

COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

A North American Youth Ministries Publication

April-June 1984



The Quest for God



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Northern European Division Thanks God for You. In 1981, when Sabbath Schools worldwide last focused attention on Northern Europe, we told you of our plans for an evangelistic center in Poland, a school above the Arctic Circle in Norway, and a new building for Toivonlinnan Junior College in Finland. Of the \$1,582,888.30 you gave that thirteenth Sabbath, 25 percent (\$395,722.07) was shared among the three projects. Because of difficulties in obtaining materials, the building in Poland was delayed, but construction has begun on the college building in Finland, and the school building in north Norway (pictured above) is already in use. These children express the appreciation we all feel.

The Special Projects portion of this quarter's offering on June 30 will be divided between library extension at Newbold College in England and the construction of an evangelistic center in Eindhoven in the southern Netherlands. Thank you again for your prayers and generosity on our behalf.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walter R. L. Scragg".

Walter R. L. Scragg, President, Northern European Division

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The *Collegiate Quarterly* is written by faculty, students, and friends of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities in North America. Organized under the Union College Board of Trustees, it is coordinated by Campus Ministry and published with the approval of the North American Division Church Ministries Committee.

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Art and Design

Perceptive readers will note some significant design modifications in this issue of the *Collegiate Quarterly*. The new look was created by Lauren Smith Design of Mountain View, Calif., winner of 30 major design awards during the past 3 years. We're confident the changes will make reading the *Collegiate Quarterly* an even more enjoyable experience.

Cover art and inside illustrations by Beth Christiansen, senior art major at Union College in Lincoln, Neb.

COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY PROFILE
CANADIAN UNION COLLEGE



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MURDERERS, YOU AND I

"Religion can be compared to an individual obsessional neurosis."

Sigmund Freud

"Religion is the opium of the people." "I want to increase the mind's freedom from the chains of religion."

Karl Marx

"The Christian religion is the relation of man to himself. . . . The divine being is nothing other than the human essence."

Ludwig Feuerbach

"I regard Christianity as the most fatal seductive lie that has yet existed, as the great unholy lie. . . . I reject every compromise position with respect to it—I force a war against it."

"God is dead."

Friedrich Nietzsche

Religion is as old as man. But in the last 100 years or so God and any belief in him has come under attack from atheism. Up until recently people fought over the question of God's existence, but now the debate has subsided. The arguments are over. God lost. We are now entering what has been called the post-atheistic age—an age which God is absent. People live independently of any divine influence. They order their lives without any reference to God. They are resigned to his non-existence. If God is acknowledged at all, it is in the form of sentimental greeting cards. If he is ever mentioned or brought to mind, it is only at life's "big moments", to use Sartre's¹ phrase, birth, marriage, and death. God has been replaced by bunny rabbits and reindeer. His ethics have been set aside for materialistic values. He has disappeared from the consciousness of man.

Is religion a neurosis, a pacifier, a prison? Is belief a human invention? Is God dead? If the answers are all no, why is the questioning of God's existence no longer considered absurd or traumatic? Why are there atheists?

Ideally God's existence should be beyond question. Why then is it questioned? The answer is stated above. God has disappeared from the consciousness of man. He is unknown to the world.

Why is He unknown?

Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: "I seek God! I seek God!"—as many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? emigrated?—Thus they yelled and laughed.

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you. *We have killed him*—you and I. All of us are his murderers. . . . God is dead. God remains dead. . . ."

It has been related further that on the same day the madman forced his way into several churches and there struck up his requiem aeternam Deo. . . .²

"You are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14, 16, RSV).



Editor

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words*, tr. by B. Frechtman (New York: Braziller, 1964), p. 99.

2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, tr. by W. Kaufmann (New York: Random House Vintage Books, 1974), no. 125, pp. 181, 182.

The Chicken or the Egg?

INTRODUCTION

For the first few years of my life I was raised in a sterile environment. But upon moving to North America I began to branch out and make my first contacts with the non-Adventist world. As a result I became good friends with my nominal Christian neighbors next door. These new friends did much in helping me become acquainted with some of the intricacies of the North American life-style.

One such introduction was to the daily devotion given to the television program *Sesame Street*. The big yellow bird, with the green and blue and other rainbow colored monsters were all very new and intriguing. My two friends, a girl and her younger brother, enjoyed singing the songs and repeating the rhymes that interspaced the monster segments. I, however, found these to be tedious and too repetitive. One which particularly grated my nerves was the question, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" The brother and sister would spend hours, or so it seemed, bantering back and forth between the two alternatives. Was it the chicken or was it the egg? When all this would get too much for me I would end the argument by saying in an all-knowing attitude, "The chicken! God created it!"

