from Union College was responsible for the organizational and editorial work and The College Press at Collegedale, Tennessee, handled the publishing.

The Collegiate Quarterly is an experiment. Is such a quarterly needed? Will it appeal to the college person? Can the Adventist college and university students across North America produce their own Sabbath School study guides? The response from the Collegiate Quarterly will answer these questions.

Our list of those who encouraged and supported this project is long. There are certain ones, however, to whom the Collegiate Quarterly owes much: Elder Richard E. Barron, Elder Thomas M. Ashlock, Elder Larry McGill, Maylan Schurch, the college chaplains and the college editors. If the Collegiate Quarterly is successful it will be because of the prayers and efforts of these individuals.

During a Friday evening vesper service a friend wrote on a tithe envelope and passed to me the message, "If we'll come to Him—God will bless us more than we have even thought about yet!" It is our prayer that as you study the Collegiate Quarterly the God who we believe has directed in writing this quarterly will "bless us more than we have even thought about yet!"

Yours in Christ,



Eugene Shirley
Collegiate Quarterly Editor

pw



Dr. H. Ward Hill

Dr. Hill became chairman of the Religion Department at Union College after serving as a pastor, hospital chaplain, college instructor and as chairman of the Religion Department at Kingsway College. Dr. Hill holds a Master of Divinity degree and a doctorate in sociology.



Dr. William Loveless

Before assuming his present position as president of Columbia Union College, Dr. Loveless was president of the Pennsylvania Conference and pastor of the Loma Linda University and Sligo churches. He is a licensed marriage and family counselor with a master's degree from Andrews University and a doctor's degree from the University of Maryland.



Elder Chester H. Damron

After serving for fifteen years as a missionary in the Far East, Elder Damron was called to Andrews University to head the Campus Ministries program as chaplain. He holds a master's degree in education.

The Collegiate Quarterly is publishing discussions from the best among Adventist thinkers during the 1979-1980 school year.

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The Collegiate Quarterly

3800 South 48th, Lincoln, Nebraska 68506; (402) 488-2331

Collegiate Quarterly

A Kaleidoscope of Christian Thought
October-December 1979

God Revealed

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The Collegiate Quarterly is written by faculty, students and friends of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities throughout North America. A team of students and faculty advisors from Union College served as the editing board.

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(Through your local church or ABC)

by Eric M. Graham

Notes

The high level meeting on Madison Avenue drew to a close as the immaculately dressed executives put away their Cross pens, closed their Gucci cases and adjusted their monogrammed Saks Fifth Avenue ties. There it was—a brand new “package” for the election of Senator Jameson. It would work. Other packages just like it had worked before. Control the entire public contact with the candidate—his ideas and his actions. Let the public know just what they want to know on every issue—tell the *right* public the *right* things.

After all, everybody is different. We've all got our own sets of values and opinions. So make the audience hear what they want to hear and you've sold the client to the public.

It worked—he won.

But what about selling God? How does His PR program work? Does the heavenly marketing plan include the usual elements found in earthly plans?

Are we being duped? Are we being sold a package?

God faced these issues in the very beginning. He solved them very simply.

First of all, there is nothing to hide in describing God. There is only the reality of the human's inability to perceive anything beyond his own immediate needs. At any given moment I may be worried about my grades, my money, my next meal, or my next friend. So God's task was to make Himself any one of those needs.

Like candidate Jameson's PR experts, God uses all the communication techniques available. Only He goes one step further and uses environment in a way that they can't. In fact, this quarter's lessons give an excellent example of how God uses my state of mind, my individual set of needs, my background and humanness to make a special picture of Himself just for me.

Therefore, I may not only perceive God differently than you, but I may perceive Him differently now from the way I will see Him in 24 hours. He capitalizes on my creativity. Where Madison Avenue needs to bury it, God helps my creativity to grow. I'm going to imagine God the way I need God. And He'll be that way just for me.

A historian writes of God from his own scholarly perspective. He sees God as an historical reality through the eyes of the culture of the Bible times. Ellen White had, of course, a special view of God. She reveals Him through the eyes of a warm, loving human writing in the last century. Nevertheless, she writes from the point of view of a real human with real needs.

The scientist shows us his God. We see questions and answers rising out of a concern with such things as power, design, and structure.

God matches His information input to our own information metabolism. He feeds us just the amount we can handle as well as matching the content to our needs.

God's PR office really doesn't have a job. There is nothing to hide and God is what I need *when* I need Him. The ultimate Friend.

He has won in my life. Are you voting?



Andrews University

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“... HE THAT SOWETH TO THE SPIRIT
SHALL OF THE SPIRIT REAP LIFE EVERLASTING.”

“Sowing to the spirit” is quite an all-encompassing phrase. In fact, it takes in a person’s whole lifestyle, extending far beyond the borders of Bible classrooms and church sanctuaries.

At Andrews University, “sowing to the spirit” can be seen in the small things. Like the willingness of a teacher to spend extra hours after class with a searching student. Or the sense of welcome a newcomer feels when walking across the campus.

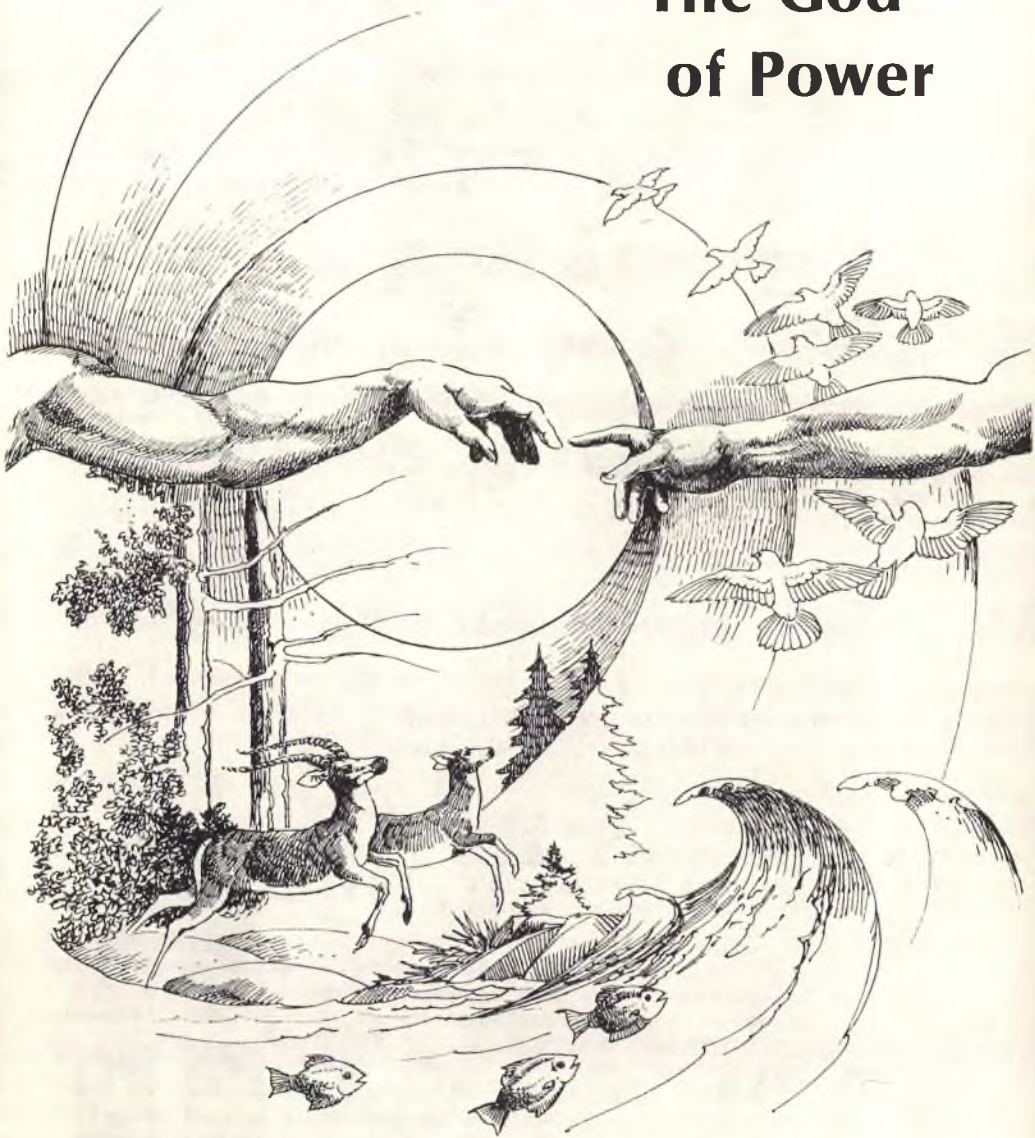
As we see it, active concern and Christian commitment are much more than mere topics intended to fill the neatly-typed pages of a required term paper.

“FOR WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT ALSO SHALL HE REAP.”



* texts taken from Galatians 6:7, 8

The God of Power



by Doug Morgan

Notes

Power? The Pentagon. Exxon.
Jimmy Carter. Leonid Brezhnev. A
Camaro Z-28. A Saturn V launcher.
Reggie Jackson. The Pittsburgh
Steelers. Power.

Power? "The Lord is king, and
the people tremble. He sits on his
throne above the winged creatures,
and the earth shakes. The Lord is
mighty in Zion; he is supreme
over all the nations."¹ Power.

Power? "He endured the
suffering that should have been
ours, the pain that we should have
born. . . . He was treated harshly,
but endured it humbly. . . . He
was arrested and sentenced and
led off to die, and no one cared
about his fate. He was put to
death for the sins of our people."²
Power?

¹ Psalm 99:1-2, TEV

² Isaiah 53:4, 7-8, TEV

selected by editors

For the director of music. Of David the servant of the Lord. He sang to the Lord the words of this song when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.

He said:

I love you, O Lord, my strength.

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.

He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

I call to the Lord, who is worthy of praise,
and I am saved from my enemies.

The cords of death entangled me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

The cords of the grace coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me.

In my distress I called to the Lord;
I cried to my God for help.

From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears.

The earth trembled and quaked,
and the foundations of the mountains shook;
they trembled because he was angry.

Smoke rose from his nostrils;
consuming fire came from his mouth,
burning coals blazed out of it.

He parted the heavens and came down;
dark clouds were under his feet.

He mounted the cherubim and flew;
he soared on the wings of the wind.

He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him—
the dark rain clouds of the sky.
Out of the brightness of his presence
clouds advanced,
with hailstones and bolts of lightning.

The Lord thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded.

He shot his arrows and scattered the enemies,
great bolts of lightning and routed them.

The valleys of the sea were exposed
and the foundations of the earth laid bare

at your rebuke, O Lord,
at the blast of breath from your nostrils.

He reached down from on high and took hold of me;
he drew me out of deep waters.
He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
from my foes, who were too strong for me.

The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock!
Exalted be God my Savior!

He is the God who avenges me,
who subdues nations under me,
who saves me from my enemies.

You exalted me above my foes;
from violent men you rescued me.
Therefore I will praise you among the nations, O Lord;

I will sing praises to your name.
He gives his king great victories;
he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed,
to David and his descendants forever.

by editors

Notes

God's infinite greatness and power are unique in a world where humans are limited by gasoline and tooth decay. Consequently, there are no meaningful synonyms to describe the Almighty. How do you define a Being who has created billions of galaxies, who marks each chirp of the cricket and who knows your destiny?

God has chosen to define Himself by describing His relationship with His people. That is why when you study the writings of Ellen White you don't read page after page about the "power of God," but rather, you read about what the power of God can do for your life.

God's power. Let's define it in human terms.

To the worried, God's power means assurance:

"Worry is blind and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. . . .

"Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet."¹

To the injudicious, God's power means wisdom:

"He is able and willing to bestow upon His servants all the help they need. He will give them the wisdom which their varied necessities demand."²

To those struggling with sin, God's power means the ability to obey:

"By *faith* you became Christians, and by *faith* you are to grow up in Him—by giving and taking. You are to *give* all,—your heart, your will, your service,—give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must *take* all,—Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper,—to give you power to obey."³

To the weary, God's power means strength:

"All who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to God's service will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind."⁴

For every problem, God's omnipotent power means that there is a solution:

"To the omnipotence of the King of kings our covenant-keeping God unites the gentleness and care of the tender shepherd. His power is absolute, and it is the pledge of the sure fulfillment of His promises to all who trust in Him. He has means for the removal of every difficulty, that those who serve Him and respect the means He employs may be sustained."⁵

¹ Ellen White, *Ministry of Healing*, p. 481.

² *Ibid.*, p. 482.

³ Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 70.

⁴ Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 306.

⁵ *Ministry of Healing*, pp. 481, 482.

by Dean L. Hubbard

Notes

That God exists is evident to the Christian. The believer claims that nature speaks distinctly of a Creator God. But is this true? What can man really learn from nature itself about the God of power?

The psalmist sings in Psalm 19, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. . . .*" (Psalm 19:1-3). In spite of the apparent contradiction over the presence of speech, what David is really arguing is that, although the message which nature tells the world about God is not propositional, *i.e.*, contained in speech and words, it is nonetheless clear: Since he is immersed in nature, man is constantly immersed in arguments asserting the glory of God.

Arguments for the existence of God and in support of His nature are very old. Essentially inductive, they argue with David from effect to cause; that is, an effect (in this case, the world) must have a cause equal to or greater than the effect itself (God). Such reasoning has intuitive appeals since we all recognize that we cannot get something from nothing. Over the centuries, such arguments have taken at least twenty-five forms subsumed usually under four (sometimes five) headings.

The *cosmological*, or what C. S. Lewis calls the "whole show," argument asserts that back of this cosmos or universe must be something or someone equal to the task of bringing it into existence. The late Dr. Wernher von Braun employed the argument of design (*teleological*) when he said, "One cannot be exposed to the order and beauty of the universe without conceding there must be a divine intent behind it." The familiar *anthropological* argument asserts that since man has intelligence, creativity and personality he must have come from a source with these same traits. And finally, the *ontological* argument asks how man could conceive of perfection, since he is imperfect and lives in an imperfect world, without a perfect God as a point of reference.

But these arguments do not satisfy many modern thinkers who tend to reject the notion that man can reason his way to a knowledge of God. Rather, it is asserted, the believer must begin with a "first truth," an assumption of God, and then proceed to devise a rational structure based on that assumption to account for what is observed in nature. It can be argued that this approach is not unreasonable, since even the most rigorous scientist begins with certain presuppositions, else he would not know where to begin looking for data. Jim LonDIS suggests that the reason modern man has trouble with the old arguments for God is that science has limited our view of experience by asserting that only sense experience can put us in touch with reality.

Regardless, it seems clear that we cannot arrive at a complete or adequate knowledge of the God of power by observing nature, even though we may be led to accept the fact of God as a necessary presupposition. After having accepted strong reasons for knowing something of God, we find that it is only through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the wonderful Son, that we can come to a satisfactory understanding of the wonderful Father.

Creation argues for the glory of God

The "cannot-get-something-from-nothing" arguments:

***cosmological:*
an object must have a maker that can create it**

***teleological:*
order and beauty must be designed**

***anthropological:*
a personality must be created by a personality**

***ontological:*
to conceive of perfection, one must have a point of reference**

One must begin with an assumption of God to see Him in creation

by editors

Notes

The God of the Bible stands supreme—unique, universal and eternal. He is the only God, the omnipresent God and a God of greatness. Some people in the world would argue this point with you. But the best argument that can be given for the power and majesty of God is a life of perfect, peaceful trust.

A studious pre-med student who gets a "D" on an organic chemistry test with peaceful trust and assurance is arguing most powerfully that his God reigns supreme and is above every circumstance. (A calm, unengaged senior theology student would perhaps be an even more forceful argument.)

But how does one come to the place of deep reliance upon the power of God? How can we maintain through every difficulty a calm serenity which testifies to the power of God? Consider two ways suggested below.

1. Keep a journal. Perhaps you would want to call this your "What God Did For Me Today" journal. Sitting on the edge of your bed—five minutes before turning out the lights—let your mind scan the many happenings of the day. Look for specific ways in which the Lord blessed you and jot those down in your book. Then, when your faith is a *little* low (don't wait until it's real low), go back to your "What God Did. . . ." book and read about the time you lost your nice "Cross" pen and, after praying about it, your sister found it lying in the yard. Or about the time your dog Sheba was lost and, after prayer, she showed up.

These are "little" things, probably insignificant to most people. But they will be very meaningful to you and will increase your faith in God's power to fulfill *your* needs.

2. Experiment with God. After seeing God's faithfulness in the past—*your* past—experiment with Him.

If you've seen from past experience that He can help you find a summer job then take a leap of faith and let Him help you pick a career. Then trust Him to help you pick a life partner.

After you've lived with Christ for some time you'll know you can trust Him. So each day trust Him with more and more of your life. Experiment with trusting God—it can't fail.

God is the Source of all power. He wants His people to trust and utilize His power. Keep a daily journal and experiment with God. Make the God of power in the Bible the God of power in your life.

by Graeme Loftus

Notes

As you studied this week's lesson, did the contemplation of the powerful, biblical God it talked about fill you with trust? Before you answer, thoughtfully consider the following facts:

God's eternity highlights your bondage to this contemporary age and culture;

God's uniqueness highlights your tendency to rationalize your own God;

God's universality highlights your limited existence;

God's life highlights your mortality;

God's omnipresence highlights your finite constrictions;

God's greatness highlights your smallness.

These qualities talk about the greatness of God and describe Him objectively. But there is nothing in these attributes that hints at His morality or how He will use His powers. What if He used them against us? Many people, ancient and present, have felt by observing life and nature that if God exists at all He has used His attributes capriciously and often in a destructive, tragic manner.

But the character traits of God become sources of trust to us Christians when seen in the light of the cross. It is only then that we become assured these qualities will be used for us and not against us. The cross is the great unveiling of God's morality and values. It reveals to us the depth of His commitment to His creation, His love for humans and His hatred of anything that destroys them.

Then why is it that some folk have trouble recognizing and responding to this God of the Bible? All men and women seem to be innately religious. Even the avowed atheist cannot help wrestling with problems of origin, ultimacy and meaning in life. Thoughts of this nature pass through every person's mind and bring him into contact with a quality of his nature that can only be described as spiritual. In rejecting the existence of God, people effectively deify their own minds and their own experiences as the ultimate source of authority.

This explains the surge of eastern religions of a Transcendental Meditation type in modern western society today. Such a movement invites people to look within themselves to find God, by getting in contact with hidden inner resources. Such a movement removes from man the implications of the biblical God described in this lesson; it cuts Him down to a person conveniently manageable, a God reflecting the image of man.

And yet man is not at all comfortable in his assumed role of God. The load is too heavy to carry and he is not up to the task. He may pretend for a while that everything is under control, but the external and internal realities tell him otherwise. The problems facing him have brought him into deep insecurity and made him look for new assurances of his own godhood.

But for man to make God in his own image is not very bright. Far more meaningful is the thought that man is made in the image of the powerful, loving, caring God revealed from the cross.

God's character highlights the human condition

When God's power is revealed through the cross it creates trust

By rejecting God man deifies himself

YOU'RE NEXT

1. Please rewrite the following passage of scripture in terms of your own experience.

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies." (Psalm 18:2, 3; NIV)

Here is a sample "Bible rewrite":

Dad, you have come through once more, just when I needed you. You were there to deliver me from all my psychological fears and depressions and created a place where I could hide and receive strength. I will always trust in you to help me - you are worthy of my praise - you will save me from my depressions.

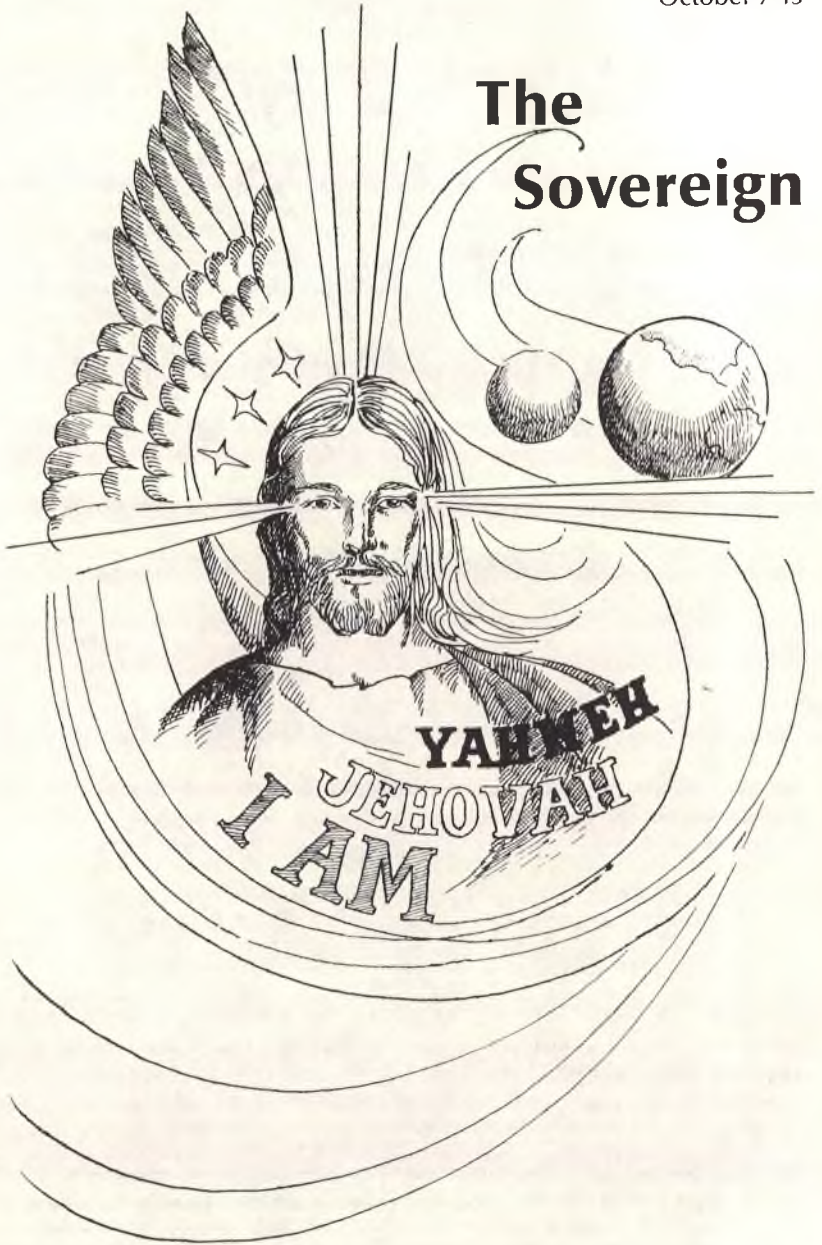
Now it's your turn:

2. List three occasions in your experience when you failed to see God's power working for you. How were you able to maintain a faith in God's power through these experiences?

3. Name the individual you most heavily rely on for your emotional security. Is there a balance in this relationship and your reliance upon God as your "Rock"? What would happen if you no longer had this stabilizing person for support?

4. List five attributes of your character you consider to be strengths. Has reliance on these strengths instead of God's mighty power ever proven to be a problem?

The Sovereign



by Kathy Nelson

"Larry. Larry," I quietly but firmly spoke at 2:30 early on that fall morning.

"Larry," I spoke again as he nuzzled his head deeper into the warm, soft pillow.

I sat on the bed and looked at my husband sleeping so soundly. How could I disturb him now?

Nine months previously we began our little creation—and God formed and molded and painted. . . .

"Will he look like Larry? What if it's a *she*? Will she look like me? In any case, I certainly hope the baby sleeps like its father does!"

I was propped up in bed, sitting comfortably now—wide awake, a little anxious, but comfortable.

I reached for my Bible on the bedside table and opened it. It was too dark in the room to read and I didn't want to turn on a light quite yet, so I closed it and left it lying on my lap. I decided to think of Bible texts. My mind went from this one to that one and then contemplated, ". . . Be fruitful and multiply. . . ." The words struck something within me. And in those early morning hours it came to me that I was fulfilling God's ancient plan.

I thought of God as the Sovereign: the supreme Ruler who sponsors all existence. What a God He must be to spin galaxies like frisbees into eternity and implant within wombs an image after His own. To establish the laws of gravity and inertia and give each little one a conscience. To bedazzle the evening sky with a kaleidoscope of color and paint the skin and hair of the fetus. This God is powerful enough to create life and

humble enough to do it through me. This is the Sovereign God.

And the exciting part was that through this pregnancy experience God was inviting me to become like Him. As a mother, I could taste of the greatness of God. For I also was to become a creator and sustainer of life.

It was time.

"Larry."

I spoke a little more firmly now. Without moving his head he opened his eyes and they caught mine.

"Don't worry, honey," he nervously stuttered, leaping from the bed. "Everything's going to be OK. Don't worry. I'll go get the car started. Just sit still. We'll be there in a minute. Don't worry about anything. . . ."

And Larry could also taste of the greatness of God. As he frantically hurried to call the obstetrician, warm the car, boil water (I haven't yet learned why), he was fulfilling his part in God's plan and was therefore entering upon the greatness of the Sovereign God.

The greatness of God is found in His majesty and power directed through channels of goodness. As I fulfilled God's plan for my life by giving birth to a child, I was able to catch a glimpse of that greatness. As Larry wiped my forehead during labor and helped me regulate my breathing, he also was fulfilling God's plan and entering into His greatness.

As Sovereign of the universe and Sponsor of all existence, God invites all persons to come into harmony with his purposes and plans for their lives and to thereby enter into the greatness of the Sovereign God.

Identifying the Sovereign

by Aage Rendalen

Notes

The sovereignty of God. It sounds as abstract as the measure "16,000 light-years." It is a concept that is hard to get a handle on.

But God did not mean for it to be that way. The sovereignty of God is not a subject to be viewed abstractly. It is a reality that must be *experienced*. The sovereignty of God reveals His greatness; and it is only as man experientially comes into harmony with the Sovereign's plans that he can be truly great. God is Sovereign, and He invites man's worship, appreciation and obedience.

God's sovereignty is to be experienced

The Bible writers did not deal with God on a buddy-buddy level. He was the awesome Creator before whom the glory of man vanished. **"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" (Psalm 8:3, 4; NIV).** Much of the Bible is a rehearsal of God's great acts in history and a corresponding emphasis on the impotence of man. God was Sovereign while man was a creature of the dust and utterly dependent upon God for even his very breath (Psalm 103:14-16). David exclaimed, **"Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. . . . In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all." (I Chron. 29:11, 12; NIV).**

God is the awesome, sovereign Creator

Since true greatness lies with the Sovereign, man's closest approximation to greatness lies in his worship of God in His sovereignty. When the gospel of God's mighty work of salvation is proclaimed, it issues an exhortation to recognize and worship the sovereign God. **"Fear God and give him glory . . . worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." (Rev. 14:7; NIV).** In the Bible it is God who acts and man who celebrates His works.

To experience God's greatness is to worship, appreciate and obey

It is this rehearsal that nourishes man's humility, faith and love. Through deep appreciation of God's majesty and greatness Christians become invincible. By active appreciation God's power becomes theirs. Says John in Revelation: **"They overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death." (Rev. 12:11; NIV).**

God's sovereignty not only challenges man to worship and appreciate, but also to obey. **"The man who says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar. . . . This is love for God: to obey his commands." (I John 2:4; 5:3; NIV).** This is part of the **"obedience that comes from faith" (Romans 1:5; NIV).** He has not understood the majesty of God who can call Him "Lord" and yet not submit to His will (Luke 6:46).

The sovereignty of God is a reality that must be experienced by every Christian. God is indeed Sovereign over all; and man's ability and greatness lie in His appreciation of God. It is only as man refracts and rehearses the glory of God that he recovers his manhood.

compiled by Larry McGill

Notes

John was shut in with God. As he learned more of the divine character through the works of creation, his reverence for God increased. He often asked himself, "Why do not men, who are wholly dependent upon God, seek to be at peace with Him by willing obedience? He is infinite in wisdom, and there is no limit to His power. He controls the heavens with their numberless worlds. He preserves in perfect harmony the grandeur and beauty of the things which He has created." . . . It is no light matter to sin against God, to set the perverse will of man in opposition to the will of his Maker. It is for the best interest of men, even in this world, to obey God's commandments. The beasts of the field obey their Creator's law in the instinct which governs them. He speaks to the proud ocean . . . and the waters are prompt to obey His word. The planets are marshaled in perfect order, obeying the laws which God has established. . . .

God is indeed sovereign

As John meditated upon the glory of God displayed in His works, he was overwhelmed with the greatness and majesty of the Creator. Should all the inhabitants of this little world refuse obedience to God, He would not be left without glory. He could sweep every mortal from the face of the earth in a moment, and create a new race to people it and glorify His name. God is not dependent on man for honor. He could marshal the starry hosts of heaven, the millions of worlds above, to raise a song of honor and praise and glory to their Creator. . . .

God's majesty is Self-dependent

John calls to remembrance the wonderful incidents that he has witnessed in the life of Christ. In imagination he again enjoys the precious opportunities with which he was once favored, and is greatly comforted. Suddenly his meditation is broken in upon; he is addressed in tones distinct and clear. He turns to see from whence the voice proceeds, and, lo! he beholds his Lord, whom he has loved, with whom he has walked and talked, and whose sufferings upon the cross he has witnessed. But how changed is the Saviour's appearance! He is no longer "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He bears no marks of His humiliation. His eyes are like a flame of fire; His feet like fine brass, as it glows in a furnace. The tones of His voice are like the musical sound of many waters. His countenance shines like the sun in its meridian glory. In His hand are seven stars, representing the ministers of the churches. Out of His mouth issues a sharp, two-edged sword, an emblem of the power of His word.

From Servant to Sovereign

John, who has so loved his Lord, and who has steadfastly adhered to the truth in the face of imprisonment, stripes, and threatened death, cannot endure the excellent glory of Christ's presence, and falls to the earth as one stricken dead. Jesus then lays His hand upon the prostrate form of His servant, saying, "Fear not; . . . I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore." John was strengthened to live in the presence of his glorified Lord; and then were presented before him in holy vision the purposes of God for future ages.

Taken from *Sanctified Life*, pp. 75-78.

by editors

Notes

Sandy Clark was raised on a farm with horses and chickens and cows. She was outgoing, athletic and bright. Her teachers claimed that she was the most intelligent student ever to attend her high school. She attended prestigious universities in the United States. He is now a professional in the Midwest. You see, *she* became *he* at the age of twenty-four.

The Christian community is entering an age that challenges it with circumstances never before conceived. Medical technology has created and opened doors which lead down uncertain paths.

Because of the recent advances of science we can now create "test-tube" babies, check for fetus abnormalities and change the sex of mature people. Much of this technology is being challenged by Roman Catholic theologians and some among conservative Jews and Protestants. Christians everywhere are asking: To what extent is man allowed to tamper with what has previously been considered as the will of the sovereign God?

A little over a year ago Eilene Brown of Los Angeles gave birth to her second child, Sharon. Eight years previously her first child had been born severely retarded with Down's syndrome (Mongolism). Eilene was quite apprehensive about having another child after her first one appeared with this genetic defect until she learned of a new practice called amniocentesis.

Amniocentesis is a low-risk procedure which involves inserting a needle through the abdominal wall into the amniotic sac in order to draw from the surrounding fluid. Within this fluid are contained cells from the fetus which will be examined and tested for any of one hundred different abnormalities. If a defect is found in the fetus the mother has the option of abortion.

*"When my husband and I were told our first child was a Mongoloid," Eilene Brown recalls, "we considered it an act of God. When I found that a test could tell me whether my next child would be a Mongoloid and that I had a choice of whether to end the pregnancy, I realized the decision would be my own."*¹

In religious and ethical fields some consider this procedure to be morally wrong. Many theologians are against the process since it provides for the alternative of abortion. Others fear that this is only the beginning of state-controlled, "1984"-type laboratory pregnancies. Still others are concerned with the sovereignty of God.

Is medical technology—indeed, are parents—encroaching upon the sovereignty of God? Medical science challenges you to consider the relationship between these technological advances and God's sovereignty and what effect the conclusion you draw will have on your life. For true greatness comes to man when he recognizes and puts himself in proper relationship to the sovereignty of God.

¹ Susan Jacoby, "Should Parents Play God?" in *Reader's Digest*, June, 1979, p. 100.

As an evidence of greatness, the author wishes to remain anonymous.

Notes

October, 1979

Dear Mohammed Ali,

For at least 15 years, or as long as I can remember, your claims about being the greatest have successfully intimidated most challengers to your boxing title. But now that you have retired from your present status I would encourage you to pursue a higher level of greatness which has evaded you for most of your life. (Yes, there are levels of greatness, and the highest level is called "true" greatness.) Because you are a religious man I know you will hear me out. But just so you will know where I'm coming from I'll tell you that my thoughts are based on the principle that *human beings are truly great only as they come into harmony with the plans of the Sovereign God*. Below, I would like to share some household hints which suggest how you can be really great. Hope you can use them.

1. Recognize that true greatness is not always compatible with man's greatness. We have our standards for greatness; God has His. The two don't often agree. As William Hazlitt wrote: "He who comes up to his own idea of greatness, must always have had a very low standard of it in his mind." My culture tells me I am great when I receive applause, or when I surpass another human. But my God reveals that true greatness can dispense with outward show (*Desire of Ages*, p. 242). "It is not the seeking to climb to eminence that will make you great in God's sight, but it is the humble life of goodness. . . ." (*My Life Today*, p. 56).

2. Follow the footsteps of the Pattern. Christ taught what true greatness was all about when he washed the disciples' feet. Meditate on the chapter "A Servant of Servants" in *Desire of Ages*. Reflect on the passages where Christ taught about greatness: Matthew 5:19; 20:25, 26. "The soul that has Jesus abiding in it will develop true greatness." (*Medical Ministry*, p. 143). So don't just dance like a butterfly, Mohammed, dance like the butterfly's God.

3. Study other examples of true greatness in Scripture and Ellen White's writings. The chapter "True Greatness" in *Prophets and Kings* amplifies Daniel 4 and the experience of Nebuchadnezzar, a great king who learned that true greatness comes only in allegiance to the Most High. The last years of David and the life of Samson are also helpful real-life illustrations.

4. Don't compromise, harmonize. Acts of true greatness are never solo performances—they are duets starring God and man. God provides all the music and He sings the melody line. We are responsible for singing the harmony (which isn't just any note we decide to hit). The tune is different for every person; yet the task of harmonization is the same for everyone. Any attempt to create my own harmony, to change the duet, to do my own thing, is to compromise.

Finally, Mohammed, remember what G. K. Chesterton said. "There is a great man who makes every man feel small. But the really great man is the man who makes every man feel great."

Sincerely,



by Warren Ruf

Notes

The moment arrives when Dorothy, her three friends and Toto the dog leave a long corridor and enter the great hall. The darkened room is energized with thunder, flashing lights, colorful smoke and the booming voice of (dare we even mention his name?). The visitors tremble in fear and evaporate to insignificance, overwhelmed by such a display of power. The convincing scene is suddenly marred when little Toto, unimpressed by the fireworks, snoops around the corner and pulls back a curtain revealing a small, graying, timid man, energetically pulling levers and pressing buttons.

The Sovereign God cannot be disclosed so easily. There has, is and will always be a mystery in our knowledge and understanding of the Most High. Perhaps we ought to learn a lesson from the Bible writers who never tried to prove the existence of God. The reality of God was a stated claim based on His righteous acts.

In response to this claim the prophets, and apostles too, encourage us to praise, adore and worship this Sovereign. In fact, man's greatness lies in his proper response to the overflowing grace of God. If we should be great we must first recognize God's claim, rather than try to create a sovereignty of our own.

Admittedly, most people have no problem relating to a Sovereign God as long as He is "out there." A common attitude is "Let Him push buttons and pull levers to His heart's content if that's what He wants to do." But the crunch comes when that Sovereign—one having superior rank and power—extends His legitimate authority into my own life. When He knocks on the door of my heart saying, "You are not really independent; you are not free to do as you want; you are not your own, you are *Mine*." He comes into my life and suggests: "Please, pray My way, not your way. Please, worship My way, not your way. Please, obey My commands, not your own wishes."

Still, God's sovereign claims are based on love. If He did not love us He could afford to let the human race drift down the road to hell. But no, He is right now providing saving knowledge and saving power to break the bonds of sin and unbelief. So if we *could*, like Toto, pull back the curtain and unmask the Sovereign God, we *would* find Him in His own infinite way pressing buttons, turning wheels, pushing levers and yes, pulling out all the stops; not in order to intimidate but in order to save each one.

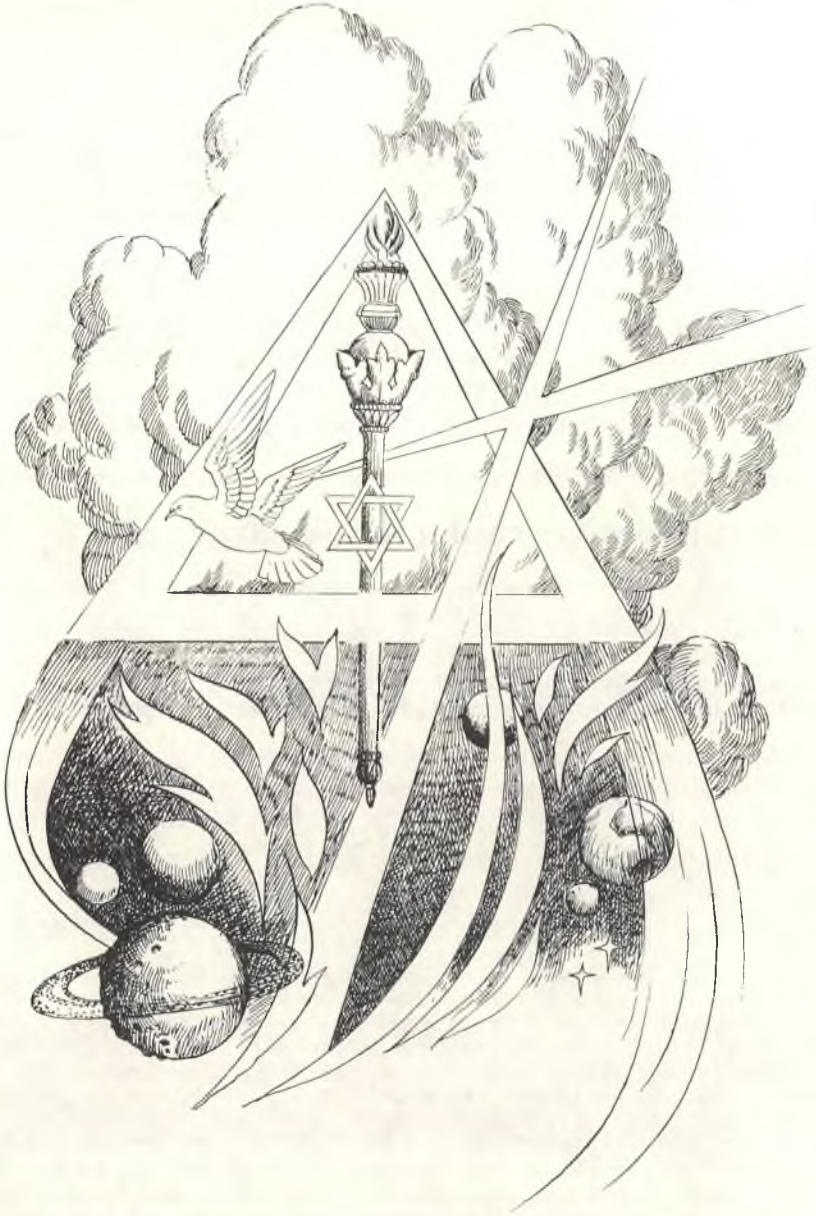
My Maker and my King,
To Thee my all I owe;
Thy sovereign bounty is the spring
Whence all my blessings flow.
Lord, what can I impart
When all is Thine before?
Thy love demands a thankful heart;
The gift, alas! how poor.

God is not easily disclosed

Man's greatness lies in his response to God's greatness

The crunch: "You are mine."

1. The introduction to this week's *Evidence* article told about Sandy Clark, a person who changed her sex from female to male. Could a sex-change ever be right for a person?
2. Also in this week's *Evidence* article there was a story about Eilene Brown who underwent a procedure called amniocentesis in order to determine if the fetus she was carrying were deformed. Should one go through this procedure? If, because of this process, a woman's baby were found to be deformed, should the woman have an abortion?
3. To what extent do you feel man should be allowed to tamper with what has previously been considered as the will of the Sovereign God?
4. Should one have an informal relationship with God? How much reverence should be exhibited in personal devotions? How much in church? If there is a difference, where does the difference lie?
5. As the Sovereign God, would it have been wrong for Him to sweep all sin and sinful creatures from the earth and create a brand new race?



The One Who is Three

by Ruthita Fike

Marci's eyes were steady and intense as she watched the conclusion of "Columbo." When the program was over she leaned back in the recliner and sighed with pleasure.

"Boy, do I like that program! It's really neat how Columbo can fit all the pieces together like a giant jigsaw puzzle. I guess I'm just a sucker for mysteries."

"Oh, yeah?" For the first time in thirty minutes Marci's brother looked up from what he was working on.

"I don't think you even know what a real mystery is from watching that."

"And I suppose you are a mystery expert?"

"Well, this assignment, at least, has taught me what a real mystery is. Mr. Jackson assigned us a parable to write for Bible class. We can illustrate any Biblical topic that we choose—I thought I'd write on the Trinity."

Marci scowled. "What does all that have to do with mysteries?"

"It's strange, but I've spent nearly two hours trying to figure out a suitable illustration for the Trinity, and I can't do it. The whole concept of three distinct Beings making up One is out of the limits of human understanding. I tried comparing the Trinity to triplets or clones or grafted plants, but none of the comparisons carries through. I've come to the conclusion that there is nothing earthly that can be related to an understanding of the Godhead. The nature of God really is mysterious."

Marci leaned back further into the recliner and said nothing for several minutes.

"You know, Jack, I think you're right. The idea of three Beings making up One is not an easy idea to illustrate. Does the Bible give an illustration?"

"No, it doesn't. It's interesting that the parables that Jesus told illustrate the love of God for erring children, but do not attempt to explain the nature of God."

A period of silence followed as both Jack and Marci tried to solve the mystery they had been discussing.

"It makes my head hurt to try to comprehend the Trinity. Maybe that's the sign of a true mystery."

"I know what you mean, Marci. It makes me realize what a truly great God we have. I wish I were a poet, then I'd ask Mr. Jackson if I could write a poem of praise for the Trinity rather than to write a parable."

Marci smiled acknowledgement, although she hadn't really heard what Jack had been saying.

"Funny," she said, "that episode of 'Columbo' doesn't seem as interesting as it did a while ago. I know it didn't do anything to expand my mind like the last few minutes have. It's true, I love mysteries, but all of the ones I watch or read are solvable. We will never understand the Godhead until we reach heaven—and maybe not even then. I like the idea of a God who is so big, so magnificent, so incomprehensible that it stretches my mind to the limits to contemplate just one aspect of Him. Wow, what a God!"

by Tim Crosby

Notes

While the doctrine of the Trinity is not strongly pronounced in the Old Testament, there are hints and shadows of it. The oneness of God which is affirmed in Deuteronomy 6:4 may be understood in a composite sense, as in Genesis 2:24, where husband and wife are said to become "one flesh." Joseph claims that the two dreams of Pharaoh are "one" (Genesis 41:25); *i.e.*, they mean the same thing. In I Corinthians 10:17 (NIV) Paul makes the statement concerning Christians that "**we, who are many, are one body.**" It is this type of corporate oneness which God claims in Deuteronomy 6:4: "**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.**"

There are some interesting facts in the Old Testament concerning the Godhead. For one thing, the first person plural found in Isaiah 6:8 (NIV) ("**Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?**") is often cited as evidence of plurality in God. This "us," however, is probably a reference to the angelic members of the heavenly court. Then, in Psalm 110:1 (NIV) there seems to be a distinction made between the first and second members of the Godhead: "**The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'**" And all three members of the Godhead are mentioned in Isaiah 63:7-10.

There are two important Old Testament passages that indicate that the Messiah would be divine. In Isaiah 9:6 (NIV) the Messiah is called "**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**" And Micah 5:2 (NIV) claims that the ruler who is to come out of Bethlehem is one "**whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.**"

In the New Testament Christians are commanded to baptize "**in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**" (Matthew 28:19; NIV). Similar Trinitarian formulas appear in Paul's writings: "**May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all**" (II Cor. 13:14; NIV). Peter says that Christians "**have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood**" (I Peter 1:2; NIV).

Christ told His disciples that "**When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me**" (John 15:26; NIV). How could Jesus send the Spirit which proceeds from God unless Jesus was Himself God? Jesus claimed that "**Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father**" (John 14:9; NIV); "**I am in the Father, and the Father is in me**" (John 14:11; NIV); "**I and the Father are one**" (John 10:30; NIV).

Paul claimed that "**in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form**" (Col. 2:9; NIV), and he calls Jesus "God" in Titus 2:13. John claims that Jesus Christ "**is the true God and eternal life**" (I John 5:20; NIV).

Indeed, one of the mysteries of God's being and nature is that the Godhead consists of three divine Beings, unified in purpose and action but distinct in personality. It is our privilege to understand that our God is three Persons in One and to appreciate this dimension of His character.

Old
Testament
concepts of
the Trinity

New
Testament
concepts of
the Trinity

by Tim Crosby

Notes

During the nineteenth century most Seventh-day Adventists were Arians (not believing that Christ was co-eternal and co-equal with God) and did not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. Some of the pioneers felt that this doctrine was unscriptural and of Roman Catholic origin. Indeed, not until 1931 was this doctrine of the trinity included in the list of Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs. As late as 1942 M. L. Andreasen could state that "The field is divided on the subject of the Trinity."¹ So when Ellen G. White began to teach that Christ was eternal and self-existent, just before the turn of the century, some church leaders were a bit shocked.

In 1898 *Desire of Ages* was published, and in it was the statement, that "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived."² Some could not believe that Ellen White had written such a statement.³ But what they didn't know was that earlier the prophet had made an even more explicit statement about the deity of Christ: "He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent . . . He is the eternal, self-existent Son."⁴

Ellen White teaches that the Holy Spirit is also a member of the Godhead and that He is a "Person."⁵ "The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit."⁶ "The Holy Spirit is a person, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. . . . He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God."⁶

Over the next fifteen years (from 1898) Ellen White made several other statements related to the Trinity, although she never used the term itself (doubtless because of the prejudice against it):

"The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ."⁷

"The eternal heavenly dignitaries—God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit—arming them [the disciples] with more than mortal energy, . . . would advance with them to the work and convince the world of sin."⁸

It is reassuring to note that at a time in our history when the church was having a difficult time accepting the Trinity doctrine, God led Ellen White as a pioneer in this important truth.

**Most early
Adventists
rejected the
doctrine of the
Trinity**

**Ellen White
taught
Trinitarian
beliefs**

**Christ is
equal
with
God**

**The
Holy Spirit
is a divine
"person "**

**The
"heavenly
trio "**

¹M. L. Andreasen, private letter to J. L. McElhany and W. H. Branson, December 25, 1942.

²Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 530.

³Russell Holt, "The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance" (unpublished term paper at Andrews University, 1969), p.20.

⁴White, *Evangelism*, p. 615.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 617.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 616, 617.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 615.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 616.

by Albert Smith

Notes

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4). This ancient proclamation—confirmed in Christianity and in Islam—affirms the most profound concept. “. . . it points to a unity at the heart of things. It points to the possibility of a universe rather than a multiverse, to meaning, consistency, harmony, order, coherence, in short to a cosmos rather than a chaos.”¹

In the ancient world it was one God or many, monotheism or polytheism. It was a world governed by a benevolent deity or one in which gods warred, the universe stood against itself, and man was a pawn in the cosmic struggle. In the modern world the choice is between one God or none. And the consequences for religion, philosophy, science and history, even for our reaction to daily events is of great significance.

As Dr. Jack Provonsha has pointed out, “God as the Creator ties everything together. Every part of the universe is in some way related to every other part through God, who is its unifying principle. There are no radical or categorical separations between independent levels of reality. The Hebraic-Biblical sense of unity is thus in sharp opposition to every dualistic separation between spirit and matter, or between supernature and nature. It rejects the two-or three-storied universe of the pre-enlightenment world view. The Bible sees God as dwelling on all floors! All is His. He is the Creator and He is one, uniting everything with His own unity. Those amazing continuities, the electromagnetic spectrum and the periodic table, are visions of God!”²

Modern scientists from Kepler on have dreamed of, in some sense, understanding the whole—the entire system of relations in this universe. To the faithful this search has been a recognition of unity and of Lordship, an act of worship. But the dream has obviously not been fulfilled. Our understanding is fragmented, and the universe is far richer and inferences drawn from it more subtle than anyone could have anticipated; nevertheless, science has made real progress in comprehending not only the parts but also the whole.

“Man may yet be in for many surprises in his exploration of the universe, but not in for discontinuities! What he finds will fit into what he has found—because God is *one*. Since God cannot, by His very nature, oppose or contradict Himself, neither can His creation—with a single exception, that part of His creation endowed with freedom of choice.”³

Indeed, “The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4).

¹Jack Provonsha, *God is With Us*, p. 62.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

**The Unified
Three
created a
universe**

**God's
oneness
pervades
all He has
created**

HOW TO To Understand What You Can of the Trinity

by Maylan Schurch

Notes

I got a chance to try one of those new TV game consoles last Christmas at my sister's house. It was sleek and black and exciting, and there was a slot into which I plugged a black plastic box about the size of a cassette tape. When I did this, the TV screen changed color, and two squarish-looking basketball players appeared and bounced a square ball around—and I was ready to play.

What amazed me was this: There didn't seem to be any moving parts: the plug-in "cassette" wasn't actually a cassette—there was no tape, and you could get your ear down next to it and listen all you wanted to, but nothing whizzed, or clicked, or even got warm! I couldn't figure it out.

And that's the healthy attitude in which I'd like to begin this set of "how to" steps. Obviously, using a TV game console to introduce some thoughts on the Trinity borders on sacrilege if not handled right. But the inner workings of the console are very incomprehensible to me, and my tacit acceptance that, in spite of this, it *does* work, can serve as a human illustration of the much more complete and comprehensive trust I can place in the Godhead. So:

1. Realize that you can't understand everything there is to know about the Godhead—and it's presumptuous to imagine that you can. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God" (Deut. 29:29), and no amount of human-based illustrations can make me understand certain things about the Three: how One can become a Man, how Another can enter and inspire Him and give Him strength to live and die for us, and how the Third can sit by and allow it to happen. But "those things which are revealed belong unto us . . . for ever" (Deut. 29:29, second part), so it's important to:

2. Study carefully those things which you can understand. You can learn something about the Godhead, and here's one of the most basic ways: Get a Young's concordance and look up the word "spirit," making a note of all verses which refer to the Holy Spirit or the "spirit of the Lord," etc. (Young's is best because it tells you exactly which Greek or Hebrew word is used, and in the back it tells you into what *other* words that word has been translated in the KJV.) Try to discover how the Godhead operated as a *unit* in these instances. This sort of study gives you that relaxing, satisfying, juicy *firsthand* knowledge of these great themes.

3. Ask God daily to really fill you with His Holy Spirit. Last fall I did this, and it not only helped me to more fully understand the "revealed" things, but it affected my life in another way. Last fall was the first time I sincerely started asking for the Holy Spirit (it was during those excellent Sabbath School lessons on the subject), and while only the Lord knows for sure if there was a definite connection, I know that this March He laid hold on this phlegmatic young assistant professor of English, tossed him around a bit internally, and shoved him in the direction of Andrews University and a Master of Divinity degree. I'll be starting on it this fall (1979). Amen? *Amen!*

Maylan Schurch, formerly an assistant professor of English, is now working on his Master of Divinity degree at Andrews University.

by Chester H. Damron

Notes

In His prayer for oneness and unity, Christ could point to the Godhead of Three as the perfect example for Christians. He does not ask redeemed mankind to attain to that which has not been demonstrated by his Creator and Redeemer. He Himself has given us the Example and has revealed the Source of power whereby unity and oneness are possible. Moreover, unity and oneness constitute a hallmark of faith for God's true people; *oneness* in Christ continues to be the goal of the true Christian.