A few years went by and we began to imagine ourselves as being older and wiser. In slightly embarrassed amusement we would reminisce

about our "youthful" *Sesame Street* days from which we had so recently graduated. On these occasions, to my exasperation, the inevitable "chicken or the egg" argument would come up. However, my attempts at ending it were becoming increasingly more futile.

I remember the last time this endless question was discussed. Again in my arrogance, I presented the final solution to the dilemma. But this time my friends weren't satisfied. The girl responded: "Evert, surely you don't believe *that* anymore?! You know there's no God! The chicken evolved." I was shocked and for once I was speechless. Her words cut through and tumbled into my emptiness. Of course I believed in God, but what could I tell her? She was armed with the "knowledge" recently acquired in her public school science classes, and I with "platitudes" from my church school lessons.

Did the chicken evolve? Is there no God? I believe there is, even more than I did then. But how can one be absolutely sure? One way is to follow the advice of the Psalmist: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10, NIV).

In the rush of life take time to be still. In quiet solitude wait patiently for the voice of God, and you will hear it. He will make himself known. As with Elijah on Mt. Horeb, God probably won't reveal himself

(Continued on page 14)

The Universal Answer

LOGOS

I once took a math class in which the professor stridently insisted that all problems solved include written proofs incorporating the theorems used to obtain the solutions. This practice struck me as being unnecessarily time-consuming and became a source of great frustration. I found it relatively easy to solve the problems, but I couldn't really explain how or "prove" the answer correct. I knew I had the right answer, but could give no empirical proof.

The problem of God's existence is much like that. Millions of Christians assume the existence of God and hinge their lives on that belief, but absolute proof for God is difficult or impossible to come by. Theologians and philosophers from time immemorial have attempted to find proof for God—with varying degrees of success. For the most part however, belief in God's existence must still have its basis in faith. "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Heb. 11:6, NIV).

The Bible does, however, indicate several other sources of support for divine existence. One of these is intuition or inner perception—the so-called "divine spark" innate in every person. The Apostle John refers to this when he speaks of "the true light that gives light to every man" (John 1:9, NIV).

More evidence for God emanates from simple human reason, which tells us that there must be a supreme deity behind the immense and intricate workings of nature. Reason asks such questions as: "Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain, and a path for the thunderstorm, to water a land where no man lives, a desert with no one in it, to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass? Does the rain have a father? Who fathers the drops of dew?" (Job 38:25-28, NIV). And each time the answer seems to point to God.

Yet another indication of God lies in Scripture—certainly a more subjective source, but no less convincing. The Scriptures are the embodiment of evidence for the existence of God. For Jesus said, "These are the Scriptures that testify about me" (John 5:39, NIV). So it isn't surprising that the Scriptures go further than a simple testimony of God's existence. They also give a fairly complete description of God and his characteristics. We discover that he is powerful (Jer. 32:17) yet loving (1 John 4:6), eternal (Rev. 1:8) and immortal (1 Tim. 6:16), immanent (Ps. 139:7-12) and consistent (Mal. 3:6). What impressive qualities—what an awesome God!

But the clincher comes when God himself speaks in his own defense. He declares in clear, ringing tones that bear no refutation, "I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God" (Isa. 45:5, NIV). Need any more be said?

L. R. C.

Unnecessary Evidence

No finite mind can fully comprehend the character of the works of the Infinite One. We can not by searching find out God. To minds the strongest and most highly cultured, as well as the weakest and most ignorant, that holy Being must remain clothed in mystery. But though "clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne." Ps. 97:2, RV. We can so far comprehend His dealing with us as to discern boundless mercy united to infinite power. We can understand as much of His purposes as we are capable of comprehending; beyond this we may still trust the hand that is omnipotent, the heart that is full of love.

The word of God, like the character of its Author, presents mysteries that can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. But God has given in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine authority. His own existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. True, He has not removed the possibility of doubt; faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration; those who wish to doubt have opportunity; but those who desire to know the truth find ample ground for faith.¹

In the Garden of Eden the existence of God was demonstrated, His attributes were revealed, in the objects of nature that surrounded them [Adam and Eve]. Everything upon which their eyes rested spoke to them. The invisible things of God, "even His everlasting power and divinity," were clearly seen, being understood by the things that were made.

But while it is true that in the beginning God could be discerned in nature, it does not follow that after the Fall a perfect knowledge of God was revealed in the natural world to Adam and his posterity. Nature could convey her lessons to man in his innocence. . . .

The real evidence of a living God is not merely in theory; it is in the conviction that God has written in our hearts, illuminated and explained by His word. It is in the living power in His created works, seen by the eye which the Holy Spirit has enlightened.