Trinity: an example for Christian unity

The Bible teaches that true unity is obtained only by "abiding" in Christ. In John 15:1-17 (RSV) the word "abide" is used eleven times. Christ said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:5). It is the vine that furnishes the branches with the *principle* of life and with the *type* of life. No pressure or molding from *without* is needed to shape them to the pattern of the vine (parent stock). The form, color, taste and fragrance of each individual is determined by the root. Likewise, conforming us to the divine pattern is the united purpose and plan of the Eternal Three.

Christian unity is not conformity but is abiding in the Eternal Three

It is not through the painful reproduction of another person's spiritual life, however, that one is to be conformed to God's plan. Oneness in Christ does not suggest an outward imitation requiring all born-again Christians to think and act identically. Sheer conformity takes away from the God-given uniqueness of each individual. The joyful Christian has learned that true unity is neither the realization of some "ideal" self nor the painful imitation of some real saint. "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). Christian unity and oneness is the result of growing *toward* Christ (like flowers toward the sun) and growing *from* Him (like limbs from the tree trunk). Thus the divine counsel, "Remain in me and I will remain in you, no branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (John 15:4; NIV).

Unity does not take away individuality

Ellen White said it so beautifully: "Christ is one with the Father, but Christ and God are two distinct personages. Read the prayer of Christ in the seventeenth chapter of John, and you will find this point clearly brought out. How earnestly the Saviour prayed that His disciples might be one with Him as He is one with the Father. But the unity that is to exist between Christ and His followers does not destroy the personality of either . . .

Unity with Christ brings unity with others

"Through the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind, man is made complete in Christ Jesus. Unity with Christ established a bond of unity with one another. This unity is the most convincing proof to the world of the majesty and virtue of Christ, and of His power to take away sin" (Manuscript 111, 1903, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1148).

Unity with one another is possible for those who are abiding in the Unified Three. Because the Godhead *abides* in unity and oneness, we Christians may also be one.

The Three-Personal God

by C. S. Lewis

Notes

A good many people nowadays say, "I believe in a God, but not in a personal God." They feel that the mysterious something which is behind all other things must be more than a person. Now the Christians quite agree. But the Christians are the only people who offer any idea of what a being that is beyond personality could be like. All the other people, though they say that God is beyond personality, really think of Him as something impersonal: that is, as something less than personal. If you are looking for something super-personal, something more than a person, then it is not a question of choosing between the Christian idea and the other ideas. The Christian idea is the only one on the market.

Again, some people think that after this life, or perhaps after several lives, human souls will be "absorbed" into God. But when they try to explain what they mean, they seem to be thinking of our being absorbed into God as one material thing is absorbed into another. They say it is like a drop of water slipping into the sea. But of course that is the end of the drop. If that is what happens to us, then being absorbed is the same as ceasing to exist. It is only the Christians who have any idea of how human souls can be taken into the life of God and yet remain themselves—in fact, be very much more themselves than they were before.

I warned you that Theology is practical. The whole purpose for which we exist is to be thus taken into the life of God. Wrong ideas about what that life is, will make it harder. And now, for a few minutes, I must ask you to follow rather carefully.

You know that in space you can move in three ways—to left or right, backwards or forwards, up or down. Every direction is either one of these three or a compromise between them. They are called the three Dimensions. Now notice this. If you are using only one dimension, you could draw only a straight line. If you are using two, you could draw a figure: say, a square. And a square is made up of four straight lines. Now a step further. If you have three dimensions, you can then build what we call a solid body: say, a cube—a thing like a dice or a lump of sugar. And a cube is made up of six squares.



Do you see the point? A world of one dimension would be a straight line. In a two-dimensional world, you still get straight lines, but many lines make one figure. In a three-dimensional world, you still get figures but many figures make one solid body. In other words, as you advance to more real and more complicated levels, you do not leave behind you the things you found on the simpler levels: you still have them, but combined in new ways—in ways you could not imagine if you knew only the simpler levels.

Now the Christian account of God involves just the same principle. The human level is a simple and rather empty level. On the human level one person is one being, and any two persons are two separate beings—just as, in two dimensions (say on a flat sheet of paper) one square is one figure, and any two squares are separate figures. On the Divine level you still find personalities; but up there you find them combined in new ways which we, who do not live on that level, cannot imagine. In God's dimension, so to speak, you find a being who is three Persons while remaining one Being, just as a cube is six squares while remaining one cube. Of course we cannot fully conceive a Being like

that: just as, if we were so made that we perceived only two dimensions in space we could never properly imagine a cube. But we can get a sort of faint notion of it. And when we do, we are then, for the first time in our lives, getting some positive idea, however faint, of something super-personal—something more than a person. It is something we could never have guessed, and yet, once we have been told, one almost feels one ought to have been able to guess it because it fits in so well with all the things we know already.

You may ask, "If we cannot imagine a three-personal Being, what is the good of talking about Him?" Well, there isn't any good talking about Him. The thing that matters is being actually drawn into that three-personal life, and that may begin any time—tonight, if you like.

What I mean is this. An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get into touch with God. But if he is a Christian he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God—that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him. You see what is happening. God is the thing to which he is praying—the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on—the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers. The man is being caught up into the higher kind of life—what I called *Zoe* or spiritual life: he is being pulled into God, by God, while still remaining himself.

And that is how Theology started. People already knew about God in a vague way. Then came a man who claimed to be God; and yet he was not the sort of man you could dismiss as a lunatic. He made them believe Him. They met Him again after they had seen Him killed. And then, after they had been formed into a little society or community, they found God somehow inside them as well: directing them, making them able to do things they could not do before. And when they worked it all out they found they had arrived at the Christian definition of the three-personal God.

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"One almost feels one ought to have been able to guess it."

1. In what order of importance do you see the following:

- _____ Spirit
- _____ Father
- _____ Son

Why?

2. In the light of this week's lesson on the Trinity, how would you explain the text, "The Lord our God is one Lord"? (Deut. 6:4)

3. How do you interpret the statement by Chester Damron in the *Opinion* section, "Oneness in Christ does not suggest an outward imitation requiring all born-again Christians to think and act identically"?

4. Which member of the Godhead should we pray to? Why? Is it important?

God Is With Us

LESSON 4
October 21-27



by Calvin Miller

The Father and his Troubadour
sat down
Upon the outer rim of space.
"And here,
My Singer," said Earthmaker,
"is the crown
Of all my endless skies—the
green, brown sphere
Of all my hopes." He reached
and took the round
New planet down, and held it
to his ear.

"They're crying, Troubadour,"
he said. "They cry
So hopelessly." He gave the
little ball
Unto his Son, who also held
it by
His ear. "Year after weary
year they all
Keep crying. They seem born to
weep then die.
Our new man taught them crying
in the Fall.

"It is a peaceless globe.
Some are sincere
In desperate desire to see
her freed
Of her absurdity. But
war is here.
Men die in conflict, bathed
in blood and greed."
Then with his nail he scraped
the atmosphere
And both of them beheld the
planet bleed.

Earthmaker set earth spinning
on its way
And said, "Give me your vast
infinity
My son; I'll wrap it in a bit
of clay.
Then enter Terra microscop-
ically
To love the little souls who
weep away
Their lives." "I will," I said,
"set Terra free."

And then I fell asleep and all
awareness fled.
I felt my very being shrinking
down.
My vastness ebbed away. In dwin-
dling dread,
All size decayed. The universe
around
Drew back. I woke upon a tiny
bed
Of straw in one of Terra's
smaller towns.

And now the great reduction
has begun:
Earthmaker and his Troubadour
are one.
And here's the new redeeming
melody—
The only song that can set
Terra free.
The Shrine of older days
must be laid by.
Mankind must see Earthmaker
left the sky,
And he is with us. They must
concede that
I am he. They must believe the
Song or die.

Taken from *The Singer*, by Calvin Miller, © 1975 by Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. Used
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Calvin Miller is a writer and pastor living in Omaha, Nebraska.

by Sieg Roeske

Notes

In order to reveal Himself to the human race, God has chosen to call Himself by many different names. Each of God's names describes an aspect of His saving activity in behalf of man. "Emmanuel"—*God with us*—stresses God's desire for fellowship and unity with man. This name takes on even greater significance when we realize that man's salvation depends upon God's *presence* with man.

After his great sin David cried, "**Cast me not away from thy presence**" (Psalm 51:11). David recognized his lost condition as a sinner as *separation from God*. Sin always separates man from God and places him in a lonely, forsaken, and lost condition. Calling Himself "Emmanuel" is God's way of saying, "**I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**" (Hebrews 13:5). *I will come close to you to provide the warmth, the comfort, the direction that you need to receive eternal life.* When God's presence approaches the repentant sinner it is always a day of salvation.

"God with us" is God's provision for our salvation

In order for the presence of God to be most meaningful, however, God has to meet humans on terms that are understandable to them. He therefore decided to take the form of a man in order to best communicate saving knowledge. For our salvation depends upon the *knowledge* of the God who is "with us." "**And this is life eternal, that they might know thee. . . .**" (John 17:3).

Throughout the ages men of God have yearned for that saving knowledge. Moses asked to see God and he did; it was an experience that meant everything to him. But Christ came to make this knowledge of God available to all in a very singular and emphatic way. He not only became "God with us," but "**One of us**" (I Tim. 3:16). What more could God do to communicate His love?

God became One with us to communicate best to us

Because of the strong monotheistic view of God as presented in the Old Testament it was difficult for many people in New Testament times to believe that the Messiah could actually be God. They believed Him rather to be a kind of prophet, king or ruler, but not really God.

The challenge to the New Testament writers was not only to present Christ as the Messiah, but to present Him also as God who "became flesh." In John 1:1-3 we read, "**In the beginning was the Word . . . the Word was God. . . . All things were made by him . . .**" Verse 14 goes on to say, "**And the Word was made flesh . . .**" Here John is stressing the fact that although the Messiah is One with man, He is also One with God. He is still the Creator. "**All things were made by him.**" (vs. 3).

The Messiah as God and man

Both John and Paul were careful to present in their writings the kind of Messiah that the Christian could most easily put his trust in and commit his life to. So these Bible writers presented Christ as One equal to God, One with God and as God Himself.

"**Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.**" (Matthew 1:23). Since the Son and Father are One, God did not give somebody apart from Himself—to ransom man—but gave Himself. It was not Christ's love alone that was revealed on Calvary, but it was the Father's revelation in the Son. On the cross was revealed the presence of God with man.

selected by Ivan L. Warden

Notes

Since God has always been with us, why was it necessary for Christ to physically enter into our arena and become eligible to receive the hurts inflicted upon us by the evil one?

"Nearly two thousand years ago, a voice of mysterious import was heard in heaven, from the throne of God, 'Lo, I come.' 'Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me . . . Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God.' Heb. 10:5-7.

". . . As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of the common priest, so Christ took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim. 'He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.' Isa. 53:5.

"Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. 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. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed.'

". . . By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey. . . .

"By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.' John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. . . .

"Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. . . .

"And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift,—*Immanuel*, 'God with us.' "

Christ was treated as we deserve that we might be treated as He deserves

God gave Christ to the human race

Sin can never rise again

Taken from *Desire of Ages*, pp. 23-26.

by A. Josef Greig

Notes

When the Syro-Ephraimite coalition threatened to attack Judah during the reign of King Ahaz and replace him with the puppet Tabeal, Isaiah did two things: he prophesied that the attack would be frustrated and he gave Ahaz an opportunity to ask for a sign that would confirm the authority of the prophetic word. King Ahaz, politically sensitive and spiritually faithless, rejected the offer on the grounds that to ask for such a sign would be considered as tempting God (See Exodus 17:2 and Deut. 6:16).

**The historic
Emmanuel**

After the king refused to commit himself, Isaiah went ahead and gave him a sign which forced him to decide whether he would put himself and the nation in God's hands or follow his own political judgment. The sign Isaiah gave was that a young woman would bear a son and call his name Emmanuel (God with us). This sign confirmed the promise of deliverance from the Syro-Ephraimite threat—God was with them. But the sign of Emmanuel also signified judgment for the faithless rejection of God's offer: the Assyrians would invade the land of Emmanuel and God's people would be subject to very difficult conditions.

This passage in Isaiah 7:14, 15 which deals with the birth of Emmanuel is one of many Old Testament passages concerned with the subject of God's presence in Israel. Although Isaiah 7:14, 15 has a definite historical focus for that time it also suggests today, with many other Old Testament passages, a personal relationship between God and man. It tells of an incarnation—God with us—that in actuality is future to Israel's experience in the Old Testament. This tendency to view such Old Testament prophecies in light of the incarnation has prophetic significance which culminates in the Christian confession that Jesus Christ is Lord and God (John 20:28).

**The prophetic
Emmanuel**

But man's confrontation with the presence of God must be based on an unreserved commitment of faith. Otherwise, God's presence in salvation is transformed into His hiddenness in judgment: " 'who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?' declares the Lord" (Jer. 30:21).

What Isaiah's sign in Emmanuel was to Judah so is Jesus to the modern world. Emmanuel was both a sign of deliverance and of judgment for Judah. So Jesus Christ, a sign today confirming the promise of deliverance for those who accept Him, is also a sign confirming judgment for the faithless.

The Syro-Ephraimite coalition threatens no one today. Loss of money, unhappiness, sickness, etc., are the threats we face. May Emmanuel always be to us a promise of deliverance.

by Jill Doster

Notes

A man once became extremely ill, suffering from a rare and usually fatal disease. He heard of a famous surgeon who claimed to be able to cure such an illness with special, although expensive, surgery. The sick man sought out the doctor who agreed to perform the operation. The surgery was a success; the patient's life was saved. Now, however, the patient faced a devastating mound of hospital bills. But when the newly cured man gathered his courage and prepared to face those bills he discovered that he owed no money at all. The surgeon had waived his fee and from his own pocket had paid all of the man's hospital expenses.

It should be easy for us to see how grateful the patient would be. The doctor not only saved the man's life but eliminated all his debts as well. What a surgeon!

Why is it so easy for us to grasp this simple illustration and at times so difficult for us to understand Christ's sacrifice for us? Like the sick man, our only hope for life lies in the hands of a skillful and caring Surgeon. The surgery will cost us nothing; all we need to do is believe in His surgical skill and accept the "surgery." But how?

1. Communicate. The first step is to find out what Christ did for us and why He did it. So go to the Source. Talk with Him. Ask questions of Him. Read what the Bible has to say about Him. *Communication is the key to understanding.* It is through this communication that we find out why Christ—the only qualified "Surgeon"—is our one sure source of salvation.

2. See what Christ has done to change lives. There seems to be nothing quite as effective as a personal testimony. Perhaps each one of us has such a testimony—maybe without even realizing it. We should ask ourselves, "How is my life different because of Christ's sacrifice?" Then, we should discuss our answer with others—find out what Christ has done for them, and share our own joys with them.

3. Accept the fact that Christ didn't give up His life because we deserved it. We could never deserve what He's done. Paul says, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were *still sinners*, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, NIV).

We can't earn eternal life; we can only gratefully accept it. Like in the story above, the sick man didn't try to operate on himself. He let the surgeon do it—he knew he couldn't save his own life.

Sometimes we receive a gift or compliment that seems just too good to be true. Maybe we question it or pinch ourselves continually to make sure it isn't "all a dream." That's natural. But it isn't necessary when we're talking about salvation. Christ's sacrifice and love for us is no dream. It's a perfect gift, lovingly handed to us by a caring Parent who became One "with us."

by Kenneth Houchin

Notes

On the last day of creation week God examined the product of the week's creativity and observed not one fault in all the intricate and complex systems of the new planet. God pronounced the world perfect and rested on the seventh day.

But I have often wondered how God could truly call the world perfect when He knew that one "fatal flaw" underlay the beauty and symmetry of the planet? In order to create an atmosphere where man would be free to respond to God's love God must also provide the opportunity for man to reject Him. God knew that the first rejection of Him, or the first sin, would bring disorder, blight, and death to man and to the new planet. So how could God truly call His creation perfect?

Before the foundations of the world were laid, the Godhead had made provision for the eventuality of sin. Entirely through their own initiative, the Holy Three arranged for One of them to become man. If mankind sinned, it was determined that the Son would leave the throne of the universe and the adoration of heavenly intelligences to immerse Himself in the finiteness of His creation. By Jesus Christ living a perfect life and dying an unjust death on this planet, fallen man could once again be elevated to an acceptable relationship with the Divine.

Although rejection of God would still bring disunity to the planet and suffering to the inhabitants, provision had been made for man's redemption. Thus, God could declare a perfect creation.

Adam sinned, and the penalty passed upon all humanity. Thus, it became necessary for the incarnation of Christ to become a reality. Christ came to this earth as a second Adam to restore man to his pre-sin perfection. Through man's acceptance by faith of Christ's death on the cross, God could view each individual through the righteousness of Christ. And, because of His victorious earthly life, Christ would have the right to impart divine power to help man resist sin.

In accepting the guise of humanity, Christ was subject to the same temptations, sufferings and physical needs as man in order to be able to understand and sympathize with his condition. The glory of Christ was hidden so that He would possess no outward advantage to gain popular attention. By appearing as a common man, He was approachable by the lower classes of people, and could thereby draw near to sorrowful, tempted men and women.

It was necessary for Christ to become human for yet another reason. Contact with His divine character and life served to teach by example the love of the Father and the practical application of how to conduct one's daily affairs. Through His life He showed that He, like man, was completely dependent upon God for power over sin and that victory could be won.

Then, by the life and death of Jesus Christ, God's righteousness was vindicated before the universe. The nature and purpose of sin was revealed, and unfallen beings were forced to marvel at the love of God in the condescension to humanity.

Indeed, the mystery of infinite love showered on an ungrateful planet by the Incarnation is a subject for the contemplation of angels and will be the focus of man's studies throughout eternity.

1. Please rewrite the following text so that it relates to your own experience, needs and relationships.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

(For an example of a “Bible-rewrite” see the *You're Next* section for Lesson 1.)

2. Define if you can the phrase, “whosoever believeth in him.” What does it mean to you?

3. On a separate sheet of paper write a letter to a non-Christian friend showing how to take the initial steps to believe in Christ. Share this letter with your discussion group.

His Holy Image



by Deborah Anfenson

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:6-8).

Holiness Model #1: He thundered, blazed, bellowed and seethed. A small band of pilgrim-suppliants trembled before his awful throne. Caught unaware by a feisty little dog, the great Oz was exposed to be nothing more than a bumbling, good-hearted, slightly absent-minded grandfather-type.

Is holiness quantified in degrees, candle-feet and decibels?

Holiness Model #2: Grandma will be ninety-five her next birthday. She is hard of hearing and doesn't get around too well because of her arthritis. But she sure is holy.

"I don't know anyone who reads her Bible and prays more than Grandma. I guess that's just about all she can do, aside from crocheting Dorcas doilies and knitting bandages for lepers. Grandma must be the holiest person I know.

"I just don't ever think I could be as holy as Grandma—I couldn't sit still that long."

Do I have to wait until I'm ninety-five to be holy?

Holiness Model #3: Year after year he made his home on a platform nestled in the branches of a sturdy tree. Physically sustained by the stark bill-of-fare supplied by those below, he fasted often. His clothing never changed. The lusts of the flesh were being extinguished through the most rigorous discipline. With the time others spent on meeting social, erotic, gustatory and other physical material needs, he was able to commune on the spiritual level with his God. Some called him holy.

Holiness Model #4: It is a holiness which is active, alive and vibrant—not a static commodity but the living presence of a God who moves among men. The holiness of this model #4 is defined specifically as *God's saving activity* among human beings.

God's holiness is more than Sinai thunder, more than a still, small voice, more than "touch not, taste not." It is not simply what God *is*, but what He *does*. It is His communication, in all of His fullness, to us in our fragmented partialness. It is His activity to make us complete and whole and holy, even as He is holy.

by Buz Menhardt

Notes

The biblical words describing God’s holiness carry the meaning that God is sacred because He is separate. Holiness is an attribute which makes Him distinct or sets Him apart from the common things of man. Holiness is God’s noble and incomparable majesty which puts Him above the imperfections of sinful humans.

God’s holiness is associated with more than just His righteousness and perfection. His name is sacred: **“I will make known my holy name among my people Israel . . .”** (Ezekiel 39:7; NIV). Paul notes the holiness of God’s law. **“So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good”** (Romans 7:12; NIV). The Psalmist reminds us that God dwells in His holy temple (Psalm 11:4) and calls us to **“Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill”** (Psalm 99:9). Isaiah speaks of God’s holy Sabbath day (Isaiah 58:13).

Everything about God is holy

But God’s holiness is more than a collection of sacred things and places; it is His uniqueness. **“Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?”** (Exodus 15:11; NIV). God is set above other gods because He meaningfully intervenes in the lives of men. The very fact that He has created man sets Him apart as holy (Isaiah 43:15). He is **“the Holy One of Israel, your Savior”** (Isaiah 43:3; NIV). He is man’s helper and Redeemer, **“our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is His name, the Holy One of Israel”** (Isaiah 47:4). **“This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: ‘I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you . . .’”** (Isaiah 48:17; NIV). God’s continual involvement with man is an expression of His holiness.

God’s unique holiness is actively involved with man

As Christians it is important that we recognize that God is holy. Jesus, our example and guide, acknowledged Him as holy: **“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name . . .”** (John 17:11; NIV). The heavenly beings testify to God’s holy existence: **“And they were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory’”** (Isaiah 6:1-3; NIV; see also Rev. 4:8). The demons know that Jesus is the Holy One of God: **“Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!’”** (Mark 1:23, 24; NIV). God, talking to Moses, said of Himself, **“Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am Holy’”** (Lev. 19:1; NIV).

Testimonies to God’s holiness: Jesus’ prayer

the angels’ celebration

the demon’s cry

God’s command

But that which is most significant for Christians today is that sinful man may stand faultless before this holy God. Paul proclaims, **“Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation . . .”** (Col. 1:21, 22; NIV). The promise from God to us is: **“Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy”** (Lev. 19:2; NIV).

Before God man is also holy

Let us acknowledge that God is separate, unique and righteous, and let us praise this holy God for accepting even us.

by W. G. C. Murdoch

Notes

“ . . . He [Christ] revealed to him [John] that for which his soul longed—the beauty of holiness, the transforming power of love.”¹

This transforming experience which John had can be ours. It goes beyond a thrilling vision or saintly feeling into a day-by-day relationship of trust. “Holiness is not rapture; it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love.”²

Following, then, is prophetic insight on how the holiness described above becomes our own:

“The true Christian obtains an experience which brings holiness—a glow of perfect love for the Redeemer clears away the miasma which has interposed between his soul and God. The will of God has become his will, pure, elevated, refined and sanctified. His countenance reveals the light of heaven. His body is a fit temple for the Holy Spirit. Holiness adorns his character.”³

“It is by receiving the life for us poured out on Calvary’s cross, that we can live the life of holiness. And this life we receive by receiving His word, by doing those things which He has commanded. Thus we become one with Him.”⁴

“Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God’s requirements.”⁵

“He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.’ . . . Here is the test of every man’s profession. We cannot accord holiness to any man without bringing him to the measurement of God’s only standard of holiness in heaven and in earth.”⁶

“There are two errors against which the children of God—particularly those who have just come to trust in His grace—especially need to guard. The first, already dwelt upon, is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God. He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy.

“The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption.”⁷

“No man receives holiness as a birthright, or as a gift from any other being. Holiness is the gift of God through Christ.”⁸

Holiness is active reliance upon God

The holy life is one that is redirected

Holiness means obedience

Watch out for two things:

1. trusting in doing good to become holy

2. not doing anything good

¹ *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 540.

² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

³ *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. VII, p. 909, (Letter 139, 1898).

⁴ *Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

⁵ *Great Controversy*, p. 472.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Steps to Christ*, pp. 59, 60.

⁸ *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. VI, p. 1117 (Signs of the Times, Dec. 17, 1902).

by Ruth Murdoch and Barbara Goyne

Notes

In modern psychology today there is a theory of human development that seeks to promote what would seem almost to be the perfection of character described as holiness. Note some of the descriptions this school of thought gives as desirable:

- Kind
- Patient with people
- Showing compassion
- Altruistic
- Empathetic
- Respecting the rights of others
- Adequate
- Able to accept himself and others
- Showing concern for social problems

These expressions drawn from the humanistic model of man are excellent goals to strive toward. However, there is a basic weakness in this approach to becoming fully human.

Humanism is founded on the belief that man, by nature, is basically good and can by his own efforts achieve this level of character perfection, or holiness. This philosophy contrasts with the Christian view of man as fallen from the holiness in which he was created and unable to attain perfection except through the merits of Christ's righteousness.

As an example of how futile man's efforts at goodness are, consider the following:

The towering cost of recovering lost health has forced doctors, nurses, and other health professionals to examine the task of *educating people to adopt lifestyles aimed at wellness*. Many have been the studies and programs designed to educate for better living. But most experiments in health education are uncovering the sad fact that knowledge of good health practices does not insure changed behavior, let alone holiness.

The unfulfilled promise of teaching better lifestyles is apparent in such studies as those of Cohen and Cohen.¹ They wanted to find out if such health care training programs work. They reviewed all of the empirical studies reported in eleven major health-education journals during the three-year period 1975-77. Only seven percent of the health care programs studies demonstrated that they were doing any real good and were causing overall major improvements in those being trained. Obviously, *knowing* and *doing* are two different things.

Despite recent extensive health education campaigns to alter smoking, driving, leisure, eating and drug habits, *not one has produced any notable success*.² An example familiar to many of us is the war against obesity. The dieter who *does* lose weight is faced with a 90 percent chance of gaining it all back. All of the programs for weight control apparently fail in the end, for most people.

And, so do all human attempts at holiness.

Indeed, all human programs aimed at the elevation of man are inadequate. In Christ has been provided the only means for the regeneration of this fallen race. So the challenge is to look to Christ, claim His holiness, claim His power for reform and then lift Him high so the world may look and live and love.

"Change your lifestyle" programs are very unsuccessful

"In Christ"—it's the only way

¹ Cohen, C., Cohen, E.: "Health education: panacea, pernicious, or pointless?" Presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington, D.C., February 12-17, 1978.

² Cohen, E.: "A study of the effects of several educational techniques on junior high school students' knowledge and intended behavior toward a new concern in health education" (doctoral dissertation) New York University, 1978.

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Barbara Goyne is a biology instructor at Union College.

by Robert M. Johnston

Notes

"Remember who you are and what you represent" is the motto of a certain women's college. And it is not a bad motto for Christians. But before I ever heard this slogan the idea it conveys was playing an important part in my life.

Many times I was on better behavior than I might have been only because I remembered that I was, for example, an American in a foreign country, an Adventist in a non-Adventist school or the only representative of my profession in a meeting of other professionals. I have a natural desire to protect and enhance the reputation of the group to which I belong. I know that my acquaintances judge "my people" by what they see in me. I want whomever I meet to think well of Americans, Adventists or whatever group I may happen to be representing.

But for the Christian there is a better motto than "Remember who you are and what you represent." It is, "Remember who you are and *Whom* you represent." Since we are representatives and ambassadors of the Holy One, God calls upon us to be holy. The promise "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2) is the recurring refrain in Leviticus 17-26 which scholars call the Holiness code (cf. Matthew 5:48). Hebrews 12:10 tells us we are to be "partakers of His holiness." But how?

1. Desire the hallowing of God's name (Matthew 6:9). Be just as jealous of God's reputation—yea, more so—as you are of the reputation of your school, your family or your country. If you have such a holy jealousy you will do nothing to bring reproach on God's name or His people. If you call yourself a believer in God and take the name of Christian and carry the Adventist label, you have His reputation in your hands. You have a mark on you—God's mark. Carry it carefully.

2. Keep holy times. The Sabbath is a school for holiness; by observing the holy day we learn how to be holy all the time. But we need holy times each day, for if we don't have a close contact with the Holy God how can we hope to represent Him? And a holy time is better than a holy place. We have to go out and find a holy place but a holy time comes to us every week and every day.

3. Dare to be different when you must be. To be holy is to be set apart. As a doctoral student I felt uneasy in my first seminar when I was the only one present who didn't drink coffee and one who made no apologies for Christian convictions and lifestyle. At first I was getting some pretty sly remarks. But I noticed that as time went by my classmates drank less and less coffee and the unkind remarks stopped. I sought to win their respect—but only so that they would respect my religion and my God.

Holiness is not quiescent; action is part of its very nature. Desire the hallowing of God's name; keep holy times; dare to be different. In these ways let God's holiness be lived out through you.

by editors

Notes

The theme for this week states: "The Holy One, by virtue of His perfection, power and glory, stands distinct—i.e., holy above all else. Whatever He dwells in becomes holy, including the human heart."

According to this, since God is holy and He dwells in me I should be holy.

But I'm not. Not even close.

In fact, I don't even like the term "holiness" when we're talking about people. You see, my concept of a holy person is not too thrilling. You know, drinks Brussels sprout juice at 4:30 every morning, doesn't like white-water rafting because the excitement is too much, etc.

Intellectually, I know that holiness is not measured by sprout juice and white water. But for some reason, back in the deep recesses of my mind, I can't shake the idea that the holy road God wants to lead me down is nothing very exciting.

But that's OK. I can squirm when I hear the term "holiness" and I can be disenchanted with a "holy" lifestyle, if I keep one thing in mind: *We become like those things we appreciate.* Becoming holy is not some magical overnight transmutation. Sanctification begins with a birth and involves growth. And we grow to become like the things we appreciate.

Therefore, it really doesn't matter if I'm keen on sprout juice or not. I don't have to like the lifestyle of those people with whom I associate the term "holiness."

All I have to do is appreciate the truly Holy One—and I will become like Him.

This is what is meant by the idea of Christ dwelling in us. When we appreciate Him, when we like the way He does things, He will be able to dwell in us more fully—and gradually we will become more and more like Him.

There is one other thing I feel should be mentioned when we're discussing God's holiness and the conversion of man to holiness.

God is holy—above all things. "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all His praise?" (Psalm 106:2). Looking through the glass darkly we can see only the periphery of the holiness of God. So when we say that a holy God dwells in us and we therefore become holy, we must remember we're speaking in relative terms. We are not talking about a state of sinless perfection. We are not talking about our goodness being acceptable before God. We recognize that all of our *holy acts* are so "defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God."¹

I still get a bad taste in my mouth when I use the word "holiness." But that doesn't matter. I appreciate the One who is holy—I like how He does things—and I am therefore growing to be like Him more and more each day. And so He dwells in me, and teaches me to be holy, and then places my holiness "upon the glowing fire of the righteousness of Christ."²

We become like those things we appreciate

On this earth we will never become truly holy

¹ *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 344.

² *Ibid.*

YOU'RE NEXT

1. Which of these influence your holiness?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 hours of sleep each night
<input type="checkbox"/> studying your Bible each day
<input type="checkbox"/> if a girl, never wearing pants
<input type="checkbox"/> accepting Jesus as your personal Savior
<input type="checkbox"/> not having sex before marriage
<input type="checkbox"/> being conservative
<input type="checkbox"/> praying | <input type="checkbox"/> going Ingathering
<input type="checkbox"/> not drinking "Dr. Pepper"
<input type="checkbox"/> witnessing
<input type="checkbox"/> knowing that you're saved
<input type="checkbox"/> smiling
<input type="checkbox"/> not eating meat
<input type="checkbox"/> becoming a student missionary
<input type="checkbox"/> avoiding alcohol and cigarettes |
|--|---|

Why?

2. Below is a *values continuum*. As you may see it is a line with the numbers *one* through *ten* written above it. These numbers represent degrees of holiness: *1* being least holy and *10* being most holy. Rank the holiness of the following on this values continuum by writing the letter which corresponds to each word on the continuum (e.g., since God is "most holy," I would put *H* on the line at the number *10*; etc.).



- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| A. church building | G. mother | M. miracles |
| B. Billy Graham | H. God | N. Ellen White |
| C. prophet | I. Uriah Smith | O. Bible |
| D. father | J. political leaders | P. teacher |
| E. James White | K. pastor | Q. church leaders |
| F. prayer | L. Jimmy Carter | R. nature |

Why did you place these where you did?

Atlantic Union College

FOUNDED: 1882 as South Lancaster Academy.

LOCATION: South Lancaster, Massachusetts

CHAPLAIN:
Richard Trott

COLLEGE EDITORS:
Richard Latane
Richard Trott

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THE WILLIAM MILLER CHAPEL, located on the second floor of Founder's Hall on the campus of Atlantic Union College. Founder's Hall is the oldest Adventist educational building.

Miller Chapel is dominated by two larger-than-life-size portraits of William and Lucy Miller, done in the 1850's by the American primitive artist Horace Bundy, who was himself a Millerite.

The pulpit and three matching cathedral chairs (gifts of the Balston Spa Seventh-day Adventist church and several AUC graduating classes) were made for the Balston Spa, New York, Baptist church, where William Miller's brother-in-law served as pastor. Miller himself preached from the pulpit regularly at the height of the Millerite movement.



ATLANTIC UNION COLLEGE

God's Unique Love



selected by R. Lynn Sauls

Love Song

by R. Lynn Sauls

God, I love you—this I know:
I didn't go to the picture show.
Came to this your house instead
To drink your wine and eat your bread.

Jesus, Jesus, up above,
You are the one I love.

Two, four, six, eight!
Who do I appreciate?
God the Father,
God the Son,
And God the Holy. . . .

BLAST THAT MRS. SPRATT.

CAN'T SEE THE PULPIT BECAUSE OF HER
HAT.

CAN'T HEAR THE PREACHER BECAUSE
OF HER BRAT.

. . . And God the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Love

by George Herbert

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here."
Love said, "You shall be he."

"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee."

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord, but I have marred them; let my
shame

Go where it doth deserve."

"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the
blame?"

"My dear, then I will serve."

"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my
meat."

So I did sit and eat.¹

All Times Are His Seasons

by John Donne

God made sun and moon to distinguish seasons,
and day and night,
and we cannot have the fruits of the earth
but in their seasons;
but God hath made no decree to distinguish the seasons
of his mercies;
in paradise the fruits were ripe the first minute,
and in heaven it is always autumn,
his mercies are ever at their maturity.
God never says, you should have come yesterday;
he never says, you must come again tomorrow,
but today if you will hear his voice,
today he will hear you.
He brought light out of darkness,
not out of lesser light;
he can bring thy summer out of winter,
though thou have no spring.
All occasions invite his mercies,
and all times are his seasons.²

¹ George Herbert, "Love (III)," *The Temple* (Cambridge: Thomas Buck and Roger Daniel, 1633), p. 183. Spelling and punctuation modernized by R. Lynn Sauls.

² From a sermon by John Donne, as quoted in Louis M. Savary, et al., ed., *Listen to Love* (New York: Regina Press, 1969), p. 347.

by Thomas A. Merrill

Notes

God is a creative Lover. He shares Himself in a kaleidoscope of ways. He shares Himself in a love that is always active and never passive, a love that is revealed in one wondrous act which reaches out to embrace all humanity.

I John 4:16 tells us that **"God is love."** This suggests that love is not something God merely possesses but that it is the very essence of His being. God does good for no other reason than the fact that He is good. His essence is love and because of this God could fathom no other alternative to the sin problem except to redeem fallen man by the sacrifice of Christ.

Love is the essence of God's being

"For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16; NIV). *Love is genuine only when it is in action.* God's love for sinners led Him to give all that He had for their salvation. Jesus took the risk of failure and eternal loss to save us because it is the essence of love to sacrifice self for others.

Genuine love is active

God's law also reveals His love. **"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"** Jesus replied: **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.** (Matthew 22:36-40; NIV). By nature men lack the love demanded by these commandments. But the good news is that this *command* to love is also a *promise*. No sooner are we "justified by faith" than God pours His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:1-5). God's act of justifying us teaches us how, and gives us the power, to love.

God's law: Love God and Love Men

But to love like God does must also include a gut-level emotional love. In Hosea 11:8 (NIV) He says, **"How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused."** This verse poignantly illustrates the fact that at this time God was experiencing great emotional turmoil. The holiness and righteousness of God demanded that unfaithful, unrepentant Ephraim must be punished. But God's disposition to love was still continuous and indestructible, constant and unending.

God's love is gut-level

Thankfully, God's unending love does not depend upon our ability to reciprocate. **"Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."** (Romans 5:7, 8; NIV).

God loves man—regardless

There was nothing in man to demand God's love. The love that God exercised toward us was not a response to any love we had for Him, for we were His enemies. **"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."** (I John 4:10; NIV). Christ's death for us was not an unwilling one. He deliberately and willingly gave His own life for our sake *because* He loved us. Consequently, we see in His cross the manifestation of a goodness which transcends all human standards.

Truly, God is love.

by editors

Notes

"'God is love' is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass.

"He Himself has declared His infinite love and pity. When Moses prayed, 'Show me Thy glory,' the Lord answered, 'I will make all My goodness pass before thee.' Exodus 33:18, 19. This is His glory. The Lord passed before Moses, and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.' Exodus 34:6, 7. He is 'slow to anger, and of great kindness,' 'because He delighteth in mercy.' Jonah 4:2; Micah 7:18."¹

This picture of God is pleasing, indeed. But it must somehow be reconciled with the God who, through Moses, commanded, "Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor." (Exodus 32:27; NIV). This was the Sinai conflict, where God's wrath was administered after His people had sculptured the golden calf and worshipped it.

The following passages in *Patriarchs and Prophets* seek to show that "God is love" is written even upon this Sinai experience.

"Love no less than justice demanded that for this sin judgment should be inflicted. God is the guardian as well as the sovereign of His people. He cuts off those who are determined upon rebellion, that they may not lead others to ruin. In sparing the life of Cain, God had demonstrated to the universe what would be the result of permitting sin to go unpunished. The influence exerted upon his descendants by his life and teaching led to the state of corruption that demanded the destruction of the whole world by a flood. . . . The longer men lived, the more corrupt they became.

"So with the apostasy at Sinai. Unless punishment had been speedily visited upon transgression, the same results would again have been seen. . . . It was the mercy of God that thousands should suffer, to prevent the necessity of visiting judgments upon millions. In order to save the many, He must punish the few. Furthermore, as the people had cast off their allegiance to God, they had forfeited the divine protection, and, deprived of their defense, the whole nation was exposed to the power of their enemies. Had not the evil been promptly put away, they would soon have fallen a prey to their numerous and powerful foes. It was necessary for the good of Israel, and also as a lesson to all succeeding generations, that crime should be promptly punished. And it was no less a mercy to the sinners themselves that they should be cut short in their evil course. Had their life been spared, the same spirit that led them to rebel against God would have been manifested in hatred and strife among themselves, and they would eventually have destroyed one another."²

In conclusion: "It was in love to the world, in love to Israel, and even to the transgressors, that crime was punished with swift and terrible severity."³ The God of judgment ever remains the God of love.

**"The Lord
God . . .
merciful."**

**"Each man
kill his
brother and
friend."**

**True love
must have
justice**

**God's
judgment
was necessary
for Israel,
later
generations
and the
sinners
themselves**

¹ Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 10.

² Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 325, 326.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

by Stephen A. Nyirady

Notes

What objects or conditions would you use to describe God's love?

If you are like many of us the first mental pictures to come into view would be beautiful flowers, majestic trees, lofty mountains, awe-inspiring waves, etc. For these things inspire many with a sense of the love of God. But I would like to suggest to you that God's love may also be seen amidst many of the *unpleasant* things we experience day by day.

A wise teacher once defined love to me as *ultimate concern for someone*. The more I have pondered that definition the more I have seen the validity of this perspective. When you consider the true qualities of love (I Corinthians 13) you will find that they revolve around a sincere concern for the quality of existence of another being.

**Love:
ultimate
concern
for
someone**

Consequently, at times the demands of love involve doing or experiencing things that are not the most aesthetically pleasurable. One may view pain in this manner. In fact, if seen in the proper perspective, one can even learn to appreciate pain as an evidence of the love and concern of God for His created beings. As uncomfortable and unbearable as pain may be, it enables us to survive in this sinful world where destructive conditions are ever present.

**Love may
bring the
unpleasant**

The case of Miss C., reported in the medical literature in 1950, illustrates this point. Miss C. was normal in every way except for one: she experienced no pain—ever. When scalded with hot water, poked, pinched or exposed to ice water she could identify the sensations of hot and cold and pressure but the sensations never became unpleasant for her. In fact, as a child she bit off the tip of her tongue without realizing it. Because of this inability to experience pain her health deteriorated rapidly as she matured. Her back and leg joints became severely inflamed simply because she did not know to shift her weight to relieve excessive pressures when standing. Despite continuous medical attention Miss C. died at the age of 29 from extensive infections and massive skin and bone destruction. Perhaps it could be concluded that Miss C. died because she felt no pain.

Miss C

Then, consider the unfortunate condition of lepers. The lack of fingers and toes is not a result of the bacteria eating away these body tissues but the result of self-mutilation *due to the local anesthesia* caused by the bacteria which destroy sensory nerves.

Leprosy

Pain is truly an evidence of God's provision for existence in a world of sin. But in this world pain often unfortunately goes to extremes and not only warns us of danger but at times makes existence miserable. Nevertheless, consider what life would be like without it and learn to see God's love and concern in pain and in other objects and conditions you may have overlooked before.

by Anderson Sandiford

Notes

"God is love."

I am sure that if you are like other students in our colleges you have heard this phrase at least ten times. Most likely, however, you have heard it ten thousand times. Perhaps it has become nothing more than a cliché—carrying little weight. But "God is love" is important—it is the most significant group of words in this galaxy.

The critical question then for us is, How can we transform this three-word concept into a vibrant, living statement we are able to daily experience?

1. Give God the chance to show Himself real. In truth and in fact this is what God has been trying to do since He created Adam and Eve. First, He spoke to them personally, face to face. Later He spoke through prophets, judges, priests, kings and the Old Testament scriptures. In His final, most daring *risk* to make Himself forever clear, He communicated in the Person of Jesus. *God became man to show us how we may experience God's love.*

2. STOP! That's right! Freeze in your tracks!

Now, take these next five minutes to think about and communicate with God. Start by kneeling down. Then ask God to prove Himself to you. No need to be afraid. He is willing to go to any length to reach you, even if you're the *only* one. I have found that God seems nearest to me when I feel as though I can't make it. In fact it is my very *need* that allows me to experience His love.

So go to Him in your need. Remember: "My God shall supply all my needs in Christ Jesus." Dare Him, but be prepared for the fulfillment of whatever you requested.

3. Share a friendship. This is more than having many friends whose first names you know. Take time out to befriend a lonely student or child (lonely students appreciate you more and children have a way of reflecting God's character and therefore His love). And be ready to accept God's love when it is offered to you.

4. Make a list. Keep a piece of paper handy to jot down a list of the ways God shows His love to you. Develop this list from your own experiences or from the experiences of other people. You will also want to keep a list of those Bible passages that talk of how God's love affects your life. (For example: *peace*: John 14:21; *joy*: John 16:24; *clothing*: Matthew 6:28, 29; *bread*: Matthew 6:26; *good grades*: James 1:5; *tuition fee*: Malachi 3:10; *eternal life*: John 3:36; *Himself*: John 1:1, 14; *glory*: John 17:22).

In conclusion let me summarize by saying that to experience God's love means to go where that love is most clearly revealed and to then bask in it. Seek to experience the love of God and you will find it wonderfully fulfilling when you search for it with all your heart.

by Lethiel C. Parson

Notes

Having been made in His image, man shares in God's essential attribute of love. God has not only provided us with His love, He has also endowed us with a need for love and with a capacity both to give and receive it.

Every individual was *created to share in this essential attribute*. God made man to share His character and glory. He did not make human beings because He was "lonely still,"¹ after creating the earth and its creatures. There was no selfish motive for creating man. Rather, as C. S. Lewis puts it, "in God there is no hunger that needs to be filled, only plenteousness that desired to give."² The God of love is One who desires the office of service.

"God is love and he that dwelleth in God dwelleth in love for God dwelleth in him." Our need, therefore, is to recognize, accept and effectively appropriate this reality. To *recognize* means to keep our eyes open for evidences of God's love. It means to appreciate cardinals and dandelions and mud daubers. To *accept* the reality of God's love means to willingly receive compliments and gifts and gratitude from others. To *appropriate* the reality of God's love may mean to wash a neighbor's car and pick up trash along the sidewalk. We must consider whether we believe this, whether we truly grasp the eternal reality of God's love.

But we must be careful of spiritual "navel-inspection." Focusing on our sinful nature causes us to draw back from the welcome of the God of love—to shrink back from His reaching out to us. And it is only as we see God as reaching out to and accepting us that we can reach out to and accept others.

In His ceaseless, active concern for our well-being—for "the quality of [our] existence," to use Dr. Nyirady's phrase—God sees the need for a variety of experiences in our lives, many of them unpleasant. But that is OK. We can trust the God of love. For it is only as we accept and dwell in His love—the pleasant and unpleasant aspects of love—that we can retain the ability to love when faced with a large hat in the pew ahead or the distraction of the fretful child.

Finally, let me make two suggestions. We need to study the Living Word with greater care each day. For it is only by the contemplation of God's love that we may understand and be conformed to the breadth and depth and height of God's love. Let us also submit to the Holy Spirit as He seeks to stimulate the fruit of divine love in each of our lives.

¹ Johnson, James Weldon, "The Creation"

² Lewis, C.S., *The Four Loves*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., © 1960.

Man was created to share in God's essential attribute of love

It is important to recognize, accept and appropriate God's love

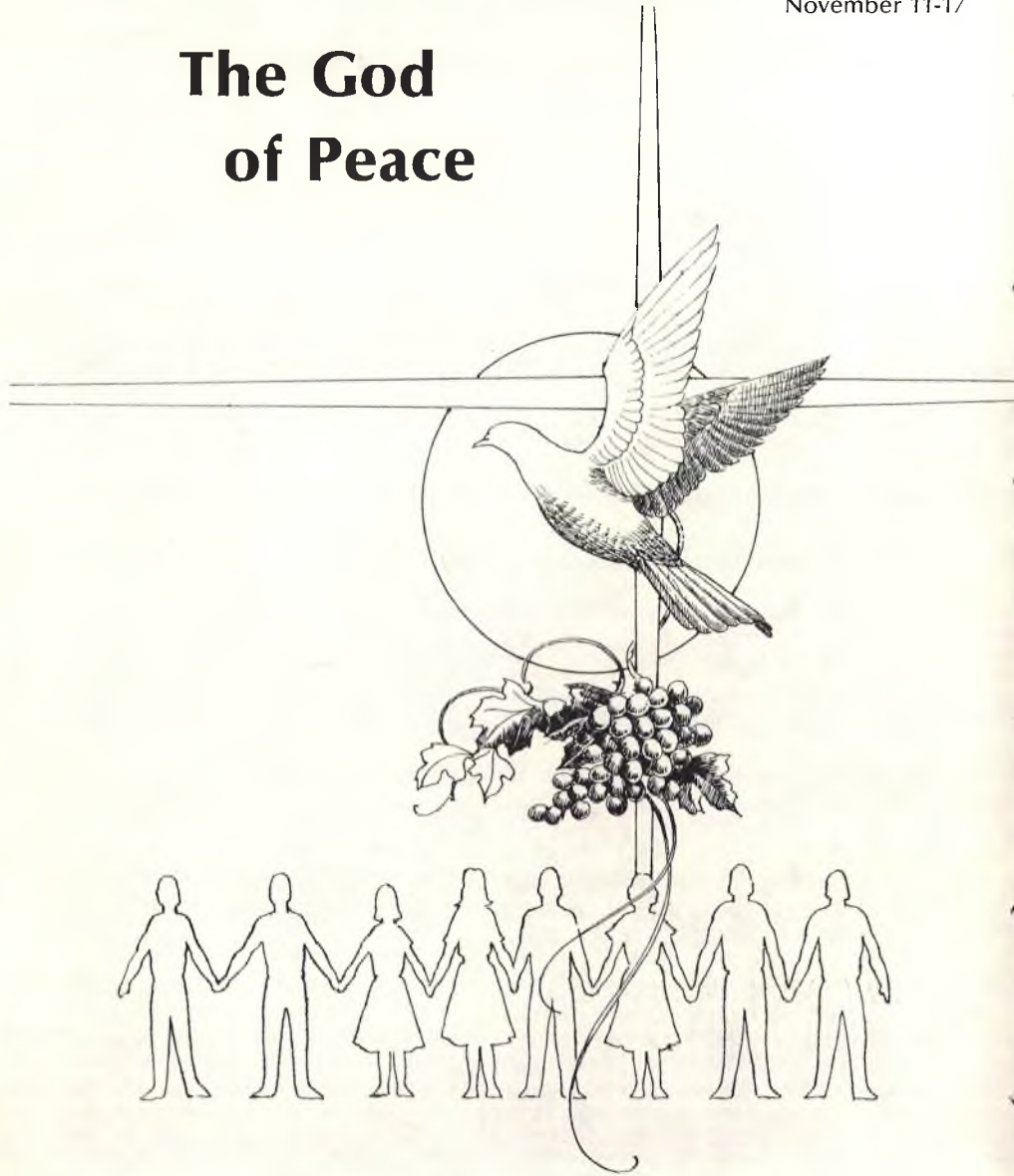
Beware of spiritual navel-inspection

Write a letter from God to you explaining His love for you.

Dear

Love,
God

The God of Peace



by James Segar

College is a lonesome place.

That is a strange description of a place where people are in every corner. But for a shy kid like I was, who couldn't make friends fast, it could be rough. I thought that kids who came to college from those strange schools called boarding academies had a good thing going for them—they had lots of friends already. "They don't need shy friends like me," I supposed.

I wasn't even friends with my roommate. He came and went as if I didn't exist. He was out of the room until late at night. He would sleep until after I had gone to work at the shop in the morning. Once I saw him on the sidewalk (I think it was him) and he said "Hi" as he hurried on his way.

To top it all off, the dean was saying, "Freshmen are not allowed to have cars on campus at Thames Union College. Cars distract from the main purpose of the college"—study. And girls, another distraction, might be attracted to those freshmen with cars! So, no cars!

Weird roommate. No car. Working thirty hours a week. Undecided as to a major. I wondered why I was even there. I figured I should have accepted the partnership a rancher-friend offered. He promised me that I could be part owner in land, buildings, herds and equipment in four years. "What will you have if you attend college for four years?" he asked.

Certainly not a girlfriend. She came to see me once. We walked around the campus about sixteen times but we could not be alone. I knew that if only I had a car I could see her on weekends.

Then things broke, even though I never intended to violate well-known

rules. You see, my brother knew of a former police car that cost only half of a month's wages. I bought it in his name and had my sister deliver it to me. I knew that if the dean found out I could be expelled. But I decided to brave it. I even took a load of kids home for Thanksgiving.

But Friday after Thanksgiving my pleasure was punctured. As I rounded an icy curve the momentum carried my car into a tree. My hopes and ambitions were wrapped unneatly but tightly around that solid oak.

A week later I got another car—a Chevy. This time I decided not to live in fear of the dean so I had my brother-in-law's name on the title. It was the ideal situation: He "lent" it to a sophomore and I "borrowed" it for special times.

Hey, that is OK. Nobody got hurt and it allowed me to be able to stick out that first lonesome year. I needed my friends and my home and those wheels helped me meet my needs. So why feel upset about it?

Later, as a teacher in one of those strange boarding academies, a strict interpretation of honesty caused me to break the story to those deceived college administrators. How did they react? Promptly I received a letter telling me of their full forgiveness and encouraging me to help other youth in such difficulties.

Unsuspected by the authorities, mine was the "perfect" crime. Known by God and me, however, my conscience was never clear. My own expert rationalization never allowed me peace. But now I'm happy, really happy. Now I rejoice, genuinely. At last I live in undisturbed peace with God and with my fellowmen.

by editors

Notes

"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:76-79).

God's people are messengers of peace. They are to cry out against sin, declare the means of salvation and ask for repentance, but all for the purpose of bringing peace to worrisome humans.

The message of the Bible has always been to bring peace to men. Peace is a word that encompasses the entire scope of Christian living. One can be at peace with the God of love only when he also loves. One can be at peace with the Holy One only when he too is holy. One can be at peace with the longsuffering, compassionate One only when he is the same. To experience God's peace is to be at rest with God. With peace, there is no other need.

As a "footnote" let me say that this is why Satan tries so hard to produce the many different synthetic types of peace. Since, "with peace, there is no other need," if the devil can get one hooked on artificial peace, then that person will have a difficult time realizing his great needs. Indeed, as an altered version of the saying goes, "money cannot buy peace." But sadly enough it can buy enough tranquilizers so that one will never know the difference—and never recognize his need.