Those who judge of God from His handiwork, and not from the suppositions of great men, see His presence in everything. They behold His smile in the glad sunshine, and His love and care for man in the rich fields of autumn. Even the adornments of the earth, the grass of living green, the lovely flowers of every hue, the lofty and varied trees of the forest, the dancing brook, the noble river, the placid lake, testify to the tender, fatherly care of God and to His desire to make His children happy.²

It is those who have not experimental knowledge of God who venture to speculate in regard to Him. Did they know more of Him, they would have less to say about what He is. The one who in the daily life holds closest communion with God, and who has the deepest knowledge of Him, realized most keenly the utter inability of human beings to explain the Creator.³

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Psalm 53:1

"The one who holds closest communion with God realizes most keenly the utter inability of human beings to explain the Creator."

1. *Education*, p. 169.
2. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 255, 324.
3. *Medical Ministry*, p. 92.

The Evidence of Faith

by Charles Scriven

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Exodus 3:14

No Christian can prove that God is not a mere figment of the imagination. The Christian cannot produce God to the skeptical world in the way that an archaeologist, for example, can produce the artifacts he claims to have found. As you may suppose, skeptics have been quick to seize upon this fact and to use it in their criticisms of the Christian faith. Among the best known of these criticisms—with Sigmund Freud its most celebrated advocate—is the view that God is just a mythological personality dreamed up to satisfy various psychological needs. Humanity needed someone to lean on, the argument goes, so it invented God.

What can the Christian say to this? One thing is certain: There is no way to refute categorically such an interpretation. But if called upon to prove its views, the opposition finds itself in a similar impasse. If the Christian cannot produce God for the benefit of skeptical onlookers, neither can the skeptics produce any proof that He is imaginary. So the critics certainly do not leave the Christian speechless. Indeed, there is considerable that he can say.

First of all, the Christian can point out that when he speaks of God, he is not merely giving voice to some private or eccentric opinion. As Richard Niebuhr said, the things the Christian feels certain about grow "out of immediate perception plus social corroboration and out of neither one of these alone."¹

So while the Christian has, indeed, experienced God personally, a large community of other human beings down through millennia of history have had the same experience and have said, or are now saying, the same things. If the Christian cannot produce God, he can at least point to his fellow believers, all of whom would ardently testify that God is more than an invention. While the critics may dispute the testimony of a large community of people such as this, they certainly cannot ignore or dismiss it lightly.

In the second place, contrary to what the skeptics may say, the God of Christian faith is not cosmic cotton candy whipped up to take the edge off the troubles and misery of human existence. It is true that the faith of the Christian enables him to bear suffering and to live with hope, but that is not the whole story. God also makes uncomfortable demands. He asks the Christian for rigorous commitment to the needs of human beings and to the care of the earth. Nothing—not money, not romance, not career, not even family—may be allowed to interfere with this commitment. It is one thing to say, as Freud did, that God is an illusion. But to say that God is a *convenient* illusion, to say that He is a nice, genial, undemanding escape—that is nonsense.

More than this, the Christian may appeal to reason. Though he cannot make a neat, unimpeachable argument for Christianity, he can do what persons of other convictions can do: *describe* his faith, especially the central points, and explain what it means for human existence. Then he can ask whether the Christian view of life does not seem, despite all the difficulties, to make sense. . . .

"the God of Christian faith is not cosmic cotton candy . . ."

A fourth response for the Christian is that of a life lived in accord with what he believes. Suppose a cynic accuses you of using the person you love to satisfy your own need to be loved. Suppose he calls your love a charade. If he does this, you will never refute him by argument. He can label everything you say a "rationalization." But by the concrete ways in which you care for the person you love, by the everyday indications that you are not putting on, you make a powerful statement that your love is genuine. In the same way, the Christian whose life reflects what he believes makes a powerful statement that the Divine Reality he speaks of, far from being an illusion, is actually at work in his life.

Yet when the Christian has said all he can, he still falls short of proof for his views. But as I pointed out before, Freudians fall short of proof for their views—as do Marxists, Buddhists, and nudists. Our "deepest convictions . . . are rooted," as Gordon Kaufman has stated, "in a kind of unquestioned faith, not in logical demonstration."² In the end, the Christian must simply ask his listener to size up what has been said, to try to enter into it "sympathetically," and then to decide whether it is a true picture of our existence!³ The listener's decision is, in the end, a mystery—for the Marxist trying to win converts as surely as for the Christian.

. . . No one is forced to commit himself to the Maker of all things. As Pascal wrote, "There is enough light for those who only desire to see, and enough obscurity for those who have a contrary disposition."⁴

. . . The skeptic will still have questions to ask, and, indeed, the Christian himself knows these questions. He knows them well. The mystery of God, in the days of the modern believer as certainly as in the days of Job, " 'is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea' " (Job 11:9).