Paul also speaks of peace in Romans 5:1-5: **"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."**

This passage says two things to me. The first is that we are at peace with God as contrasted with being at war against Him. Though, because of sin, we were at one time enemies of His, we are now, because of Christ's reconciliation, allies with God.

The second thought that strikes me from this passage is the idea that peace with God means we have security in all situations. We need never be threatened or intimidated when we are at peace with God. Isaiah echoed these feelings: **"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:3, 4).** Jesus promised, **"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).**

On the cross, Jesus suffered the troubling second death. He became the enemy of God that we might become God's allies. He became troubled that we might have peace. He suffered the second death that we might never worry again.

"My peace I give unto you."

Peace encompasses the entire scope of Christian living

With peace there is no other need

Peace with God means security in all situations

Peace is being allied with God

selected by Nancy Eisnor

Notes

"Human plans for the purification and uplifting of individuals or of society will fail of producing peace, because they do not reach the heart. The only power that can create or perpetuate true peace is the grace of Christ. When this is implanted in the heart, it will cast out the evil passions that cause strife and dissension."¹

"There are many whose hearts are aching under a load of care because they seek to reach the world's standard. They have chosen its service, accepted its perplexities, adopted its customs. Thus their character is marred and their life made a weariness. In order to gratify ambition and worldly desires, they wound the conscience and bring upon themselves an additional burden of remorse. The continual worry is wearing out the life forces. Our Lord desires them to lay aside this yoke of bondage. He invites them to accept His yoke; He says, 'My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.' He bids them seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and His promise is that all things needful to them for this life shall be added. Worry is blind and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet . . .

"In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage. But many who profess to be His followers have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God. They do not make a complete surrender to Him; for they shrink from the consequences that such a surrender may involve."²

"Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest. The Lord says, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.' Isa. 26:3. Our lives may seem a tangle; but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master Worker, He will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to His own glory . . .

"As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here. We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal. Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ. The longer we are in the heaven of bliss, the more and still more of glory will be opened to us; and the more we know of God, the more intense will be our happiness."³

¹ *Desire of Ages*, p. 305.

² *Ibid.*, p. 330.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

by editors

Notes

“What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?”

“Let wars come—the Lord will get here more quickly that way.”

Peace with God is action

“What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” So asked Tertullian, the Christian writer from North Africa who lived from 160-220 A.D.

By “Athens” he meant the world and by “Jerusalem” he meant the church. And so he expressed the feelings of Christians from the earliest times to the present: “What has the world to do with the church?” To this question Christianity has had a difficult time supplying a satisfactory answer.

The objective for this lesson states: “To show that God’s act of redeeming the sinner brings that person peace with God and with his fellowmen.”

But are we truly at peace with God? Can a person be at peace with God and be indifferent to the sufferings of God’s children? Can a person be at peace with God and not be eager to improve the condition of humankind?

I will never forget the reaction of many brothers in Christ to the news of the signing of the Mid-East Peace Agreement: “It will never last.” “Why are they wasting their time?” “Let the wars go ahead and happen—the Lord will come sooner that way.” I was brought up with the idea that Christians were to be hopeful, optimistic people—desiring and working for the very best of society—not pessimists. While it is true that sudden destruction is to come at a time when men are saying, “Peace, peace,” it is the Christian’s duty to hope and pray for peace and safety rather than for the destruction of their fellow humans. Remember the words of the angels: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). Those who are at peace with God will hope for peace for their fellowmen.

The exclusive “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem” statement is also exemplified in the attitude many Christians have towards suffering humanity.

At times I have been in attendance at a church where hundreds of thousands of dollars were collected for the building of a marvelous new sanctuary—where little was collected for orphan relief in Pakistan.

Peace with God is more than a satisfied feeling in the stomach—it is *action*. Those who are at peace with God will recognize their brothers and sisters as those starving on the other side of the globe—with both spiritual and physical starvation. Those who are at peace with God will work to feed their brothers and sisters regardless of the cost. Feeding your family is never a sacrifice.

As Christians we have everything to do with the world Christ redeemed with His blood. We must be concerned with war and farmland and bread and houses and evangelism if we are at peace with God and with our fellowmen.

compiled by editors

Notes

Our God has provided that each one who receives Christ and obeys the Holy Spirit will experience a peace and contentment beyond imagination. But when your food bill is too high, your roommate is messy or you are having difficulty falling asleep, peace is no reality.

Dr. Virginia Simmons, a professor of psychology at Union College, writes a regular advice column in the campus' spiritual life magazine, *Live*. We have reprinted some of her suggestions below as "how to" steps for finding a practical kind of peace.

Dear Virginia,

For over a week now I have hardly been able to sleep at all. I lie awake at night and don't fall asleep until a few hours before I have to get up. Nothing I do seems to help. This is literally killing me. Any new ideas?

Sleepy Head**Dear Sleepy Head,**

Don't wait until you're in bed to plan for sleep. Begin early in the day. Be sure you get some vigorous outdoor exercise, daily. Keep up on your commitments so you don't end the day with lots of pressures and worries. Check your schedule; perhaps you'll need to lighten it to remove pressure. Don't study right up until bedtime. Read something lighter, visit with your friends or, best of all, try a period of private devotions at this time.

Dear Virginia,

I am taking 18 hours of classes, and I am swamped with homework. But I just can't force myself to study. How can I motivate myself to study?

Run Around Sue**Dear Run Around Sue,**

It sounds like you're using a common defense mechanism. You've taken on an awfully large load, and you might not do as well as you want to do. So by doing nothing you've created an acceptable reason for failure. You can always say to yourself, "I would have gotten all A's if I had just studied."

Make yourself a reasonable schedule, allowing time for relaxation, recreation and daily devotions. Recognize that you're responsible for your own behavior and get with it!

Dear Virginia,

Why don't these guys get on the ball? I mean really—I have done homework (boo! hiss!) for the last four Saturday nights! This arrangement is totally UNSatisfactory! I am not a real snob or Miss Ugly Duckling either. I would most definitely appreciate it if gentlemen who have expressed a positive interest in me would DO something about it. In the meantime, what should I do?—Take the Miss Aggressive U.S.A. role?

A Lady in Waiting**Dear Lady in Waiting,**

Assume the role which fits you best. If that's Miss Aggressive U.S.A.—go to it!

by Donna Rubano

Notes

Mike professed Christianity and had no doubt in his mind that God existed. As a matter of fact he had been trying to lead his wife to a belief in God for some time. He had hoped she would become a Christian soon. Recently, however, Mike overdosed on a combination of amonia and aspirin because, the note read "I cannot seem to cope with my lifestyle."

"I cannot cope."

On a less dramatic, but more familiar note, how many times have the words, "I am *not* going to worry about it" been uttered? Whether it be in regard to entering a certain career, meeting a future mate, finding a summer job or whatever, I dare to believe that most if not all of us have experienced the inner turmoil that such a statement suggests.

"I am not going to worry about it."

Both of the situations in these stories have one basic point in common: they develop from a lack of peace. And lacking peace is not unfamiliar to our frequently frenzied lives. At times it seems that peace is an impossibility in spite of what the Master had to say: "My peace I give unto you . . ." (John 14:27). This gift of peace constitutes the last legacy Christ bequeathed to His followers. His peace is a vital element of the Christian character. Our God has provided for those who follow Him heavenly peace.

But what about Mike—in the story? He declared himself to be a follower of Christ but certainly found little peace.

I have found only one answer to this dilemma. It is in the words of Christ: "Learn of me . . . and ye shall find rest" (Matt. 11:29). Christ is not only the Author but the Perpetuator of peace. Only God can offer this gift to man and only God can nurture and develop it. Peace blossoms only where a relationship with God grows. And that is precisely the point: *Peace is a gift proportionate to faith and trust in Christ.* Only by daily walking with the risen Savior can we find this long sought-after rest. By studying His character, communing with Him, and thereby seeing fit to trust Him we can live peacefully.

Peace blossoms where a relationship with God grow

As both of the stories mentioned at the beginning of this article indicate, it is not enough to know about God and to believe that He exists. Peace comes when we ask God each day for guidance, when we follow Him and when we depend on His power. Perfect peace rests on a complete trust in God's love and care, and this trust is developed by knowing Him.

YOU'RE NEXT

1. The *Evidence* article for this week stated that *one cannot be at peace with God and be indifferent to the sufferings of humanity*. So are we truly at peace with God?

Can a person be at peace with God and:

Yes / No

Yes / No

___ ___ drive a sports car

___ ___ not be concerned about ecology

___ ___ feel rejected

___ ___ be a U.S. Congressman

___ ___ live in solitude

___ ___ go to war

___ ___ not read the Bible

___ ___ drink alcohol

___ ___ hate

___ ___ not support secular charitable organizations

___ ___ join the army

___ ___ live in a city

___ ___ not be denominationally employed

___ ___ be hated by one's parents

___ ___ go through depression

___ ___ experience someone's death

___ ___ fail

___ ___ worry

___ ___ not go to church

___ ___ not have the assurance of salvation

2. Explain the statement of Paul, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (Phil. 3:10; NIV). What is the relationship between *peace* and *suffering*?

The Counselor



by editors

When was the last time you wanted to chuck the whole works?

It was yesterday for me.

I don't know what was wrong. I guess things really went OK; but I had that "blah" feeling. I just wanted to forget I had anything to do with anything. I wanted to retreat from college and family and friends and from work on this Sabbath School quarterly, crawl into a cave up near Mt. Meeker in Colorado and . . .

Well, that's why I never did it—I couldn't figure out what to do once I was up on Mt. Meeker.

But I'm doing fine. That little period of depression is over—for now. Another one will come later on and I'll feel like "hermitizing" again but then I'll snap right out of it.

But some people won't.

Some people—your friends and my friends—will go through a depression something like mine. Only, when they can't decide what to do as a hermit on Mt. Meeker, they will choose to jump off the dormitory roof.

Why? Because they're angry. Angry at society, angry at those closest to them and angry with themselves.

Now, I do not consider myself suicidal. I get a little depressed at times, like I described above, but it's a quick, come-and-go type of thing; and it's shallow—doesn't really affect me much.

But I have wondered, Could I—sometime—*really* be affected? Could I become suicidal? The thought shakes me up a little. I can't imagine myself jumping off a building. But on the other hand, I haven't been able to imagine myself doing any number of things I have suddenly been caught doing.

Oh, well, enough of that. On the positive side of things I know that I need friends. Immerse me in friendship and I'm sailing at 50 knots. For me, my friends are my counselors. They are people I can open up to and know that they will "handle with care." I don't have to cautiously weigh each word against their feelings; I know that they will nourish the good and sift away the bad that they see in me. My friends are people who, when I have a problem, will counsel with me; but they counsel with the single purpose of directing me to the Great Counselor.

And that's where the help really comes. Though it is great to have fellow humans to talk things over with, there is nothing in this galaxy that compares with *the* Counselor. He is a Person who is constantly there—even though my behavior may suggest that I don't want Him. I know that I am OK in His eyes. I know from experience that He *does* have a thousand ways to work out every problem and *will* give me wisdom and *will* guide me in the way I should go. I need the type of counselor He is.

Could I become suicidal? I guess that's a possibility for anyone. But I don't think it will happen to me. You see, good friends are in most cases the next-to-the-best counselors you could have. And you know who the best Counselor is.

When I get depressed again, I'll become immersed in friends and in God, and I know from experience that together, they will lift me out.

by Ronald Knott

Notes

When the institution of the family is working as it should, the place the children will go first for advice and counsel is to their parents. It is the same with the family of God.

As our Creator, God is our Father. As our Father, He is the best and surest source of advice and counsel that can be found. There can be no better source of wisdom and counsel in the universe because God is the origin of thought. Isaiah 40:13, 14 implies this very concept in the rhetorical questions that are asked: **"Who has understood the Spirit of the Lord, or instructed him as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?"** (NIV).

 Who has
 instructed God?

In wisdom, knowledge and understanding there is none before God, and the counsel He has to give is unchangeable: **"The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations"** (Psalm 33:11).

 God's
 counsel is
 sure

Solomon offers his advice: **"My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight"** (Prov. 3:1-6; NIV).

Not only is God the source of all wisdom, understanding and counsel, but He is waiting—longing—for us to come to Him to receive it. Most of the counsel God has given to man is to *know* Him, *understand* Him, *revere* Him and *ask* Him. **"Be still, and know that I am God"** (Psalm 46:10). **"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"** (Matthew 11:28; NIV). **"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink"** (John 7:37). **"Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth"** (Jer. 9:23, 24; NIV).

 God's
 counsel is
 to know,
 understand,
 reverence
 and ask
 Him

The most direct advice for what we should do when we need wisdom or counsel is found in James 1:5. **"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him"** (NIV).

The simple prayer of faith can bring all of heaven's resources for guidance and direction to us from our Wonderful Counselor.

by Lavern Bentt

Notes

Because of His infinite love, God offers counsel to all who look to Him. He is a Counselor with more than human resources and is more than willing to offer His guidance and instruction. Consider the "thought blocks" below concerning our Wonderful Counselor.

Counselor of Love

"The Lord declares by the prophet, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.' While the sinner is yet far from his Father's house, . . . the Father's heart is yearning over him, and every longing awakened in the soul to return to God is but the tender pleading of His Spirit, wooing, entreating, drawing the wanderer to his Father's heart of love."¹

Willing Counselor

"It is to the thirsting soul that the fountain of living waters is open. God declares, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.' To souls that are earnestly seeking for light, and that accept with gladness every ray of divine illumination from his holy Word,—to such alone light will be given. It is through these souls that God will reveal that light and power which will lighten the whole earth with his glory."²

Importance of Seeking God's Counsel Above Man's

"When in trouble many think they must appeal to some earthly friend, telling him their perplexities, and begging for help. Under trying circumstances unbelief fills their hearts, and the way seems dark. And all the time there stands beside them the Mighty Counselor of the ages, inviting them to place their confidence in Him. Jesus, the Great Burden Bearer, is saying, 'Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.' Shall we turn from Him to uncertain human beings who are as dependent upon God as we ourselves are?"³

"God cannot glorify His name through His people while they are leaning upon man, and making flesh their arm. Their present state of weakness will continue until Christ alone shall be exalted . . ."⁴

God's Special Counsel for the Last Days

"Will you heed the counsel of the True Witness, to seek the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eyesalve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the eye salve is spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it."⁵

Results of Continual Rejection of Serious Counsel

"The oftener the Lord speaks to correct or counsel and you disregard His voice, the more disposed will you be to reject it again and again till God says, 'Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof . . . therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices!'"⁶

Results of Obeying God's Counsel

"Safety and peace and calm assurance are to be found only by following the counsel of the greatest Teacher that ever lived in our world. Let us not turn away from His unerring counsel."⁷

¹ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 632.

² *Ibid.*, p. 729.

³ *Ministry of Healing*, p. 512.

⁴ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 729.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁷ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 502.

by Bill Knott

Notes

Scholarly journals and supermarket tabloids today herald new counseling techniques designed to help men and women cope with the tensions of life in this advanced industrial society. Marriage counseling, career counseling, diet counseling, sex counseling, family counseling—each has become a recognized division of the blossoming field of behavioral science.

Twentieth century man appears to have discovered that the highly individualistic ideas he inherited from previous generations can no longer be maintained in an age that has arrived at a "global consciousness." For good or ill, men and women are discovering that they must of necessity look outside themselves for strength, advice and reassurance.

With a keen awareness of his own limited abilities and lack of education, the Christian layman may feel that his contributions to the mental and social well-being of his peers can be minimal at best. But a growing number of Christian authors are encouraging their readers to practice what must be seen as "counseling" techniques, though they do not claim such a title for these methods.

Among these authors is Bruce Larson, whose book, *No Longer Strangers* is one of the significant statements of what is also being termed "relational theology." The twin principles of Larson's theory of constructive Christian aid are *affirmation* and *vulnerability*. By affirmation, Larson means recognizing the potential in others and calling it into being by constant and supportive communication. "Our task," he writes, ". . . is to live out a style of life that will allow people to discover their worth, their strengths, and their uniqueness, and to communicate how much God intends to do with them and for them."¹

Larson's concept of vulnerability encourages Christians who seek to help their peers to first be open and honest about themselves, to "lead from weakness,"² as he puts it. When Christians are mature enough to quit pretending that they are immune to temptation and weakness, they are then in a position to offer the greatest help to their fellowmen.

Larson finds ample justification for his approach to Christian counseling in the life and ministry of Jesus: if any man ever lived to affirm the God-given potential of men and call it into being, it was Christ; if any man ever made himself vulnerable and weak for the purpose of strengthening his brethren, it was Christ.

This counseling method of affirmation and vulnerability is accessible to every son and daughter of God, professional or layman. Its use in the modern world will be no less "wonderful" than when it was used by Christ, because the same Spirit lives in each believing heart.

Relational theology: affirmation and vulnerability

Affirmation: recognizing potential and helping it develop

Vulnerability: quit pretending

¹ Bruce Larson, *No Longer Strangers* (Word Books, 1976) p. 58

² *Ibid*, p. 137

by Susan M. Willoughby

Notes

Whenever one contemplates counseling it is because he recognizes that a problem exists. In times of stress most individuals turn to someone who is significant in their lives. That problems occur at all implies that the effects of sin, probably in the form of temptation, are laying hold on a child of God. But the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

This "way to escape" comes in many forms, but the process of escape is basically the same for everyone.

1. First is the recognition that a problem does exist. ("Yes, I do get depressed.")

2. Second is the acceptance of the fact that Jesus has made a way of escape possible. This "escape hatch" is through God the Father who is all powerful and who has more than human resources available at His command.

3. Third is the trust in God. In Matthew 7:8-11 we are reminded that if we ask our earthly father for bread he will not give us a stone; if we ask for a fish he will not give us a serpent. So shouldn't we then trust our Heavenly Father to solve our problems and open "unopenable" doors? For counseling to be effective, *trust* is a necessary ingredient.

4. Fourth is understanding the kinds of provisions for counsel that God has made. I have listed three below:

a. Parents: Your age does not preclude you from seeking counsel from your earthly parents. It is too bad that godly experience is so often cast aside. Your parents may know you better than you know yourself.

b. The Church Pastor: Here is another source that should be utilized when counsel is needed. The pastor should function as the family physician who recognizes the kinds of problems that exist, is aware of the various professionals available and is therefore able to use the referral system to obtain the necessary assistance.

c. The Church Counselor/Social Worker: The church counselor/social worker is another person you could counsel with. (It may be that the only one in your area functions on the Conference or Union level.) This individual will be fully aware of the referral system in his field and should be able to give you counsel and direction.

Be not confused: All problems are not spiritual or physical. There are many social and psychological problems which must be dealt with. Learn to recognize when you have a problem, accept the promise that God will make a way to escape, develop your trust in Him and use the avenues which God has provided for human contact here on earth.

"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14).

by Rick Trott

Notes

Susan Willoughby has suggested some primary support persons to whom we might turn in times of difficulty—persons who are significant in our lives. But while Christian doctrine places our heavenly Father as the most significant Someone for the Christian, many find that one of the biggest hindrances to seeking His counsel is an embarrassing lack of time with Him. It seems that if one is not listening regularly for His counsel on lesser issues it is difficult to distinguish His voice when life's real emergencies arise.

God rarely raises His voice

Another problem even for seasoned Christians seems to be the lack of understanding as to *how* one goes about "hearing" His counsel.

Both of these hindrances to recognizing God as a Wonderful Counselor can be overcome daily through Christ and relying upon His promises. He reminds us that He will never turn away anyone who comes to Him (John 6:37) and He invites us to boldly ask for heavenly counsel even when (and especially when) we've not been all that close to heaven.

If you know Him you will know His ways

Ron Knott pointed to the Scriptural *how to* for "hearing" this counsel: "Be still and know . . ." (Psalm 46:10). That is, taking time to be silent, alone with God, listening to His Word. It is my belief that many *want* to know God's will but that few *follow* these biblical guidelines with much consistency. Nevertheless, God stands ready to "speak" to us when we're ready to listen.

We counsel with our best friends first

We usually seek counsel first from those in whom we have the most confidence. Daily living with Him, with its opportunities to grow in trusting friendship, will make itself evident in our willingness to turn to Him *first* in crises. God invites us to make Him the most significant person in our lives: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God . . ." (Matthew 6:33). Before discouragement and frustration are allowed to fester we are to seek Him, tell Him the problem and ask for His wisdom. Then we are to praise Him in all things, giving thanks for this new opportunity to know His omniscient counsel.

And those of us who find others turning to us for counsel have the joy of leading them to *Him* for counsel. But whether we are parent, friend, spouse, pastor, teacher or counselor we won't be able to help others lean on Him unless we have personally found Christ a wonderful Counselor and Guide day by day.

The issue involved with knowing God's will is relationship

For me, the issue here clearly centers upon the individual's relationship with the Heavenly Father. This relationship is a daily experience—like getting out of bed, drinking water regularly, eating well, exercising and resting. And it takes practice and discipline—like learning any job skill, becoming proficient in any sport, picking up a new language, even like getting acquainted with a new friend. To recognize that God is a Counselor with more than human resources to guide and instruct might well be the most important thing we do each day—our number one priority.

And remember: All heaven stands ready to give us power to follow through on that daily choice to seek Him as the Wonderful Counselor.

by Doug Morgan

As a graduating nursing student, Jill was in the fortunate position of not having to worry about whether or not she could find employment. Her problem was the opposite—how to decide between a variety of options.

She had planned to work in a hospital in the large city where her home was, but now a physician friend of her parents was urging her to work for him at a small, isolated, Adventist-owned clinic that served mainly Indians from a nearby reservation. Another attractive alternative was to enter a master's program at the state university and pursue a teaching career.

Jill wanted to do God's will, but she was having a difficult time deciding. Working in her home city had the advantages of being around friends with a large Adventist community, cultural and recreational opportunities, and good wages. On the other hand, if she went to the small clinic—miles from anywhere—she would be filling a desperate need and would have the sense of doing something special for God.

But wouldn't it really be emotional and psychological masochism to isolate herself from opportunities for social life? Besides, God could use her in the city as well. And what about the third alternative? Wouldn't God want her to take advantage of every possible opportunity to improve her education? How could she find the answers to these questions?

I would like to suggest that the answers lie a combination of two concepts. One is the familiar idea that God has a plan for your life and He will reveal it to you. The other is that, to a large extent, He leaves us with the responsibility of creating the specific form that the plan takes. I don't believe there are any "magic formulas" for discovering God's will, but the following four points may help to get going into focus the way in which God's guidance can be realized in our lives.

1. Biblical promises that God will guide and direct our lives abound, and every individual Christian should accept these promises as pertaining to himself. Try Psalm 32:8, Proverbs 3:6, Isaiah 58:11, John 8:12, and James 1:5 for starters. Receiving the benefits of these promises, however, is conditional on our willingness to accept the direction God gives us. Jesus promises the "light of life" to guide us, but it is only as we follow Him that we have that light (John 8:12). Ellen White expresses the relationship between condition and promise beautifully in these words: "Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just

what course to pursue" (*Desire of Ages*, p. 668.). The starting point then, in seeking God's guidance, is to believe that He will indeed guide us as He has promised, and to be willing to follow His revealed will for our lives.

2. In a letter full of loving concern for a young man struggling to decide what is most important in life, Ellen White wrote that there are three ways in which God guides us:

- a. Through the Holy Scriptures,
- b. Through providential workings,
- c. Through mental impressions made by the Holy Spirit.

(The entire letter has been published in *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, pp. 508-16).

To be guided by God, we need to be in touch with these three channels through which direction comes. Studying the Bible gives us the underlying principles of right and truth by which every decision needs to be evaluated. "Providential workings" and "impressions made upon the heart" by the Holy Spirit will be either unnoticed or unreceived unless we spend time communicating with God in prayer.

It cannot be overemphasized that the Bible is the primary and normative channel through which God reveals His will. We can't go wrong following its principles. And God never uses providential workings or impressions to lead us contrary to the Scriptures.

3. After getting all the input possible from the channels through which God guides, we have the privilege and responsibility of using the reasoning ability He has created us with to make the final decisions ourselves. Part of being in the image of God is being creative in our sphere as He is creative in His. And He does not take that creative prerogative away from us when it comes to shaping our own lives. God made the animals, and He could easily have named them too; but instead He left it to Adam to name the birds and animals, thus reflecting the divine image by completing the creative act that God initiated.

In the Scriptures, we are given the basic guidelines for decision-making, and at certain times God gives special direction through circumstances or powerful impressions. But within the context of committed discipleship, we have the exciting challenge of deciding for ourselves just exactly how God's plan will be worked out in our lives.

We have a natural tendency to desire the assurance that a "sign" or a dramatic turn of events can give to a difficult decision. But God doesn't always work that way. In most cases He wants us to think the issue through for ourselves, make a firm, responsible decision, and act upon it.

4. Although God often puts the ball squarely in our court when it comes to decision-making, the good news for us is that we don't have to be anxious or uptight about whether we're going to completely botch up our lives by making wrong decisions.

Sometimes, we sincerely make wrong decisions; sometimes, in weak moments, we simply make decisions that deep down we know are bad. But, returning to the metaphor, though we may have to suffer the bitter consequences of hitting the ball in the wrong direction, as long as we trust in God and He is first in our lives, we never have to worry about the final outcome of the game. Everything that happens to us is not good, but, "we know that by turning everything to their good, God cooperates with those who love him" (Romans 8:28; *Jerusalem Bible*). Trust in that kind of a God takes all the anxiety out of decision-making.

So what should Jill do? Only she can decide. She receives basic directions and guidelines from God by communicating with Him through Bible study and prayer. But since He gave her the power to "think and to do," it's really up to her just exactly what the picture of her life in Christ is going to look like. And the exciting thing for her and for us is that, though working together with God to paint the picture of our lives isn't always fun and games, it's the most satisfying way to live. And when the picture finally is done, it's going to be really beautiful.

YOU'RE NEXT

1. List three kinds of problems God expects us to solve with Him alone.

2. Explain: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2)

3. List three kinds of problems God expects us to bring to Him before going to others.

4. Name the person you most heavily rely upon for counsel.

What would happen if you no longer had this person to counsel with?





There is sunshine in our soul

Loma Linda University's

La Sierra Campus

FOUNDED: 1905; chartered
as College of Medical
Evangelists 1909

LOCATION: Riverside,
California

CHAPLAIN:
David Osborn

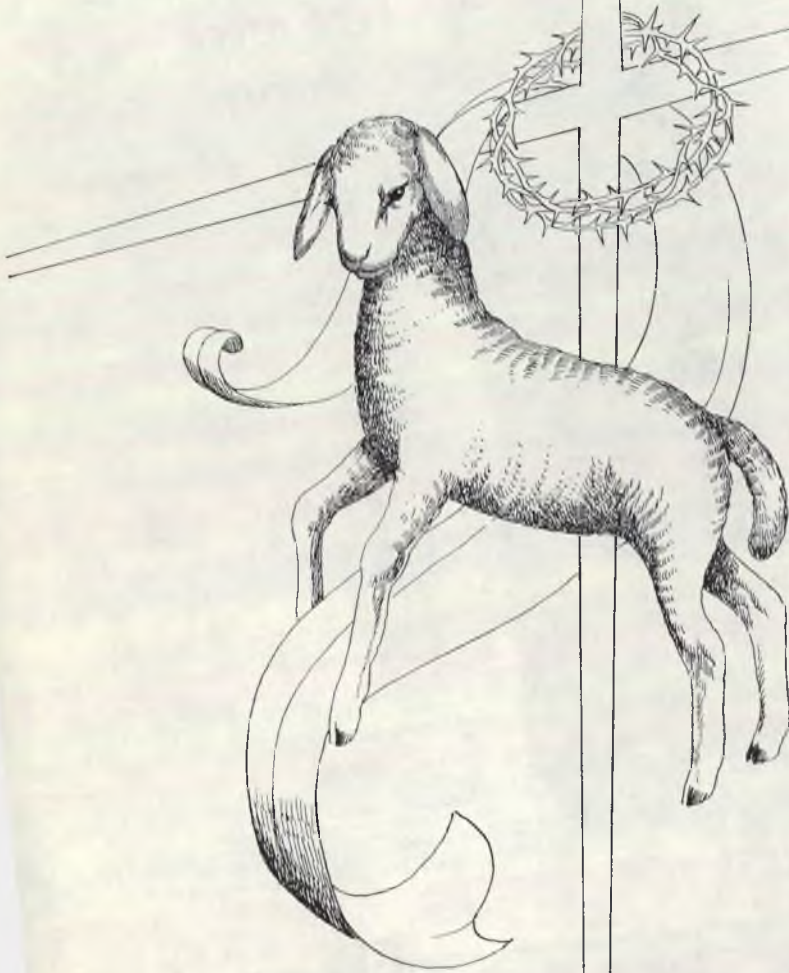
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LESSON 9
November 25-December 1



God's Lamb

by Maylan Schurch

Let's be honest. Are you really drawn by Christ? (Don't give me the stock response: a quick mental review of Christ's death on the cross, a weak spasm of sorrow, and a nod of the head.) Do you really feel a *drawing* from Christ?

Maybe you do.

Maybe you do, once in a while, after a good sermon or tape.

Maybe you don't.

Well, whatever your answer is, this lesson is designed to try to show you how to experience more of this drawing—through a knowledge of the Man who, according to the Bible, "draw(s) all men unto Me."

Shelley is my wife of one and a half years. She grew up in Juneau, Alaska, and up there they don't have many farms—at least not the way they do in the lower 48. They don't have many sheep, for one thing, and Shelley—even though she graduated from college and became a church school teacher—had never seen a real live sheep when she met me.

So, the first chance I got, I drove Shelley out to the prairies, and together we searched for sheep. She looked in the right-hand pastures and I looked in the left-hand ones.

I saw one first—anyway, I knew what to look for. It was an old gray mother sheep out in the middle of a large barnyard. We stopped the car, got out, crossed a fence—and suddenly Shelley gripped my arm.

"Oh, I'm scared," she said. "Look at it. What's it going to do?"

I looked at her in absolute astonishment. Shelley's a grown woman—and a teacher—and she's not given to childishness in the least.

"Why, that's just an old sheep," I said, "It can't hurt you!"

Nevertheless, she still clutched my arm as we walked closer. She stared at the old ewe in fascination and fear. Once it turned its head, and she shrank behind me. In Alaska, Shelley had seen sharks and whales and bears—all in their natural habitat—and here she was, scared of an old South Dakota sheep.

"How come you're scared?" I asked. "You're not worried about the wilder forms of animal life like you seem to be about this one."

"I *know* bears: I know what they're like," she answered. "I'm used to them."

Are you scared of Christ? Do you worry that He's somebody who's always shaking a mental finger at you and uttering mental "No-no's" at everything you do? If so, you aren't being drawn by Him, that's for certain. And if you aren't being drawn by Him, it's because you haven't seen His true character—just as Shelley had never seen how wholly harmless a sheep can be.

Come on. Stop your car. Get out and cross the fence of convention, travel across the pasture, and—through the help of this lesson—become acquainted with the Lamb of God.

by Kurt Bower

Notes

The word flashes across the universe—rebellion has broken out!

Up and down the vast corridors of space beings are trying to find out just what happened to cause this new young race to rebel against their Creator. Uppermost in their minds is the question, How will the Creator react to this outrage? In the air of expectancy a sense of despair pervades through the heavens.

God Himself is silent . . . about to unfold the boldest and most bizarre plan ever conceived.

But remaining silent no longer, He speaks. The rebels are to be . . . forgiven.

"Forgiven!" the surrounding host exclaims. "But how?"

God's heart-rending cry for His creatures in rebellion is heard in His plea to Israel, **"How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? . . . My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. I will not carry out my fierce anger . . . For I am God, and not man . . ."** (Hosea 11:8,9; NIV).

Yes, God is not man; it is in His nature to be **"compassionate and gracious . . . slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin . . ."** (Exodus 34:6,7; NIV). Nevertheless, it was necessary that a price be paid for man's rebellion, **"for the wages of sin is death"** (Romans 6:23).

God's solution to man's rebellion is expressed in the words of Abraham, **"God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering"** (Genesis 22:8).

God's love for fallen man is stronger than His hatred of sin. It was only by sacrificing Himself that God was able to free man and restore him to His fellowship. **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, . . . led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, . . . that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"** (John 3:16 and Isaiah 53:7; NIV). Yes, this is **"the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world"** (John 1:29; NIV).

Man is helpless when separated from God: without hope and without love. But God has reached out to man and provided Himself as the Lamb—as the sacrifice to pay for the rebellion of the human race. Only in this way can man be reconciled to God . . . who **"reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation"** (II Cor. 5:18, 19; NIV).

Harmony between God and man has been restored through Christ's reconciliatory death. When man trusts God—believes in Him as his Redeemer—Christ's life of perfection supplants his own before God's law. **"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand"** (Romans 5:1,2; NIV).

God's children will be victorious, but only through the grace of Jesus Christ. **". . . they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb"** (Rev. 12:11).

God loves you
more than He
loves Himself

TESTIMONY Of War . . . Sorrow . . . and Victory

by Edwin Karlow

Notes

Before the beginning . . .

Before the beginning ". . . there was war in heaven. The Son of God, the Prince of heaven, and His loyal angels engaged in conflict with the archrebel . . . The Son of God and true, loyal angels prevailed; and Satan and his sympathizers were expelled from heaven. . . . Their loss was felt in heaven."

Man had not yet been created. But now with this crisis in heaven "The Father consulted His Son in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth."² They decided to create humans as "free moral agents."³ They "did not see fit to place them beyond the power of disobedience."⁴

But unfortunately "Our first parents chose to believe the words, as they thought, of a serpent."⁵ "Sorrow filled heaven, as it was realized that man was lost and that world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death. . . . The whole family of Adam must die. I saw the lovely Jesus and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon His countenance. Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, He is in close converse with His Father. The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father. Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came out from the Father, His person could be seen. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and doubt, and shone with benevolence and loveliness, such as words cannot express.

"He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that He had been pleading with His Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom, to take the sentence of death upon Himself, that through Him man might find pardon . . ."⁶

A few thousand years later . . .

A few thousand years later "Christ was now standing in a different attitude from that in which He had ever stood before."⁷ This was Gethsemane. "As the substitute and surety for sinful man, Christ was suffering under divine justice. He saw what justice meant."⁸ "The sins of men weighed heavily upon Christ, and the sense of God's wrath against sin was crushing out His life."⁹

"O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me."¹⁰ "The fate of humanity trembled in the balance . . . He might wipe the bloody sweat from His brow, and leave man to perish in his iniquity . . . 'O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.'

"Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world's Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself."¹¹

¹ *The Story of Redemption*, p. 19. ⁷ *Desire of Ages*, p. 686.
² *Ibid.* ⁸ *Ibid.*
³ *Ibid.*, p. 37. ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 687.
⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 690, 693.
⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

Edwin Karlow is chairman and an associate professor in the physics department at the La Sierra campus of Loma Linda University.

by Brad Richardson

Notes

F. Scott Fitzgerald said it nicely as he began *The Great Gatsby*: "In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

" 'Whenever you feel like criticizing any one,' he told me, 'just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had.' "

". . . In consequence, I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores. . . . I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that . . . a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth."

". . . When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart."¹

These passages from the beginning of *The Great Gatsby* set up both a problem and a solution that we find almost every day. We know what we want the world to be and how we want the people in it to behave. Our own theology is flawless and our own moral standards impeccable. So when we come across anyone who does not fit into our expectations it is easy for him to become a victim of our censure. But the solution to this is suggested in the passage above: reserve judgment.

Jesus Himself was emphatic about reserving judgment while He was on earth. Matthew records Him saying, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). When Mary Magdalene was dragged before Jesus, He accused the accusers. After the mob had slipped away embarrassed, leaving Jesus and Mary alone, the Saviour spoke: Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more" (John 8:11).

You see, *Christ's death on the cross was an act of reserving judgment*; and criticism and judgment are the greatest foes of that sacrifice. When Adam and Eve first ate the forbidden fruit, there were consequences that attended their actions, but the final judgment of annihilation was reserved.

And because God has withheld judgment, men have the opportunity to make a rational decision about their sins. They have the chance to understand the nature of sin and hopefully to turn away from it. The reservation of judgment is a blessing from Calvary that the whole world receives.

Jesus' insistence that we keep from making harsh, critical judgments about our fellow men is also evidence that the sacrifice of Christ really works. If it were not for the cross which reserved the condemnation of ages, man would have been annihilated. If it were not for the cross Jesus would never have said "Judge not. . . ." Jesus' command to not judge or criticize is evidence that Christ's death on the cross *did* reserve all judgment.

Indeed, Jesus is jealously guarding the right of mercy so that His sacrifice will not be useless; and He demands that we recognize this right of mercy by reminding us that we are in no position to judge or criticize anyone.

So Nick, the narrator in *The Great Gatsby*, reminds us of the work of mercy: "Reserving judgment is a matter of infinite hope."

"Reserving judgment is a matter of infinite hope."

¹ F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, pp. 1, 2.

by Mike Rumbaugh

Notes

The Lamb of God wants us to be like Him. He—our standard of obedience and faith—desires our sanctification more than anything else.

So the question that immediately looms before us is, How can we be like Him? Or more personally, How can I with my carnivorous attitudes become like the peaceful, self-sacrificing Lamb of God?

There are two things which I believe we must do to become like the Lamb.

1. Rest in the completed work of Jesus Christ. "Most Christians make the mistake of trying to walk in order to be able to sit . . ." Think about it. It's true isn't it?

But the Christian life from start to finish is based upon the principle of utter dependence upon the Lord Jesus.² Only with the atoning price paid could Jesus cry, "It is finished."

In order to live the sanctified life the Christian must first realize that his right doing will not make the work of Jesus any more complete. If Jesus has saved you then you are saved—and your own goodness cannot add to or take away from that fact.

Some might say, "Do you mean I'm to stop doing good—stop trying to live the Christian life?" But no, I'm not saying that. What I am saying is that when we have based our salvation on the completed work, a work that we cannot take away from or make any more complete by our actions, then God is free to do an effective work within us (Eph. 2:13). "It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord'" (1 Cor. 1:30, 31; NIV).

2. Walk in a manner worthy of the calling of Christ. The secret to victorious living is in counting yourself "dead to sin but alive to God" (Romans 6:11; NIV) because God has declared it as being so. Our deliverance from sin does not find its foundation in what we can do or even in what God is going to do in us, but in what He has already done for us in Christ on the cross.

To experience freedom from the sin nature we must count ourselves as being free from the power of that nature (Romans 6:1-14).

"We sit forever with Christ that we may walk continuously before men. Forsake for a moment our place of rest in him, and immediately we are tripped and our testimony in the world is marred. But abide in Christ, and our position there ensures the power to walk worthy of him here."³

To sum it all up, let me say that the secret to living the victorious Christian life is not found in thinking that success or failure in righteousness will increase or diminish your standing in heaven's eyes. As a Christian you are seen as perfect before God whether you help out with Pathfinders or not. But when you count yourself as righteous—like God does—then you will find yourself working for your Savior.

May you live the sanctified life by faith—not by faith and works but by a faith that works.

¹ Watchman Nee, *Sit, Walk, Stand*. p. 14.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

by editors

Notes

Below is an abbreviated and edited letter written in 1573 by an imprisoned Anabaptist young woman from Antwerp, Holland, to her one-month-old infant daughter.

My dear little child, I commend you to the almighty God that he will keep you who are yet so young, and whom I must leave here in this wicked, evil, perverse world. He will be a Father to you, so that you shall have no lack here, if you only fear God; for he will be the Father of the orphans and the protector of the widows.

Hence, my dear lamb, I who am imprisoned and bound here for the Lord's sake, can help you in no other way. Your father and I were permitted to live together only half a year, after which we were apprehended, because we sought the salvation of our souls. They took him from me, not knowing my condition, and I had to remain in imprisonment, and see him go before me. And now that I have abided the time, and borne you under my heart for nine months, and given birth to you here in prison, in great pain, they have taken you from me. Here I lie, expecting death every morning, and shall now soon follow your dear father. And I, your dear mother, write you, my dearest child, something for a remembrance, that you will thereby remember your father and mother.

My dear Janneken, I leave you here; oh, that it had pleased the Lord that I might have brought you up; I should so gladly have done my best with respect to it; but it seems that it is not the Lord's will. Be not ashamed of us; it is the way which the prophets and the apostles went. Even Christ Himself did not spare Himself for us, but delivered Himself unto death for our sakes—how then should He not give us all things?

Let it be your glory, that we did not die for any evildoing, and you, my dear, strive to do likewise, though they should also seek to kill you. If you follow that which is good, and seek peace, and ensue it, you shall receive the crown of eternal life; this crown I wish you.

I leave you here among my family and friends. I hope that my father and my stepmother, and my brothers, and my sisters will do the best with you as long as they live. Be subject and obedient to them in everything, so far as it is not contrary to God.

*I wrote this when you were but one month old.**

Whoever reads this letter—Christian and non-Christian alike—must be impressed with the calm assurance expressed by this Anabaptist mother. She is not excited or fretful, like I fear I might be hours or days before execution, but a calm serenity pervades the warm words she pens to her child.

I especially appreciated the sentence, "Even Christ Himself did not spare Himself for us, but delivered Himself unto death for our sakes—how then should He not give us all things?" Here she reveals the foundation upon which her serenity is built—the Lamb of God.

As a lamb in the sheepfold, God identified Himself with suffering humanity in a way that would support an Anabaptist woman 1500 years later. God suffered in humanity, not so that the human race would escape suffering, but so that humans could bear it.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" and supports each of His children through all suffering and difficulty.

*Edited by Karl-Heinz Schroeder.

1. Complete these sentences:

When I picture God as a Lamb I . . .

To get to heaven I feel I must . . .

If Jesus were on earth today I would . . .

For me to be like the Lamb of God means . . .

Christ's sacrifice on the cross means . . .

To be drawn to the Lamb of God is to . . .

2. Below is a list of 15 descriptions used to portray the Lamb of God. Please number them in the order of their importance *to you*.

___ Comforter

___ Mediator

___ Lord of Hosts

___ King

___ Sin-Bearer

___ Counselor

___ Healer

___ Priest

___ Creator

___ Ancient of Days

___ Judge

___ Redeemer

___ Alpha and Omega

___ God of love

___ God of anger

Be prepared to share with your discussion group why you numbered the descriptions in this way.



**Our Father
and Friend**

by editors

Out of all your friends, who is your favorite? What person do you most enjoy being with? Think about it for a short minute.

Okay, who have you picked?

Probably you have picked someone who is unpretentious and genuinely loving—a very personable human being and someone whom you appreciate.

Think about this person a little longer. Why is it that you enjoy talking together in the dorm hallways and standing in line together waiting for the noon meal? What is it that you appreciate about this well-liked individual?

I gave myself the following assignment before writing this article: I dissected the character of my "most-appreciated person" and probed to uncover those traits that make him so greatly appreciated. I'll tell you what I found. So that I can talk about him objectively, I'll call him "Chuck."

I discovered that:

—Chuck is vulnerable. Defenseless. Open to the unintentionally stinging words I may "stab" him with. He is harmless in his reply to such words.

—Chuck is gentle in handling the problems I tell him about. He acts neither horrified nor gleeful if I confide in him about something I did wrong. He's careful with my spirit.

—Chuck is sensitive to my needs—I can tell that he *looks* for ways to build me up. I know he prays for me in his private devotions. He asks God to show him where I might need help.

—Around Chuck I never feel threatened. I can relax in his company. He never intimidates me. So I'm not concerned with building

myself up. I don't feel the need to be somebody else. I am me—a good and bad person struggling to be good. Chuck accepts that and urges me toward the good.

—Chuck is never afraid to claim me as his friend. You see, Chuck associates with the sterling-silver people—the better class of society. I fit in the cheaper "plastic" category. Yet, when he's with this group and I'm passing by, he never fails to recognize me—not as a casual acquaintance, but as a good friend.

And so, Chuck is a person I enjoy being around. He makes me feel complete and satisfied. When he's around, I never feel alone.

You may not feel lonely now but sometime during this semester you may think of yourself as friendless. Perhaps the problem is that you are simply feeling a little gloomy on that particular day. But maybe you feel friendless because you *are* friendless. In either case, what you need is a friend like Chuck.

I didn't have many friends until I met Chuck. Now, things have changed. Through being with him often I'm learning how to be a better friend. And of course, the two of us have become like brothers.

Would you like to meet Chuck? I'll give you his real name and maybe the two of you can get acquainted. Those who know Him well call Him Heavenly Father.

by David Johnson

Notes

One does not read far into the New Testament before he realizes that the omnipotent God of the universe is referred to and addressed in one of the warmest, most intimate and meaningful relationships of mankind—that of fatherhood.

Father is a connotative word that suggests joy, responsibility, sacrifice, special instruction, love and the willingness to let go. Its nearest equivalent and complement is motherhood. Fatherhood has more to do with relationship than with genetic linkage. When Elijah was caught up in the fiery chariot Elisha cried out, " **My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!** " (II Kings 2:12; NIV). This relationship between "father" and "child"—Elijah and Elisha—is one exemplifying deep respect and love. Though these two men were not genetically linked, they were indeed father and son.

In His appeal to the children of Israel, God demonstrates His fatherly image using the idea of adoption: " **How gladly would I treat you like sons . . . I thought you would call me 'Father'** " (Jer. 3:10; NIV). God's fatherhood is not limited by any means. He extends Himself to a Father who " **has compassion on his children** " (Psalm 103:13; NIV).

The extent of the Heavenly Father's compassion can be seen in the following two passages from the New Testament. " **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son** " (John 3:16; NIV). The extent to which a father loves is seen in *what he lets go*. Note carefully the feelings and attitudes of the father in this second example: " **So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him . . . [saying] 'Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found'** " (Luke 15:20, 23, 24; NIV). The extent to which a father loves is also seen in *what he receives*.

No personality of the Bible was more familiar with God as His Father than was Jesus. While Old Testament writers rarely use the concept, Jesus was quite free with it, especially in prayer. Three times in Gethsemane He prayed, " **My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me** " (Matthew 26:39; NIV; see also vs. 42, 44). He prayed at the tomb of Lazarus, " **Father, I thank you that you have heard me** " (John 11:41; NIV), and for us He prays, " **that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me** " (John 17:21; NIV). Such intimacy in prayer He teaches us to have by suggesting that we pray, " **Our Father which art in heaven . . .** " (Matthew 6:9).

A relationship with the Sovereign of universes, where He is the Father and we are His children, is matchless in providing security and fulfillment. " **How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is** " (I John 3:1,2; NIV).

**Father:
it is determined
more by
relationship
than by
genetic
linkage**

**Love is
measured
by what
is let go**

**and by
what is
received**

**Jesus
and
'Father'**

**A Father-
Son rela-
tionship
provides
matchless
security**

transcribed and edited by Kathy Miller & Pam Morris

Notes

Editor's Note: *Below is a story about Ellen White's miraculous healing and vision in her latter days at Elmshaven. More than any other story I have read, this account reveals the character of our loving Heavenly Father who is indeed our closest Companion and dearest Friend. This is an account which was told by Ellen White's granddaughter, Grace Jacques, to the producers of the film "Yes, I Remember Ellen White." Printed by permission of Group Seven Productions, Advent Heritage Film Series, "Yes, I Remember Ellen White."*

It was when Sister Jacques, Ellen White's granddaughter, was eight years old and Mrs. White was eighty that Ellen's closest Companion and dearest Friend did something very special for her. After forty-five years of administrative duties in the Seventh-day Adventist church Sister White was tired—tired of trying to solve other people's problems and physically tired as well.

The afternoon of March 2, 1907, Mrs. White spent in counsel with Brother and Sister S. N. Haskell, discussing the work in Oakland and their plans to go east to spend some time in South Lancaster. For different reasons the meeting was a difficult one and, after heavy discussions, Ellen was weary and retired early. She got little rest, however, as she was suffering with rheumatism in her left side and had a heart condition—both ailments causing considerable pain. But at last she fell asleep.

About an hour later that same evening, as she was turning over, she became aware that her body was entirely free from pain. As she turned from side to side and moved her hands she experienced an extraordinary freedom and lightness. It was as if she were in a pressureless environment. The room was filled with light, a most beautiful, soft, azure light—like a clear blue sky—and she seemed to be in the arms of heavenly beings.

This peculiar light Ellen had experienced in the past during times of special blessing; but this time it was more distinct, more impressive, and she felt such peace—peace so full and abundant that no words could express it. When she raised herself to a sitting position she saw that she was surrounded by a bright cloud as white as snow, the edges of which were tinged with a deep pink. And pink was her favorite color. The softest, sweetest music was filling the air, and she recognized the music as the singing of angels. It was in this setting that the Lord spoke to her. "Fear not; I am your Saviour. Holy angels are all about you."

"Then this is heaven," Ellen said, "and now I can be at rest. I shall have no more messages to bear, no more misrepresentations to endure. Everything will be easy now, and I shall enjoy peace and rest. Oh, what inexpressible peace fills my soul! Is this indeed heaven? Am I one of God's little children? And shall I always have this peace?"

Jesus replied: "Your work is not yet done."¹

Then she fell asleep, and when she awoke she once again heard the angels singing, and she too wanted to sing. After a time the light and songs passed away, but the company of her Heavenly Father always remained.

¹Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 65, 66.

by Brad Richardson

Notes

Among the many different names God wishes us to call Him, one name seems to capture the heart and mind like no other; that is *friend*. **Friend** is different from King, a name that implies sovereignty, and different from Master, a name that implies authority. **Friend** is a name that implies the relationship God the Creator intends to share with man. And *friend* describes a relationship that is always growing.

**Not only
a Father,
but a
Friend**

Kahil Gibran, in *The Prophet*, defined *friend* this way: "Your friend is your needs answered. He is your field which you sow with love and reap with thanksgiving. And he is your board and your fireside. For you come to him with your hunger, and you seek him for peace."¹ Gibran complements his own description of friendship with a second purpose: the enrichment of the soul. Friendship, then, is not only to make man complete, but also to nourish the spirit. To this end God asks us to think of Him not only as *Father* but as *Friend*.

This enrichment of the spirit referred to by Gibran's *The Prophet* is expressed dynamically in Antoine De Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. A fox, desiring a friend, explains friendship to the little prince: "To me, you are still nothing more than a little boy who is just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need of you. And you, on your part, have no need of me. To you, I am nothing more than a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world. . . ."

" 'My life is very monotonous,' he said. 'I hunt chickens; men hunt me. All the chickens are just alike, and all the men are just alike. And, in consequence, I am a little bored. But if you tame me, it will be as if the sun came to shine on my life. I shall know the sound of a step that will be different from all the others. Other steps send me hurrying back underneath the ground. Yours will call me, like music, out of my burrow. And then look: you see the grain-fields down yonder? I do not eat bread. Wheat is of no use to me. The wheat fields have nothing to say to me. And that is sad. But you have hair that is the color of gold. Think how wonderful that will be when you have tamed me! The grain, which is also golden, will bring me back the thought of you. And I shall love to listen to the wind in the wheat. . . .'

**"Please—
tame me!"**

"The fox gazed at the little prince for a long time.

" 'Please—tame me!' he said.

" 'I want to, very much,' the little prince replied. 'But I have not much time. I have friends to discover, and a great many things to understand.'

" 'One only understands the things that one tames,' said the fox. 'Men have no more time to understand anything. They buy things all ready made at the shops. But there is no shop anywhere where one can buy friendship, and so men have no friends any more. If you want a friend, tame me. . . .'²

¹Kahil Gibran, *The Prophet*, p. 58.

²Antoine De Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, pp. 66, 67. (Reprinted by permission.)

by Julie Schultz

Notes

No matter who your father is or what he does, when he comes home he is still your "Dad." And "Dads" do everything with you.

When you were little your dad would come home from a hard day at the office. You had been waiting for this all day and you would run and grab your dad by the knees and hug him, yelling, "Daddy's home! Daddy's home!"

To a dad who had been working under the threat of "job-well-done" equalling love, acceptance and security, your unconditional love perked up his feelings. No matter how bad his day had gone, coming home was a joy. And when your dad had a good day, he would tell you all about it and take you and your mother out to celebrate!

All illustrations break down somewhere, but doesn't this symbolism express the "Father" that Jesus loved and served? Or even the "Father" of whom Paul speaks in Romans 8:15, 16: "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (NIV).

So, here are some ways through which your Father in heaven can become more "Father-like" in your experience:

1. Tell Him all about your day—good and bad. Tell Him that you didn't like religion class, that you wish Dave were with you, and that the fudge brownies sure looked tempting (or, were good).