But the Christian has felt, along with others who believe, the impact of the living God. He possesses, along with others, the unshakable conviction that meaning, direction, and hope in life come not from within oneself but from the very Creator of all things. And this conviction—this indisputable sense of God's presence—is the ultimate basis for the Christian's faith and for what he says to his fellow men and women.

Excerpted from Charles Scriven, *The Demons Have Had It* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1976), pp. 25-30.

1. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 141.
2. Gordon Kaufman, *Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), p. 21.
3. John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 79.
4. Pascal, *Pensées: The Provincial Letters*, W. F. Trotter, trans. (New York: The Modern Library, 1941), No. 430, p. 140.

Charles Scriven teaches theology at Walla Walla College in College Place, Wash.

Prove It

HOW TO

Key text:
James 1:27

There is a God. Prove it!

God is love. Prove it!

Such is the skeptic's response to the truths to which Christians cling. Often, Christians find this response disconcerting. After all, how does one prove God? The scientific community generally agrees that the existence of God cannot be proven by the scientific method. One cannot touch, see, or experience him directly through any of the other senses. Therefore many take this as evidence that there is no God.

There is, however, one conclusive proof of God's existence. This proof is the evidence of his power in a Christian's life. Is it then so surprising that many believe that God is dead?

Before you finish reading these few short paragraphs over 40 children will have died of starvation. Stretch these few seconds into a year and this figure grows into a frightfully astounding 17 million deaths. This shocking amount includes only children and in no way reflects adults in the same situation.

Each year from the pages of magazines and newspapers the pitiful, hollow faces of crying, dying children call out for aid. But they still die. Their tears fall unnoticed. Their cries pass unheard.

God is love?

At the time of this writing, in about 40 different parts of the world, men are doing their best to kill other men, for a "good cause" no doubt. It's called war.

To support these wars and supposedly to guard against other wars, nations are spending more than a million dollars a minute in military appropriations.¹ It is painfully ironic that at the same time this phenomenal amount is being spent on ways to kill human beings, 17 million children die because they are hungry. When this million-dollar-a-minute figure is multiplied out to represent a yearly expenditure it is beyond comprehension, and it becomes obvious it is a crime unequaled in magnitude and horror. One year of million-dollar minutes is enough to feed the world's hungry, and provide free education and medical aid to all who need it. But the fighting goes on and nations still buy and invent new ways to kill. Men die and children still starve.

There is a God?

Yes, there is a God and despite the seeming lack of evidence he is a God of love. But until those who profess to follow him express his love in their own lives nobody will ever know that he exists and that he does love.

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress..." (James 1:27, NIV). "Learn to do good; seek justice, [and] correct oppression" (Isa. 1:17, RSV).

There is a God and he is a God of love, but you must prove it!

E. R. M.

1. Reported on NBC Nightly News, Oct. 7, 1983.

From Job to Kant to Küng

by Gerald Connell

"Canst thou by searching, find out God?" (Job 11:7).

On what basis can we say that God exists? Philosophy tells us, "the fact that God is, cannot be assumed on the basis of pure reason, not on the basis of moral reason nor exclusively in virtue of biblical testimony."¹ If this is true, how can we affirm the existence of God?

It is possible to deny the existence of God (atheism), and this cannot be rationally refuted. It is just as possible to affirm the existence of God which also cannot be rationally refuted. And having affirmed the existence of God, one can make a fundamental decision for reality as a whole.

Hans Küng was right when he said, "the price paid by atheism for its denial is obvious. It is exposed to ultimate groundlessness, unsupportedness, aimlessness, possible disunion, meaninglessness, worthlessness, and hollowness of reality as a whole."² Atheism has no answers to those ultimate and yet perennial questions of human life and existence which disappear neither by being avoided nor by being suppressed.

If God exists, then there is an answer to the great questions of life, like "where is man and humanity going; what is the destiny of human existence and history?" The nothingness of atheism does not explain the pressing questions of our beginning or our end. Francis Schaeffer remarked that, "man's greatest damnation today is that he can find no meaning for man."³ The validity of this insightful truism is reflected in a mental health survey conducted several years ago among 8,000 U.S. college students who reported that, "their most crucial problem was finding purpose and meaning in life."⁴ Even modern psychoanalysts such as Erik Erikson and Rollo May have observed a significant connection between the decline of religiousness and an increasing lack of orientation, lack of norms, and lack of meaning which are typical neuroses of our time.

Immanuel Kant, the 18th Century philosopher who spent years pondering the finiteness of man, suggested that if there was no God who can be known, then "what can we know? Why is there anything at all, why not nothing? Where does man come from and where does he go, why is the world as it is? What is the ultimate reason and meaning of all reality? What ought we to do? Why do what we do? Why and to whom are we ultimately responsible? What deserves contempt and what love? What is the point of loyalty and friendship? What is the point of suffering and sin? What really matters for man? What may we hope, why are we here? What is it really all about? What is there left for us, *death* making everything pointless in the end? What gives us courage for life and courage for death?"⁵

In affirming the existence of God and our ability to perceive him we make a conscious choice for reality instead of nothingness. Since we confidently decide for a primal (fundamental) meaning instead of meaninglessness, primal support instead of unsupported-

OPINION

Key text:
Job 11:7

ness, a primal goal instead of aimlessness, we can see in all seeming worthlessness and futility a value and purpose to our own existence. As Kūng points out, "in all uncertainty, insecurity, abandonment, exposure, and menace of our own decay and the finiteness of our own existence, in the light of primal source, value and meaning we are granted a radical certainty, assurance, and reality."⁶

The basis of the whole drug culture is the user's quest to find a meaningful reality; and failing to find it in their own environment, they try expanding their minds in search of an escape or an answer. This lack of meaning and search for tangible reality is also the basis for the "if it feels good, do it" mentality ushered in during the sexual revolution of the late 60's and 70's. The horrendous social and psychological ramifications of that movement have come to fruition in the 80's leaving millions more disorientated, disillusioned, and with no answers still to the major questions of life, death, and meaning of their own existence.

By assuming a reality that has hope and meaning, by assuming a viable alternative to meaninglessness and aimlessness, reality begins to manifest itself in its depths. As I open myself up to this primal ground, support, meaning, value, and goal, I can accept its ultimate primal source, a God that can be known.

When this was written, Gerald Connell was a senior theology major at Canadian Union College.

(Continued from page 7)

in a whirlwind, earthquake, fire or some other majestic display, but in a still small voice. In the peace of a mountain lake at sunset, through the song of a bird, or in the stillness of the morning he will speak and you will know that he is God.

E. R. M.

1. Hans Kūng, *Does God Exist?* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1980), p. 569.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 571.
 3. Francis A. Schaeffer, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1976), p. 11.
 4. Skip MacCorty, *Who Am I, A Christian Guide to Meaning and Identity* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1979), p. 141.
 5. Hans Kūng, *On Being a Christian* (Bung, Suffolk, Great Britain: The Chaucer Press Ltd., 1979), p. 76.
 6. Hans Kūng, *Does God Exist?* p. 554.
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1. If a non-believer were to ask you to give the most important reason for your belief in God, what would you say?
 2. Both the Evidence and Opinion articles comment that God's existence cannot be proven rationally. Do you agree? If so, on what basis does one decide for or against God?—Emotion? Feeling? If you disagree, what rational proofs are there?
 3. In contrast to Evidence and Opinion, the How To suggests there is one conclusive proof for God's existence—his power in the lives of believers. Do you agree? Why or why not?
 4. If we could in fact arrive at a rational proof for God, do you think that would effect mass conversions to Christianity? Why or why not?
 5. Many thinkers suggest that only when one affirms the reality of God is there meaning to life (see Opinion). Do you agree? Is life inevitably meaningless without God? Why? Is meaning necessary for happiness? In what specific ways does God's reality make life meaningful for you?
 6. Is it possible for believers to experience a sense of meaninglessness and emptiness? If so, is there a solution?
 7. The Bible assumes God's existence and never attempts to prove it. What significance do you see in this fact?
-

HOW GOD IS KNOWN

No
prophecy
ever
came
by
the
impulse
of
man

but
men
moved
by
the
Holy

Spirit
spoke
from
God



2 Peter 1:21 R5U

Morning Triptych* by Beverly Matiko Tetz

INTRO- DUCTION

The alarm clock in my head buzzed five-thirty. I got out of bed, pulled on my sweatsuit and slipped out of the cabin. The nature spot on the radio the day before had said that dusk and dawn were the best times to see wildlife.

I thought about jogging along the road leading up Tunnel Mountain, but then decided against it. The pitter-pounding of full grown feet would surely scare any animals away, I reasoned. I decided on a brisk but light pace instead.

I had read enough Annie Dillard to know that I must stalk with all my senses if I hoped to meet fellow creatures. I inhaled deeper, squinted harder, and listened closer, but still no luck. I had been walking for about half an hour before I saw them. Actually, I heard them first.

There's was a strange sound—a cross between dull applause and the rush of wings as their hooves patted the partially frozen ground and their coats brushed the bare branches.

I stood still. I knew if I looked carefully I would be able to spot their motion. I waited for a few seconds. Then it happened. Across the road in a small clearing, a piece of landscape shifted.