Tell Him what great news John 3:16 is to you, what a wonderful time you had walking along the street on the way to work and that you are anxious to get home for Christmas break.

Nothing is insignificant to Him. He is, as it were, in His heavenly easy chair, and He invites you to come and sit on the arm of that chair and have a good ol' heart-to-heart talk with your "Dad."

2. Tell Him that you love Him—He needs that. So many hate Him without knowing anything about what He is really like. Their lifestyle of self-destruction makes Him very sad. Your acceptance of His love is a positive witness to the world that Jesus' sacrifice was not in vain. After 6000 years of surviving the pain of mankind, God is anxious for your cheery voice to ascend to heaven.

3. Develop a habit of seeing everything that happens in your experience as an object lesson: carrying with it deeper-than-surface meaning that can be shared with others. Be sensitive to the way God leads, molds and directs in your life. Learn to see His guiding hand in your everyday affairs.

4. Invite God, your Father, into those activities that are fun for you. Don't worry—He's a lot of fun to be with. He can turn any occasion into a really great time—if He's invited.

The great thing about the God we love is that once we begin sharing ourselves and our times with Him as suggested above, He takes on a far more individual personality in our own minds. Even if your earthly father was not ideal (or even far from ideal), the God of whom we speak in this article is a Father you won't want to miss knowing.

by M. Stephen MacDonald

Notes

Rene dropped the neighbor boy's bike and slammed the screen door.

"Hi, Mom, I'm home. When is supper?"

"Supper's gonna be a little late, son; go and get washed up."

A few minutes later a somewhat cleaner Rene appeared in the doorway.

"Is Papa gonna make it?"

Mama's reply was always the same: "Maybe."

Rene was fifteen. He went to school, played ball in the city lot around the corner, swiped things from the market. His mother was thirty-two and on her second marriage. Rene was the only child that she was allowed to keep—something about her "mental stability." Papa tried holding down two jobs: one on the toll bridge for six hours, and a second as a stevedore at the docks for as long as they needed him.

The late-night news was half over when there was a rustle at the door.

"Rene, why don't you go on upstairs."

"But Papa's . . ."

"Rene, go!"

From there the story always went the same. Papa would come in and, if he had not had too much to drink or wasn't too tired and grumpy from the day's work, start grabbing things from the refrigerator. Of course there were the other times: the time when Rene's arm was broken as he tried to protect his mother from getting beaten again; the time when Rene's mother had to go to the emergency room and stay overnight—they said it was internal bleeding and she said that she had "fallen."

Now I'll be honest, I've never met Rene; but I have met people just like him—Stu and Rick and John. They live on the streets; that's where they make their money. In their situation they're smart: they will probably never get married. And, what seems to be in common with each of their futures is that they neither want an "old man" nor does anyone of them plan on becoming an "old man."

Were I ever to begin a conversation about God with "Your Father . . ." I would get just that far—nowhere fast.

It sounds rather unorthodox—whatever that is anymore—but when we're talking about God I don't use the concept of "Father" with them. Instead, I use words like "Lover." Now most of their lovers really aren't too much better than their fathers. The only real difference is that all fathers are "written off" as worthless and undesirable in Stu's mind—Rick's and John's too. But Stu and Rick and John are still looking for that one special "Lover" who will never take them for all that they are worth, who will give them a home, with food, and maybe—just maybe for extra—someone who will hold them in their arms and say, "I love you, and you can't give anything that will make me love you any more than I already do."

Let's never get stuck on the word "Father" as the only meaningful description for God. There are some who say that we shouldn't get "stuck" on only male models as descriptions of God, but that is another opinion.

During the remainder of this week, arrive at some meaningful models that represent the God you know. Think about how you would share Him with your roommate or a special friend or even with a perfect stranger. I use "Lover" and my friends respond to that. What do you use?

YOU'RE NEXT

1. On a separate sheet of paper rewrite the following passage in terms of your own experience: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (John 14:1-3; Matthew 28:20).
(For an example of the "Bible-rewrite" see the *You're Next* section of Lesson 1.)

2. Birth

Death

●-----●

On the *life-diagram* above, write the date of your birth under the corresponding dot on the left-hand side. On the right-hand side of the diagram, under the corresponding dot, write what you feel will be the approximate date of your death.

Now place a dot on the line that represents where you are right now between your birth and death and write today's date underneath.

This is a diagram of your life. Look at it, think about it, study it; let it *really* settle into your mind and conscience.

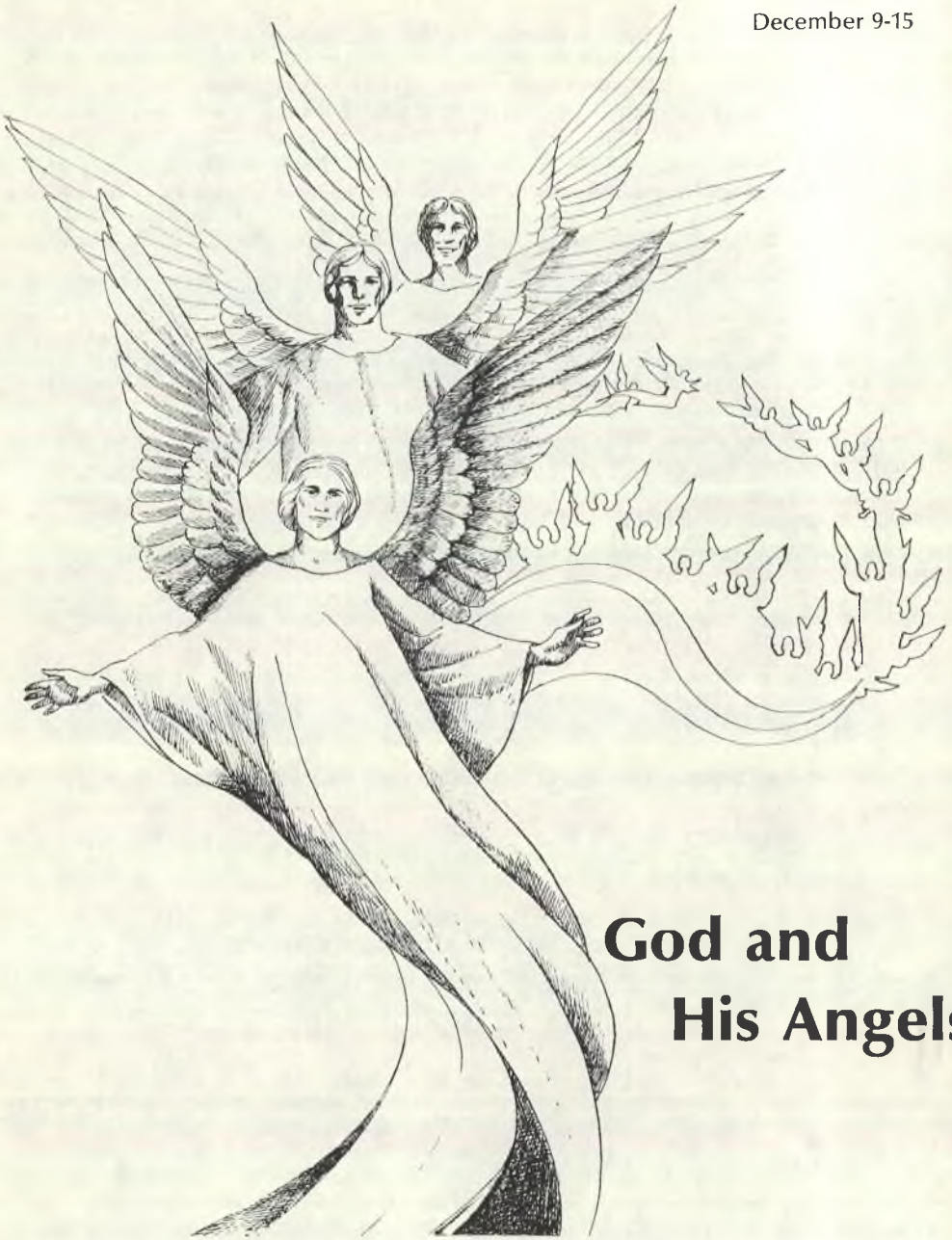
- Now, list the three most significant encounters you have had with God.

Place the approximate dates of each encounter on your life-diagram.

Why were these encounters significant to you?

- Now plot on the life-diagram the approximate date you expect to have another significant encounter with God. Why did you choose that date?
- List three things that must be accomplished in your life in order to have another significant encounter with God.

- In one sentence set a new goal for yourself that will help you to have a closer relationship with God.



God and His Angels

by Richard Pershing

Once upon a time a Swedish boy by the name of Nils had a guardian angel. Nils liked his angel very much and the angel loved Nils, always making sure to watch him carefully.

One Lordag evening a peat bog caught fire two kilometers from Nils' house in one of his father's fields. Right away Nils with his father and brother rushed to fight it. By working hard they reduced the flames to embers with wet enbuske bushes. The clock sounded midnight before they laid down their juniper boughs and crawled under their fjäderbolstrar exhausted.

At two o'clock in the morning Nils' angel woke him up. He wanted Nils to notice the rising wind for it could easily turn the smouldering peat moss back into excited flames.

The swaying of the tree branches outside his window opened Nils' eyes wide. He threw back his feather tick and ran to rouse his father. They fought long and not until eleven that morning did they smother the last flame into the ground. Much relieved, they started walking home. Nils' father patted him on the shoulder.

"Tell me, Nils, what woke you up? If you hadn't awakened when you did the fire might've even taken the farm."

"I'm not sure, Fader," Nils looked over his shoulder and then up at the

sky. "I guess my little angel woke me." The other two fire fighters smiled and nodded their heads.

Not long after that Nils' angel began to feel some new and very unpleasant sensations. Occasionally, when Nils didn't meet his father's expectations, his father would say in a bass voice, "Nils, what do you think your little angel thinks of you now?" Every time that happened the angel would feel strange pains biting into his chest, and every time those feelings came, the last always hurt more than the one before.

One night the angel sat on the edge of Nils' bed waiting for him to come and say his prayers. A pain seared his chest as a bass voice chiseled into the air that phrase Nils now despised—"Nils, vad tror du nu din lille angel tycker om det?" Flames spread into the angel's left shoulder as Nils lugged himself up the stairs. When Nils closed his bedroom door he refused to even look toward his bed. The angel winced as the flames turned into an icy pit, frosting his insides.

That night Nils didn't kneel as he usually did before snuggling under his fjäderbolstrar. Tears froze on the angel's eyes as he drew a final breath and died.

by K. Kibble

Notes

With all of the interest in extraterrestrial beings surfacing in recent years, even the least quizzical of believers has tried to translate everything from UFO sightings to "Sci-fi" movies into those events which foreshadow dominant roles in the Great Controversy.

For the believer the usual end to this inquiry rests in the discussion of angels. What do they look like? Who are they? What roles do they have to play in the grand scheme of salvation? These are the questions people are asking. And this is what we will discuss in today's lesson.

From the accounts collected for us in the Word of God we know that angels emit a dazzling light (Luke 2:9), probably an enduring reflection from the visage of the Almighty. (You will remember that this phenomenon also occurred to humans who spent time in God's presence (Exodus 34:29).) Though some will disagree, I believe that angels are of a neuter gender (Mark 12:25). And the Bible suggests that they appear dressed in white (John 20:12) and, if need be, may even appear as humans (Genesis 19:1).

As to their function, there are many duties recorded. Angels are pictured as doing such things as commanding the symbolic "four winds" (Rev. 7:1) and smiting the foes of God's people (II Kings 19:35). But their general duty may best be expressed in the definition of their Greek name, *angelos*, meaning *messenger* or *servant spirits* (Hebrews 1:14). This gives us the impression that they are the bearers of the will of God from heaven to earth. As heavenly messengers angels are beings who guide the believers (Exodus 23:20), represent their interests (Zech. 1:12; 3:2) and even, if they must, turn against God's erring people (II Sam. 24:17).

One could claim that so far our picture of angels colors them as sexless intergalactic servants who scramble throughout the universe at the whim of the Eternal. But this is not an accurate conception.

It is important to their function in the Great Controversy to perceive them in a more balanced light. A symmetrical concept of *angelology* must not allow for beings scurrying about void of emotion or intellect. Rather, they are blameless (I Sam. 29:9), discerning messengers of good and evil (II Sam. 14:17, 20), and man was created but a little below them (Psalm 8:5). The work of intelligent, perceptive angels is important as they are witnesses to the entire universal struggle (I Tim. 5:21; Hebrews 12:22).

Finally, we may conclude that angels have wonderful characters. They have exuberant joy, sublime peace and responsible love akin to the Creator's. Surely this is so as they are always found as close as possible to the Lord (Matthew 18:10; 25:31; II Thess. 1:7; I Tim. 5:21; Hebrews 12:22). And, of course, the closer one comes to the Lord the more wonderful will be his character and personality. It would appear that angels, with sanctified covetousness, choose those places in the universe nearest their precious God.

Looking beyond now to the time when Jesus comes, I get excited thinking of one special universal event: when we join with the heavenly hosts of the universe to proclaim, "**Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments . . . Hallelujah!**" (Rev. 19:1, 2, 6; NIV).

Describing
God's angels:

Celestial

Messengers

Blameless

Witnesses

With
wonderful
characters

compiled by Lynn Foll

Notes

Until God sees fit to have us join Him in heaven the angels are carrying out His wishes for us. "We cannot see them personally; nevertheless they are with us, guiding, directing, protecting."¹ Ellen White describes many different roles carried on by these angelic ministers.

They fight for our souls: "Over every man, good and evil angels strive. This is no make-believe conflict. It is not mimic battles in which we are engaged. We have to meet most powerful adversaries, and it rests with us to determine which shall win."²

They instruct us, just as they did those in the Old Testament: "When God's word is made the man of our counsel, and we search the Scriptures for light, angels of heaven come near to impress the mind and enlighten the understanding."³

They aid in our ministry, just as they did Philip's: "An angel guided Philip to the one who was seeking for light, and who was ready to receive the gospel; and today angels will guide the footsteps of those workers who will allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify their tongues and refine and ennoble their hearts."⁴

They guard and protect us from spiritual and physical danger: "A guardian angel is appointed to every follower of Christ."⁵ When we get to heaven, "Every redeemed one will understand the ministry of angels in his own life. The angel who was his guardian from his earliest moment; the angel who watched his steps, and covered his head in the day of peril; the angel who was with him in the valley of the shadow of death . . . what will it be to hold converse with him, and to learn the history of divine interposition in the individual life. . . !"⁶

They carry out God's punishment in the world: "The angels are already girded, awaiting the mandate of God to pour their vials of wrath upon the world. Destroying angels are taking up the work of vengeance; for the Spirit of God is gradually withdrawing from the world."⁷

They act like a universal "Greek chorus," rejoicing and sorrowing as they witness man's actions: "The rescue of one soul over whom Satan has triumphed causes joy among the heavenly angels."⁸ When we turn our backs on Christ's great sacrifice, we "cause angels to weep and hide their faces in shame and disgust."⁹

They are busy in heaven "making crowns"¹⁰ and recording our words and deeds: As the photographer records events on film, "so the angels of God daily place upon the books of heaven an exact representation of the character of every human being."¹¹ "If all these gossipers would ever bear in mind that an angel is following them, recording their words, there would be less talking and much more praying."¹²

To conclude: "Heavenly angels are working to bring the human family into a close brotherhood, a oneness described by Christ as like that existing between the Father and the Son. How can men so highly favored by God fail to appreciate their opportunities and privileges? How can they refuse to accept the divine help proffered?"¹³

¹ *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 153.

² *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 213.

³ *Messages to Young People*, pp. 426, 427.

⁴ *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109.

⁵ *Great Controversy*, p. 512.

⁶ *Education*, p. 305.

⁷ *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 983.

⁸ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 73.

⁹ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 271.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹¹ *Signs of the Times*, Feb. 11, 1903.

¹² *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 40.

¹³ *Review and Herald*, July 4, 1899.

by Billy Graham

Notes

While God has delegated angels to make special pronouncements for Him, He has not given them the privilege of proclaiming the gospel message. Why this is so, Scripture does not say. Perhaps spirit-beings who have never experienced the effects of separation from fellowship with God because of sin would be unable to preach with understanding.

But notice what the writer says in "Holy, Holy Is What the Angels Sing":

Holy, Holy is what the angels sing,
And I expect to help them make the
courts of heaven ring.
And when I sing redemption's story,
They will fold their wings,
For angels never felt the joy
that our salvation brings.

Down through the ages man's heart has remained unchanged. Whatever the color of his skin, whatever his cultural or ethnic background, he needs the gospel of Christ. But who has God ordained to bring that gospel to fallen men? Fallen angels cannot do it; they cannot even be saved from their own sins. Yet unfallen angels cannot preach the gospel either. Presumably they do not hear the gospel the way we do; in their purity they have escaped the effects of sin and are unable to comprehend what it means to be lost.

Rather, God has commanded the Church to preach. This great task is reserved to believers. God has no other means. Only man can speak salvation's experience to man.

God has, however, assigned angels to assist those who preach. Their assistance includes the use of miraculous and corroborating signs. Missionaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have reported many wonderful incidents where angels seemed to help them proclaim the gospel. My wife, whose parents were missionaries to China, can remember many instances in her life where angels must have intervened in the ministry of her father and his fellow missionaries.

At any rate, you and I have the privilege of conveying a message to men from God in heaven, a message that angels cannot speak. Think of that! The story is told of a question asked of God: "In the event that men fail to preach the gospel as you have commanded, what other plan have you in mind?" "I have no other plan," He said.

No angel can be an evangelist. No angel can pastor a church, although angels watch over particular churches. No angel can do counseling. No angel can enjoy sonship in heir with Jesus in His kingdom. You and I are a unique and royal priesthood in the universe, and we have privileges that even angels cannot experience.

From *Angels: God's Secret Agents*, pp. 111-113, by Billy Graham; Copyright © 1975. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

**Angels
cannot
preach the
gospel**

**Only man
can speak
of salvation
to man**

**Angels do
assist
those who
preach**

**Humans
are
privileged
above angels**

by Mike Rumbaugh

Notes

I am always fascinated with the fact that often when we encounter the hosts of the Lord—the angels—they are singing and praising the Creator of the universe (cf. Revelation 4 and 5). Our God dwells in an atmosphere of praise, and for good reason: there are so many things that his creatures have to be thankful for. It would be something if humans could so appreciate the goodness of God that they would often join in with the heavenly choir of angels in singing, "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise! . . . To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" (Rev. 5:12, 13; NIV).

But, back to this earth, those who know me well know that I can be just as negative as the grumpiest Scrooge; I don't by nature see the "silver lining." I am afraid my voice is not lifted, as the angels', in constant adoration and praise. But that is a problem of attitude and it can be remedied by a change of attention.

To be like the angels—to be in high spirits (excuse the pun) because of our appreciation of the greatness of God—is a goal for us to meet. How do we stay in an attitude of praise? How can we become positive people? How can we, in this aspect, become like the hosts of the Lord?

Here are some of the things that I have learned from the book *Steps to Christ*:

1. **"Thank God for the bright pictures which He has presented to us.** Let us group together the blessed assurances of His love, that we may look upon them continually. . . . When we seem to doubt God's love and distrust His promises we dishonor Him and grieve His Holy Spirit. . . . All this is harming your own soul; for every word of doubt you utter is inviting Satan's temptations; it is strengthening in you the tendency to doubt, and it is grieving from you the ministering angels." (p. 118).

2. **"All have trials; griefs hard to bear, temptations hard to resist. Do not tell your troubles to your fellow mortals, but carry everything to God in prayer.** Make it a rule never to utter one word of doubt or discouragement. You can do much to brighten the life of others and strengthen their efforts, by words of hope and holy cheer." (pp. 119, 120).

3. **"We should love and respect one another, notwithstanding the faults and imperfections that we cannot help seeing.** Humility and self-distrust should be cultivated, and a patient tenderness with the faults of others. This will kill out all narrowing selfishness and make us largehearted and generous." (p. 121).

4. **"Let us look to the monumental pillars,** reminders of what the Lord has done to comfort us and to save us from the hand of the destroyer. Let us keep fresh in our memory all the tender mercies that God has shown us,—the tears He has wiped away, the pains He has soothed, the anxieties removed, the fears dispelled, the wants supplied, the blessings bestowed,—thus strengthening ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage." (p. 125).

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." (Phil. 4:8; NIV).

by editors

Notes

Where do they fit in? Angels, I mean.

We have tried to define angels and tell what they do and show how they represent the concept of a God who has a "handle" on everything.

But where do they fit in? Why does God need angels? If He is all-powerful and all-knowing, omnipresent, etc., why does He need all of these other beings to do "tasks" for Him?

Of course the answer may be in the very absurdity of the question: God *doesn't* need angels or cherubim or seraphim or any other living creatures—at least for the purpose of making Him any more "godlike." They need Him: He defines their purpose in living, He has made their characters and personalities to be such that they *enjoy* doing His bidding—a facet of the human constitution that was abandoned by humanity long ago.

And God avails Himself of their individuality—which is reflective of Him—thus giving us a more varied picture of the Father.

Then, it might be interesting to look at angels as being *role models* for the human creation of this earth. Both we and the angels share in the commonness of beings created for the purpose of glorifying and communing with the Creator. But angels have not fallen. So we may see them as being examples for what we should be.

So where do angels fit into your life? We know that angels cooperate with man in helping to spread the gospel and that they help him with even his common cares and concerns. We understand that in the last days angels will sustain the Christians during times of persecution. And we are counseled, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2; NIV).

Indeed, to a certain extent, our effectiveness in this world is dependent upon our union with the heavenly hosts. But becoming united with the angels in God's work is not something we sit down and plan out with them. Rather, as we come closer to Christ we will come into a closer union with His heavenly messengers and will thereby be able to work more effectively with them.

Angels—where do they fit in?

Well, God works through them to supply our needs. They are heavenly bodyguards, tutors, role models, message carriers, friends, companions and even more. And though angels and humans are vastly different, Christians have a tie with these heavenly beings that can never be severed in the love that is shared for the Lord of hosts.

God doesn't need angels; they need Him

Angels as role models

The Christian's effectiveness is to a certain extent dependent upon his union with the angels

1. After studying this week's lesson complete the following five sentences concerning what you learned about *angels*.

I learned _____.

I learned _____.

I learned _____.

I learned _____.

I learned _____.

Now complete the following five sentences concerning things you wonder about *angels*.

I wonder _____.

I wonder _____.

I wonder _____.

I wonder _____.

I wonder _____.

2. *To Consider:*

- Could angels enter into God's omnipresence?
- What is the difference between the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of angels?
- Why does God need angels?



The Helper

by M. Stephen MacDonald

He was sitting on a park bench in the middle of a flock of pigeons and, (because of his narrow-blunt snout) very much resembled a badger guarding his supper from a marauding band of scavengers.

I slipped around his "audience" and seated myself on the bench. Before long we were in a lively conversation.

"So you come here every day at three. Doesn't anyone else come with you?"

"No. No one has come here with me since my wife died."

"How long ago was that?"

"About ten years back." I thought perhaps I should change the subject, afraid that I was prying too much, but Providence had other ideas. "That was almost the last time I saw my son, too. He was barely twenty then. Now he's a big-time manager for Chevron; making lots of money."

"Don't you ever go see him? Or he you?"

"No, we don't talk much—I suppose Richard and I were closer . . ."

"Who is Richard?"

After throwing his remaining crumbs to the pigeons he began.

Mr. Tembo* had a wife and two goodlooking sons—that was twelve years before our conversation (1963). Richard had always been his favorite—his other, older son. The whole family was heading south on the coast highway to Carmel one afternoon with Richard driving and Mr. Tembo catching some winks in the back seat. Danny (the younger son) was in front with his mother. For a still unknown reason the car swerved and headed over the embankment. Danny managed to pull his mother out of the burning car

while Mr. Tembo desperately tried to pull Richard from beneath the steering column. Finding his efforts useless, Mr. Tembo ran to get help—and was none too soon in leaving. The car suddenly became engulfed in leaping flames and Richard burned alive.

For the next two years Mrs. Tembo was in and out of hospitals and in 1965 a blood clot lodged in her brain and shortly thereafter she died.

"Did you say you were thinking of being a preacher?" Mr. Tembo asked. "Sure can talk like one." I laughed (not a little shaken by the abrupt change in conversation). "Well, son, there was a time when I needed religion, but it doesn't do me any good any more—I guess I've 'seen it all.' "

From there the stories went on to World War II, J.F.K. and PT 109, and the Japanese "rising sun." Six o'clock rolled around and we parted. I haven't seen Mr. Tembo since—doubt if I will. But I will always remember those words: "There was a time when I needed religion, but it doesn't do me any good any more—I guess I've seen it all . . ."

As I walked away I thought "God, where were You when he needed You? You're there when I need You—what's the difference?" That night was very quiet in my heart. Would there come a time when I too would no longer "need" religion?

Why is it that people like Mr. Tembo are around, suffering? Did God "ordain" the trials in Mr. Tembo's life or is the suffering he went through the result of a world in which individual powers of choice have collided—leaving Mr. Tembo and, in a sense, God holding the bag?

*Mr. Tembo is a pseudonym.

by Mike Rumbaugh

Notes

"Then Moses said, 'Now show me your glory.' And the Lord said, 'I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence'" (Exodus 33:18, 19; NIV).

"And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished . . .'" (Exodus 34:6, 7; NIV). Indeed, the omnipotent Creator-God against whom the entire human creation rebelled has revealed Himself as the God of love and mercy—the God of infinite help.

For the Lord to meaningfully be a *God of help*, however, we need to identify two things first: 1. Who is He? What is He like? and 2. Who is He able to help?

First, Who is He? What is He like?

"For who is God, save the Lord? and who is a rock, save our God?" (II Sam. 22:32).

"The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted" (Psalm 18:46).

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20).

"The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him" (Nahum 1:7).

"Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless" (Psalm 10:14).

Second, Who is He able to help?

"And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee . . . And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul" (II Chron. 14:11; 15:12).

"But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me . . . Help me, O Lord my God: O save me according to thy mercy" (Psalm 109:21, 22, 26).

"But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying" (Psalm 70:5).

"For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not" (Isaiah 30:15).

"Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt cause thine ear to hear" (Psalm 10:17).