I focused more clearly and their brown bodies began to stand out against the backdrop. There were three wapiti standing in perfect formation as if posing for a still life.

I was afraid to move. I had found the moment I was look-

ing for but now that it was here, I wasn't sure what to do with it.

I had brought no offerings. It was against park rules to feed the animals. I had prepared no speeches. I knew my voice would offend them. I had formed no requests. I was neither hunter nor photographer.

I decided to simply share their meadow for as long as they would let me. I sat down in the pebbly grass. They stared and I stared. This would be most rude if we were all humans, I thought.

Civilization in the form of a red Camaro roared by carrying three sets of skis and as many enthusiasts. But neither my friends nor I were disturbed. The chatting passengers hadn't even noticed us. They had completely missed the spectacle.

The elk and I kept company for about fifteen minutes before they started to move away. I followed them briefly but turned back to my path when they retreated deeper into the woods.

As I ran back toward the cabin, I wanted to shout "I've found them, I've found them."

I had seen what I had set out to see. It was as if they had been waiting for me to call. I picked up my pace. The wind sang a strange rushing melody as I cut through it. Its chant of promise and praise assured me that we would meet again on some other visit—this timid, taupe trinity and me.

*A triptych is a three-piece folding picture which serves as an altarpiece.

Beverly Matiko Tetz is an assistant professor in the Division of Humanities at Canadian Union College.

Heaps of Ashes

LOGOS Once thought as blessed by God, Job, in his affliction, was now considered to be cursed and rejected. Association with him, once a privilege, was now to be avoided lest one might also invoke God's displeasure.

Three friends, however, braved this possibility and came to give comfort. But the only comfort they offered was thorny rebuke. In their arrogance, as they shared Job's ash heap, they tried to explain God and his justice. And as they spewed out their empty wisdom they forgot one of their own key points. "Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave—what can you know?" (Job 11:7, 8, NIV).

Can you fathom God? "Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you will answer me. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. . . . Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion?" (Job 38:3, 4, 31, NIV). Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? Obviously no, but some things can be known. As high above and beyond our comprehension as God is he has not allowed us to remain ignorant of him. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made" (Rom. 1:20, NIV). It is through his creative acts, the things he has made, that God is revealed. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. . . . Their voice goes out into all the earth" (Psalm 19:1, 2, 4, NIV).

But nature is, nevertheless, an indirect source for getting to know God. This is where divine revelation comes into play. "Listen to my words: 'When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I will reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams'" (Num. 12:6, NIV).

Another method for learning about God is through reason. Peter counsels: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15, NIV). To do this one must logically think out why he believes in God. Reason, however, is potentially a more difficult method for getting to know God. Many claim to be using reason when they try to prove God does exist. But as the preacher of Ecclesiastes said: "This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes" (Eccl. 7:29, NIV). As these pseudo-thinkers sit on their pedestals of logic and spew out their their arrogant wisdom they fail to realize that they, along with Job's friends, are sitting on heaps of ashes. They do not see and hear what nature declares, they shut out divine revelation, and go in search of many schemes.

E. R. M.

Unto a Knowledge of God

by Gloria Falsnes

How do we get to know other people? By communicating with them and hearing about them through others. Through these means a person's character is gradually revealed.

A knowledge of God also comes through revelation. God becomes known to us:

1. Through His Word.

"What God desires us to know of Him is revealed in His word and His works."¹ As we read his word we discover that it centers around his Son. "All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son."²

2. Through the illumination of the intellect by the Holy Spirit.

"... The fact that God has revealed His will to men through His word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour, to open the word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings. And since it was the Spirit of God that inspired the Bible, it is impossible that the teaching of the Spirit should ever be contrary to that of the word."³

3. Through the works of nature.

"Since the book of nature and the book of revelation bear the impress of the same master mind, they cannot but speak in harmony. By different methods, and in different languages, they witness to the same great truths. Science is ever discovering new wonders; but she brings from her research nothing that, rightly understood, conflicts with divine revelation. The book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. They make us acquainted with God by teaching us something of the laws through which He works."⁴

4. Through providential experience.

"God's providence is the school in which we are to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus."⁵ "The pure in heart see God in every providence, in every phase of true education."⁶

5. Through prayer.

"If you come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as you really are, and in humble, trusting prayer make your wants known to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to your cry, and will let light shine into your heart and all around you; for through sincere prayer your soul is brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite."⁷

TESTIMONY

Key text:
John 17:3

"All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His son."

1. *Medical Ministry*, p. 94.
2. *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 286.
3. *The Great Controversy*, p. vii.
4. *Education*, p. 128.
5. *The Great Controversy*, p. 623.
6. *Messages to Young People*, p. 191.
7. *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 323.

At the time of this writing, Gloria Falsnes was a senior theology student at Canadian Union College.

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Hebrews 1:1-3

Archbishop William Temple's essay on revelation is as relevant now as it was in the 1920's when he wrote it, and long before that. He wrote:

"The dominant problem of contemporary religious thought is the problem of revelation. Is there such a thing at all? If there is, what is its mode and form? . . . Where is it found? Or believed to be found?"¹

A number of classic responses has been given to these questions. In Book I of his *Summa Theologica* for example, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) argued for a position which has commanded a large following, particularly in the Roman Catholic Church. It is known as "natural theology." This maintains that there is knowledge of God to be found in nature, history, and in human personality, which is objectively present and accessible to anyone who will take the trouble to observe and reflect upon it. This is consequently termed a "general revelation" and is usually buttressed by arguments based on the nature psalms (e.g. Ps. 19:1-6) and Rom. 1:18-23.

**"God alone
is sufficient
witness
of Himself."**

Although there is a modicum of truth in all of this, the "natural theology" approach labors under great liabilities because of its further insistence that our rational ability to discover spiritual truth, unaided, has not been seriously affected by the presence of sin in both life and personality. The Apostle Paul does not endorse this view because for him, spiritual regeneration is a prerequisite to a meaningful encounter with a proper understanding of God's revelation (cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-14). John Calvin, the Reformer (1509-1564), summed it up well when he declared, "The testimony of the Spirit is superior to all reason. For as God alone is sufficient witness of Himself, so it (revelation) will never gain credit in the hearts of men till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit."²

Also, the "natural theology" or "general revelation" approach gives short shrift to what is termed scriptural or "special revelation" in which we discover a redeeming God who "in former times," not only chose to reveal himself in numerous persons and places but who, "in these last days," has given us definitive manifestation of himself in his Son, Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Pet. 1:20f; Heb. 1:1-3).³ It is these convictions which traditionally have informed the Protestant position and which are entirely consistent with the "sola energy" that propelled the Reformation forward: namely, *sola gratia* (grace alone), *sola fidei* (faith alone) and *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone).

1. William Temple, "Revelation," in J. Baillie and H. Martin, eds., *Revelation* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), p. 83.

2. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, bk. 1, ch. vii.

Sec. 4. Trans. by John Allen (Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, n.d.).

3. All scriptural references are based on the RSV.

Gosnell L. O. R. Yorke is an assistant professor of biblical theology at Canadian Union College.

A Friendship to Cultivate

by Marilyn Pond

HOW TO
Key text:
Jeremiah 24:7

In a relationship with one we think we know well, we are often surprised by discovering a trait of which we were previously unaware. If, after spending much time in close association, we find there are many unknowns about a friend, then how can we expect completely to understand our great God whom we have never seen? Job 11:7 intimates that it is impossible to search out God (cf. Isa. 55:8-9). Yet he invites us to enjoy a close relationship with him. It seems imperative that we get to know him, but how?

When we think of developing a human friendship, we realize the necessity of spending time interacting and communicating. How can we overcome the barrier of not being able to communicate with God face to face? We cannot teach ourselves about God, but he will reveal himself to us if we will take the time to seek him with all our hearts (Jer. 29:13). I have found at least five ways in which God reveals himself to us:

1. **Nature (Rom. 1:20).** The starlit sky displays God's orderliness and power. The bird songs sound forth his love for harmony and happiness. The variety of flowers evidences his love for beauty. The flavors of fruit suggest his pleasure to delight us. The machinery of our bodies reveals his wisdom.

2. **The prophets (Num. 12:6).** In a world of constant change, the biblical prophets present a picture of God as unchanging love. As they give us God's repeated invitations to come to him, his promises of blessings and protection, and the love-warnings of the consequences of wrong choices.

3. **The life of Christ (John 14:9).** Through a study of gospels and the *Desire of Ages*, the marvelous love and compassion of Christ for humankind is revealed. Such an unreserved and undeserved love draws us to him, and to the Father whom he represented.

4. **Human relationships (Isa. 62:5; 66:13).** A friend's caring and sharing, a parent's concern and nurturing, a spouse's closeness and commitment, help us grasp the relationships God desires to share with us. They also demonstrate the satisfaction that comes from responding to such relationships.

5. **Personal experience (Eze. 36:26).** Answered prayers tell of God's closeness and of his unlimited resources. His forbearance with human fickleness attests of his patient power. His guidance in even the small, everyday events reveals his personal interest in each one of us.

With the traits that God reveals in so many ways, we can be assured that his is a friendship that needs to be cultivated.

Marilyn Pond is a recent elementary education graduate of Canadian Union College.

Does Faith Have a Reason?