God is omnipotent, the only source of security, and a helper to those who humbly put their trust in Him.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

by Lynn Foll

Notes

God wants to make a deal: He promises to help us in every situation we meet if we trust in Him and make some effort to help ourselves. "If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend."¹

The reason God is so willing to help us is because He made us in the first place. "God cares for everything and sustains everything that He has created When men go forth to their daily toil, as when they engage in prayer; when they lie down at night, and when they rise in the morning; when the rich man feasts in his palace, or when the poor man gathers his children about the scanty board, each is tenderly watched by the heavenly Father. No tears are shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that He does not mark."²

Our Creator is our greatest Helper when we trust Him

But the key to this constant attention by God is our faith in Him. "God will do great things for those who trust in him. The reason why his professed people have no greater strength, is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal his power in their behalf. He will help his believing children in every emergency, if they will place their entire confidence in him, and faithfully obey him."³

Isn't it comforting to know that "God has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal"?⁴ For example, "He is able and willing to bestow upon His servants . . . the wisdom which their varied necessities demand."⁵

God will also help us stay healthy: "There are cases where God works decidedly by His divine power in the restoration of health."⁶

God has provided help for every situation

God will also help us in our work of ministering to others: "At times the difficulties that we shall meet will be most disheartening. The very greatness of the task will appal us. And yet, with God's help, His servants will finally triumph."⁷

Sometimes we may even be unaware that we have "a strong helper in the Lord. The way of the Lord's helping we may not know; but this we do know: He will never fail those who put their trust in Him. Could Christians realize how many times the Lord has ordered their way, that the purposes of the enemy concerning them might not be accomplished, they would not stumble along complainingly. Their faith would be stayed on God, and no trial would have power to move them."⁸

But mankind cannot leave everything to God: "Heaven may give him every advantage so far as temporal and spiritual things are concerned, but it is all in vain unless he is willing to appropriate these blessings and to help himself. His own powers must be put to use, or he will finally be weighed in the balances and pronounced wanting."⁹

¹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 173.

² *Steps to Christ*, p. 86.

³ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 493.

⁴ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 660.

⁵ *Ministry of Healing*, p. 482.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

⁷ *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 408.

⁸ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 576.

⁹ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 339.

by Albert Smith

"What can be seen is not a sign of total absence, or of the manifest presence of the divinity, but of the presence of a God who hides himself."¹

Life as it is lived and perceived by most of us is one in which rain and accident, blessing and difficulty, fall blindly on the just and the unjust. The divine hand is notably secretive, covert, incognito. The proclamation of faith that God cares and is active in this world in watching over the faithful is clear to the believer and is part of the celebration of faith, but it is not confirmed by the newspapers.

A prophet as distinguished as Isaiah is aware of the chasm between. In the middle of heralding God's action in the history of nations he breaks in with, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself" (Isaiah 45:15). There are events without purpose, but even from the accidents of life the faithful may draw understanding.

In order to resolve this paradox we must find that Christian understanding requires us to learn to give praise to God for the commonplace, ordinary events of life: those free-handed blessings that are the result of natural causes. We must, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer suggests, interpret the promises of God in a "worldly" or *natural* sense in order to find their fulfillment in ordinary life.²

For example, God's care for the infant is not primarily in the charge of supernatural beings. It is in the first place mediated by parental love, by a mother's milk, by concern of the mature for the helpless, by a world where the young have a place.

To see ordinary events in this way gives the world back to itself as a functioning system without supernatural determination at every turn and at the same time brings God closer as we recognize that His will is mediated by the commonplace, even by our own selves.

¹ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*. In *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 33, Robert Maynard Hutchins, ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), p. 187.

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Eberhard Bethge, ed. (London: Collins, 1959), p. 118.

Notes

"What can be seen is a God who hides Himself."

God's work in this world must be interpreted in a natural sense

by editors

Notes

When it looks like your boat is about to be swamped with waves of tests, essay papers and academic deans, there probably comes to your mind a very simple question: "God, where are you!?"

The "Helping-God" on whom Peter suggests we "cast all of our cares," is always present—whether we believe Him to be or not.

The Helping-God is no intruder, and will not force His way into humdrum lives; rather, He is the God who waits for an invitation. The Helping-God responds only to need; and when we need Him He makes Himself available.

Do you need to know the Helping-God? If you do, then:

1. Ask. Recognize not only your needs but that He can supply your needs if you diligently seek Him (cf. Hebrews 11:6).

Christ left Himself wide open when He said, "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matthew 7:7). And He means for us to act upon this promise. Granted, this statement needs to be qualified, but be careful to not explain it away in such a manner that it loses its power.

Go ahead. Trust Him. He promised. So ask.

2. Talk to Him. And spend time with Him.

But remember, He is not a bubble-gum machine. By this I mean that He is not something you plug a penny into and get out exactly what you want. He loves you too much for that.

If you have been brought to the place where all of your money is gone—when you had asked Him for more—and you're making two D's and one F this semester—when you had asked Him for straight A's—God is probably trying to say something very important to you. So learn from the experience He brings into your life; the experience will be better than money or grades ever could be.

But the important thing is that you *talk* with Him. Explain how you see the problem and then listen to Him as He says how He sees it. Keep the communication flowing. Problems can only be solved as you talk them out.

3. Be ready for an answer back. When you talk to God you open yourself up for all of the things He's been trying to tell you.

If you ask Him what profession He wants you to go into be ready and receptive for *any* answer. He may want you to be a minister; but He may rather have you be a millionaire. He may want you to go into international law or become an actor or be a taxicab driver. He may want you to be a writer of religious literature or a pastor with three twenty-member congregations.

And often He wants to tell you that there is nothing you can do to make Him turn away from you.

But the important thing is that when you go to God be ready to listen. At times, some have gotten the idea that God is looking over the portals of heaven making sure that we do not become *too* successful or have *too much* fun—that He needs to give us a good dose of suffering now and then to keep us "humble."

But remember, God is on *our* side. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28; NIV).

Rest securely in the fact that the One who sacrificed Himself for mankind will handle you with care. Remember that He loves you more than He loves Himself.

Indeed, in answer to the question, "Where are you?" we can with assurance believe that God is there—waiting.

by editors

Notes

CASE NUMBER 743

Date: Early summer, 1979.**Place:** A runaway house.**Problem:** 13-year-old boy, small build (looks like he is eight), with multiple bruises about the head, arms, torso, legs; possible ruptured eardrum, suffering from headache, upset stomach.**Reason for Being Brought In:** Father beat him with a "two-by-four" because of disobedience.

Where is God?

This week's lesson states in the objective that "We need never be threatened or intimidated since God is our helper." But the question this young boy and millions of people ask from their suffering condition is, Where is God? Why isn't He my Helper?

Boiled down to its simplest form the problem is this: How can we reconcile the fact that there is obviously evil and suffering in the world and yet understand the all-powerful God as the God of love?

Let us suggest four possible solutions.

1. *Some things may appear to be evil that are not actually evil.* By this I mean that we may feel that we should have nearly everything we want, and to be deprived of some things may appear to be evil to us. But some degree of deprivation is apparently for our best good—it may be one way of dealing with our selfishness.

2. *Many things that are admittedly evil are still productive of good.* Some medicine has an "evil" taste, yet may be good for us. Disasters are generally evil; yet they set the stage for acts of kindness and generosity. It may take "evil" things like hardships and persecution in order to teach us patience or faith.

3. *In order to keep people from being machines it is necessary for God to allow a certain degree of choice.* And if the freedom of choice is to be meaningful it must allow a person to do evil as well as good. One thereby has the choice to inflict evil and suffering upon others or impart good. Although wrong choices are made—and therefore suffering occurs in the world—this is better than not being able to exercise any choice at all.

4. A more difficult type of evil to deal with is the matter of "natural" disasters. About all that we seem to know at this point is that *God does not choose to interfere with the operation of "natural" laws so as to alleviate human suffering.*

Perhaps the earth—as the dwelling of Satan and his angels—has felt the curse of evil in its physical operations to a greater extent than we realize and the Lord has mercifully overruled a perverse animal creation as well as physical disasters for the good of mankind. It does seem likely. But this is a matter of faith rather than scientific demonstration.

To me, however, it is adequate to trust in the statement, *Far from sending grief to us, God grieves with us.* One cannot reason away suffering, but one may find great comfort in knowing that the Sovereign of billions of galaxies is one with our feelings. He is indeed our greatest helper. When any are suffering He is suffering. And with His stripes we are healed.

YOU'RE NEXT

1. What character trait do you need to develop most through God's help?
2. List three tragic experiences that have taken place in your life:

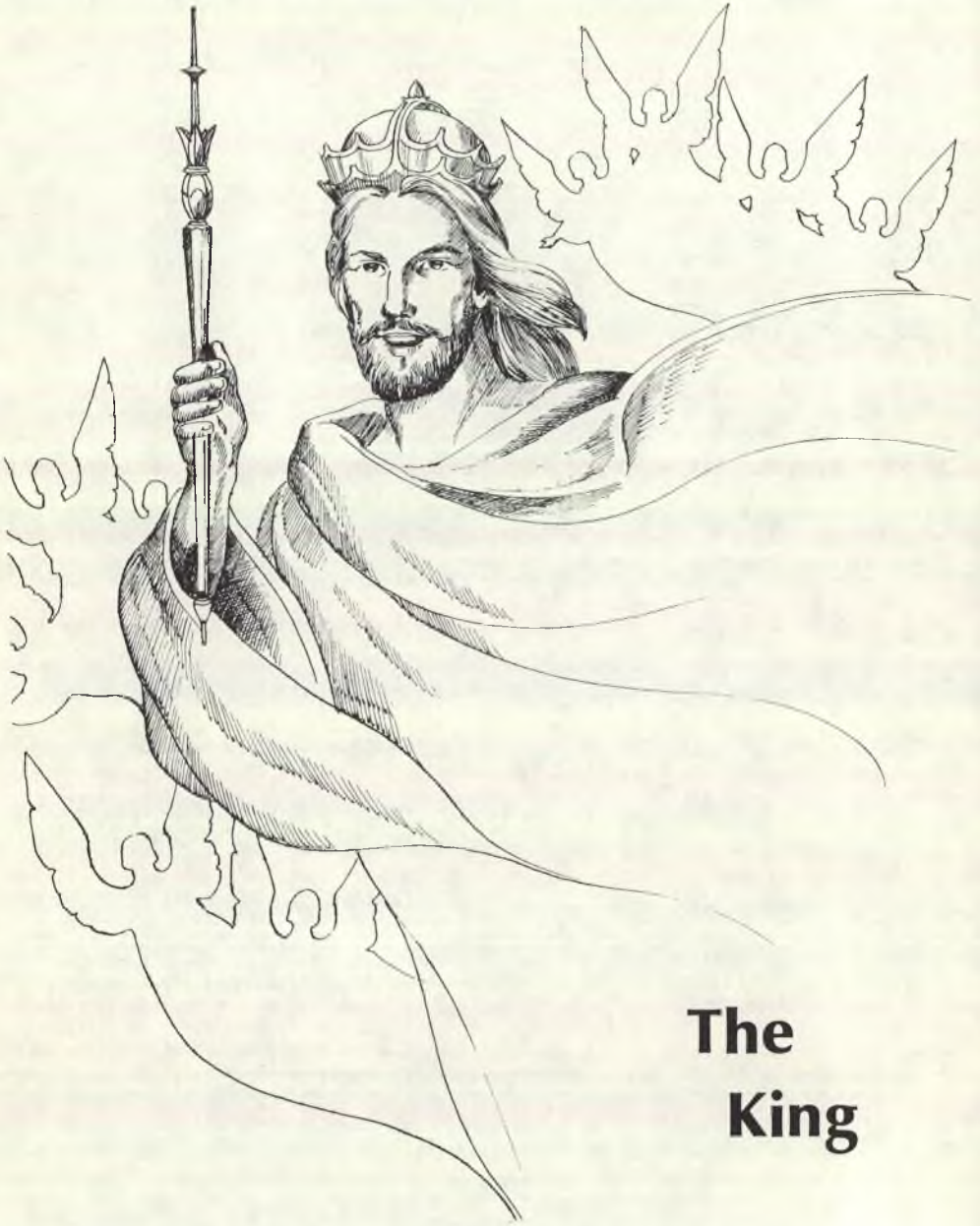
What role was God playing throughout these experiences?

3. *What do you think?* Do you agree or disagree? Strongly agree? Strongly disagree? Mark it as you see it:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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_____	_____	_____	_____	God allows some Christians to starve
_____	_____	_____	_____	God helps in every situation
_____	_____	_____	_____	God blesses each request
_____	_____	_____	_____	After drinking a Coke one cannot be helped by God as effectively as before
_____	_____	_____	_____	God will give wisdom every time one asks
_____	_____	_____	_____	At times God withholds His help
_____	_____	_____	_____	God will help us without our needing to ask Him

Why?



The King

by Karl-Heinz Schroeder

The fascination with the Utopian society is almost as old as mankind itself. Fallen man, realizing that this life is not satisfying, has desperately sought for that perfect bliss. But, as the word origin of *utopia* suggests [*ou* (not) + *topos* (place), hence "no place"], *utopia* is no place to be found. Still, man has historically tried to establish the perfect society which would satisfy the needs of all.

The first serious attempt to establish a utopian society was made theoretically by Plato in the fourth century B.C. with his two masterpieces, *The Republic* and *The Laws*. Plato was dissatisfied with the existing Greek society which was torn by party strife and social/economic difficulties. He therefore proposed in these two treatises a blueprint for a social order which would be ruled on the basis of philosophic principles. He planned a society in which all dissatisfaction would be removed.

The next serious attempt to establish a just and equitable society came around the time of Christ. Centuries of misfortune for the Jewish people resulted in the Messianic promises of the prophets. These prophecies were used extensively by religious as well as political agitators to promise either the establishment of the Kingdom of the Messiah or the soon appearance of this kingdom.

That the early followers of Christ were not unaffected by this kind of

thinking can be seen by any observant reader of the gospels and the book of *Acts*. We find that the disciples were frequently questioning Christ as to when *He* would establish the kingdom of Israel and what their relationship would be in the re-established kingdom.

The last and most influential utopian attempt was philosophically started by Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels in the nineteenth century. These two political philosophers told their followers that on the basis of their research they had concluded that the utopian society of economic and political equality was inevitable. The devastating influence of Marx's theory can be observed in the last seventy years of the world's history. Indeed, where Marx's philosophy has been practiced it certainly has not resulted in the kingdom of equality.

As we have observed, man has tried for centuries to establish the kingdom of equality, justice and brotherhood—but without success. But Christ stated that *He* would come again. *He* would establish the utopian kingdom. *He* and His Father would abolish all existing societies and *They* would establish the everlasting Kingdom of God. This inauguration of the King of kings we pray for and work for and look forward to.

by Sieg Roeske

Notes

The glorious day is fast approaching when Christ will return to this earth to claim it as His own. Multitudes will then exclaim, "**Hallelujah! For our Lord Almighty reigns**" (Rev. 19:6; NIV). This time Christ will come not as the Babe in Bethlehem's manger, but as the "**King of kings, and Lord of lords**" (Rev. 19:16). What a day that will be!

The Bible writers emphasize the kingship of Christ. While heathen nations had earthly sovereigns, Israel's King was Jehovah (Isaiah 33:22).

Even after Israel had partially rejected the kingship of God by demanding an earthly king, such as their heathen neighbors served (1 Sam. 8:7; 10:19; 12:12, 17, 19), the more God-fearing kings of Israel considered themselves only deputy kings to the Great King of heaven. They were willing to carry out the instructions of God that came through His prophets.

David's kingship was especially symbolic of the kingship of Christ. Under David's reign Israel prospered—cities were built, enemies were conquered. The nation became united. There was plenty of food and a good measure of security. Everything David undertook as king seemed to succeed.

The prophecies in the Old Testament regarding the coming Messiah, who would usher in a new era of peace and prosperity, were connected to the reign of David.

The Jewish nation at the time of Christ longed for the glorious reign of David to return in their day. While they suffered under the Roman yoke of oppression, they dreamed of the peace, the justice, the security, the plenteous food and raiment of David's day to return. These dreams and longings were based upon promises made by many of the Old Testament prophets (Jer. 25:5; Isaiah 11:1-16).

Since the Jewish nation rejected Christ as their King when He came to rule His people ("We have no king but Caesar" John 19:15) and finally crucified Him on the cross, the promises of the coming "Messiah-King" are to be fulfilled in the framework of the Christian church.

While most earthly kings have gained their kingship by means of violence and force, Christ has *earned* His right to be the Sovereign of this world. The sacrificial love that led Him to lay down His life voluntarily gained Him the right to be the Christian's King and Lord. It is this sacrificial love that distinguishes His eternal, happy, and peaceful reign from all other earthly kingdoms. Gone forever will be war and famine, violence and injustice, oppression and death.

It is the Christian's desire to be part of that new kind of world order that makes him cry out, "**Even so, come, Lord Jesus**" (Rev. 22:20).

David's
kingship
especially
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Christ's

The Old
Testament
promises of
the "Messiah-
King" are to
be fulfilled
in the
framework
of the
Christian
church

by Mike Rumbaugh

Notes

Who is king of your life? The answer to that question is a matter of allegiance and identity.

We are Christians. And as such we claim Christ to be an all-sufficient King. That's our claim. But our lifestyle sometimes betrays another kingdom. When that happens we lose many of the benefits which result from Christ's completed work on our behalf; for example, the assurance that we are saved.

Nonetheless, He is our King—but what is He like? How is He different from *other* kings?

1. His kingdom is primarily of the soul. "His presence will cleanse and sanctify the soul, so that it may be a holy temple unto the Lord, and 'an habitation of God through the Spirit.' Eph. 2:21, 22."¹ "In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work . . . Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple . . . In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin, —from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul."²

2. His style is that of a servant. "It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which 'seeketh not her own' has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto."³

3. He became a subject in His own kingdom. "Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners."⁴

4. And He gives life to all. "He was the Redeemer before as after His incarnation. As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. He has given light and life to all, and according to the measure of light given, each is to be judged. And He who has given the light, He who has followed the soul with tenderest entreaty, seeking to win it from sin to holiness, is in one its Advocate and Judge."⁵

The question "Who is king in your life?" implies not only kingship but lifestyle. This King Jesus will show His authority as King by what *He* does in our lives.

¹*Desire of Ages*, p. 162.

²*Ibid.*, p. 161.

³*Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 210.

by Sylvia Baldwin

Notes

Is there any connection between sea-cow skins, the other layers of the wilderness sanctuary roof mentioned in biblical history and the objective of this week's lesson which is to recognize that Jesus is not only our friend and brother, but also the righteous King?

In Exodus 26 God directed Moses to construct the roof of the sanctuary using four different layers of materials. Starting with the outside covering and working inward they appeared in the following order: 1. an external waterproof covering made from the skins of sea-cows found in the Red sea,¹ 2. a covering of ram skins dyed red, 3. a woven covering of goat's hair, probably black like the black goat hair tents of the Bedouins today,² 4. an inner covering of blue, purple and scarlet decorated with beautifully embroidered angels.

If one assumes that the sanctuary structure as a whole represents Christ (Exodus 25:8; Rev. 21:22), then it is possible to see an important theological message in the nature, color and order of the roof coverings. By means of these four layers God may be explaining the nature and mission of Jesus.

For example, viewed from the outside, the wilderness tabernacle appeared drab and unattractive. However, hidden beauty lay underneath the common outer covering particularly in the magnificent innermost covering. So it was with Jesus. He "tented" in our flesh (John 1:14) in such a way that He possessed no external beauty which would elevate Him above other human beings. He was divine in nature, but His divinity could only be seen by means of a faith similar to that exercised by Peter in his famous confession (Matthew 16:15-17).

The message given by the coverings is even more specific. To a casual member of the crowd viewing Jesus on the cross certain questions might arise: Is the sign above his head really true? How can a dying man be the King who is to deliver the Jews? Considered theologically, the four coverings of the sanctuary offer this profound answer to the above questions: *The man* (drab outer covering) *who died* (ram skins dyed red) *for sin* (black goat's hair) *is the King* (blue, purple and scarlet linen)—Biblical colors signifying royalty: Matt. 27:28-29; Esther 8:15; Dan. 5:7)!

We too are faced with the same questions asked by the observer at Golgotha. From a historical perspective all that stands before us is the son of Joseph, Jesus by name, crucified by Pontius Pilate in A.D. 31. Only by faith can we penetrate beyond the limits prescribed by the senses and behold in that man our eternal, righteous and victorious King. May the Holy Spirit continually illumine Him as King to our spiritual vision.

¹ SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 635.

² SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 8, p. 108.

by editors

Notes

"Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God . . . Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds . . ." (*Steps to Christ*, p. 100).

The King of kings wants to hold up your world—and mine. He is a King who allows nothing to separate Himself from His creation. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:35, 37; NIV). Indeed, God is more than a Friend. He is an eternal, powerful and victorious King who binds His creation to Himself.

The purpose of this article then is to make the concept of "Christ the King" a practical reality in the life. How can Christ daily become *our* King? How do we seat Him on the throne of our lives?

Consider the steps below in making Christ *your* victorious King of kings.

1. Whatever you ask, ask in the name of Jesus. ". . . ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you." "I have chosen you: . . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name he may give it you" (John 16:26, 27; 15:16). Asking in the name of Jesus means not only to use His name at the beginning and the end of a prayer, but to pray in the spirit of Jesus, having in mind His promises, relying upon His grace and working His works (*Steps to Christ*, p. 101).

To claim His name in your behalf means to accept His righteousness in the place of your own and to allow the corresponding fruits to develop. To claim His name means to claim His sovereignty over your life. It means that you accept His decisions for your life.

2. Be willing to let Him do "whatever" with your life. In practice this means to do the most loving thing.

If we simply leave it with "let God do *whatever* with your life" we may find ourselves sitting for hours waiting to discover what that *whatever* is. But when faced with decisions, the God of love would have us do the most loving thing.

So, if we can decide what is the most loving thing to do, we will be doing what the Lord wants us to.

3. Spend quality time with fellow believers. Do you think this is a strange ingredient in the recipe for making Christ our King? Well, maybe it is—but it's still important.

God chooses to reveal Himself through His people. Just as Christ came and fellowshiped with men to more clearly reveal His Father, so Christians today are called to be a revelation of God to those they socialize with.

So, by fellowship with one another—by allowing the character of God to be reflected and refracted through each individual—we get a more complete and more beautiful picture of our heavenly Father. Consequently, He is seated more securely on the thrones of our hearts.

Soon the Lord will come and inaugurate His reign, and only those lives where Christ had previously been enthroned will be under the dominion of the everlasting King of Kings.

by Mike Rumbaugh

Notes

Christ calls Himself the King of kings for more reasons than the fact that He likes the sound of the name. *King of kings* implies a practical, saving relationship between God and His people.

"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2; NIV). "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13, 14; NIV).

We are under a new and unique rulership when we are in Christ's kingdom. In Christ we are in a kingdom of rejoicing—where the joy of living fills the life (John 4:14).

As for those who choose against Christ's kingship, they are like the visitors from Hell described in *The Great Divorce* by C. S. Lewis. Many came to visit heaven, but few desired to stay. In fact, as the King of kings appears, the people who have found Him to be intolerable to their way of living cry out to the rocks and mountains, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from . . . the Lamb!" (Rev. 6:16; NIV). Their dying words show how little they know about the Lamb of God; they ask, "who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17). Those who hide from the King are ones who don't realize that He stands in their place, and that *no man* can stand alone before the face of Him who sits on the throne.

Now let's make a jump to Matthew 25:31-46 (but before going any further, read this parable in the Bible). Here we find the King returning to give out the rewards. On the right side are the sheep—those who heard His voice, served the way He served here on earth and loved as He loved. On the left are the goats—both the outright sinners and those who were certain they were serving Him in carefully articulated religious duties.

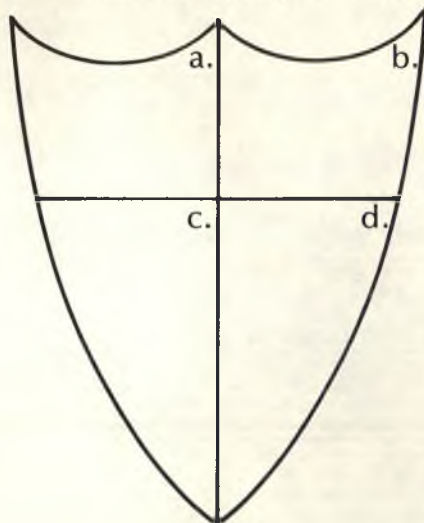
It is a very strange argument that is given by the King to His audience. To the sheep He proclaims, "Blessed are you! Anything you did for one of my brothers here, however humble, however small, you did for me. For I was present in the suffering humanity that you ministered to." Neither the sheep nor the goats probably realized that the King was going around incognito. But what made the sheep *sheep* was the fact that they went out of their way to help the humble. And it was in the guise of the humble that the King waited to be fed or clothed or comforted.

To Christians God will be the reigning King; to those who don't know Him He will be a consuming fire. Our hope is that He has begun His reign in you as King of kings.

"Many came to visit but few desired to stay."

In the guise of the humble the King waited to be clothed

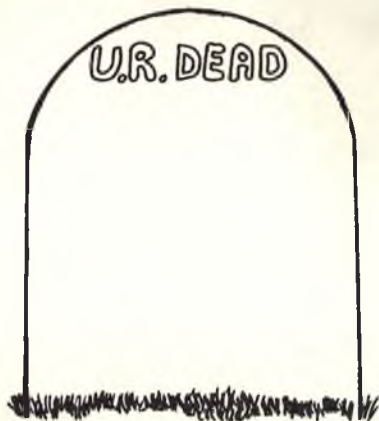
1. Below is a "coat of arms." It will become your personal coat of arms when you follow the steps below.



- In the upper left division write one word that describes your concept of God as King of your life.
- In the upper right division draw a symbol of something that God has control over in your life.
- In the lower left division list three things that occupy the majority of your time.
- In the lower right division give the year that you would pick for the approximate date of the King of kings' return.

Now share your *coat of arms* with those in your discussion group. Explain why you filled it out like you did.

2. Below you have an opportunity to write your own epitaph. Write an inscription on your tombstone that would be an accurate description of you and your life. What could you write that would convince the Lord to raise you at His second coming?



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*. . . Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow,
Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.*

Psalm 51:7,10

Photo by Gary Moore

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