OPINION

Key texts:

1 Corinthians
2:14; 2 Peter 3:15

The relationship of faith and reason, long debated among Christian thinkers, is relevant to the question of how we acquire knowledge of God. Is the knowledge of God that comes with faith non-rational, a personal enlightenment mediated to us directly by the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor. 2:14)? Or do we come to the knowledge of God through rational analysis of the evidence, aided by divine revelation (see 2 Peter 3:15)? Augustine and the Reformers are generally associated with the former view, and Thomas Aquinas with the latter (see Evidence).

Adventist thinkers have also come down on both sides of this question. In a 1973 *Spectrum* article, Richard Rice strongly defended the Augustinian view. He argued that one adopts a perspective of faith that is self-authenticating, not subject to the rational process. This faith is simply "known" to be true in the same sense that one knows when he sees the color red or is feeling pain. Rather than faith being based on objective evidence, "the process of finding reasons on which to base one's faith is really the function of faith justifying itself rather than something else justifying faith. Consequently, every attempt to get behind faith to prior evidence for it will always find faith already present in the perception of that evidence."¹ Thus, in this view, the knowledge of God that is at the core of faith is ultimately subjective and unexplainable.

"Reason does not have such pride of place that there is no room for the mysterious."

In the same issue of *Spectrum*, James Londis responded to Rice by pointing out that if faith is "self-authenticating" knowledge, then no objective tests for intelligibility or coherence can be applied to it. There would be no basis for arguing that faith in Christ is any better than faith in a Jim Jones or a Maharishi. In Londis' words, "reason has the sacred responsibility to veto any alleged revelation that is confused and nonsensical."

Londis acknowledges that faith "is more than neutral assent. It involves the commitment of the whole person. But it must be a commitment that the person finds rationally persuasive. If one cannot cite good reasons for believing, reasons that impress the nonbeliever as well as the believer, how can one demonstrate that his faith was not hastily and ignorantly born? The skeptic may not agree, but at least he can understand the intelligibility of the believer's faith."²

A third Adventist theologian, Edward W. H. Vick, suggests what I perceive to be a mediating position (though not written in dialogue with Londis and Rice):

"Faith is not the product of reasoning, like the answer to a mathematical problem. We may be just as far from faith at the end of a process of reasoning as we were at the beginning.

"Faith is not irrational in the sense of being opposed to reason.

"Reasoning has a place in relation to Christian faith, both before and after it comes.

"Our decision for or against the Christian faith may thus be a reasoned one.

1. Richard Rice, "The Knowledge of Faith," *Spectrum*, vol. IV, no. 2, pp. 19-331.

2. James Londis, "Comment," *Spectrum*, vol. IV, no. 2, pp. 32-37.

3. Charles Scriven, ed., *Into the Arena*, (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1975), pp. 17, 18.

"At the same time, reason does not have such pride of place that there is no room for the mysterious. When there is the mystery of God's presence, the function of reason is to understand it as best it can, and in the appropriate ways. By adding understanding to piety and to feeling, our admiration for the miracle of the loving grace of God will then be a rational admiration, a reasoned wonder at the doings of the Divine."

Reason thus plays a crucial role in coming to the knowledge of God, but there are basic elements of the knowledge that faith affirms to be true which are mysterious and beyond rational analysis. Through Isaiah the Lord declares, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:9, NIV). But still the apostle Paul urges us to, "test everything; hold fast to what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21, RSV).

D. F. M.

1. What does the story about looking for wapiti (Introduction) have to do with knowing God?
2. What are the implications of the Introduction author's statement, "I must stalk with all my senses" (compare Deuteronomy 4:29)?
3. What is the difference between the "natural theology" approach and the "special revelation" approach to knowing God? Which approach seems most sound to you? Is it necessary for a person to experience both before really knowing God?
4. Discuss specific human relations that you have experienced that have taught you something about God.
5. If spiritual regeneration is prerequisite to understanding God's revelation (see Evidence), is conversion then fundamentally an irrational experience, a blind leap? Does one have to turn his life over to God before he can know much about God?
6. Is your faith based on a subjective inner conviction or on objective reasons? Explain.
7. Does a proper understanding of the relationship between faith and reason in knowing God have any practical implications for
 - a) how I live my life?
 - b) evangelism and witnessing?
 - c) how I relate to those with different beliefs?
 - d) religious education?

REACT
Lesson 2

THE NAMES OF GOD

Elohim Yahweh Adonai

El-Roi Father El Shaddai Yahweh

Elohim Adonai El-Roi Father

El Shaddai Yahweh Adonai El-Roi

Joel 2:32 New International Version

What's In a Name?

by Caroline Evahnenko

INTRODUCTION

I was abhorred to find that my name is the feminine form of the name Charles, which in turn means "the man." (No offense to all the Charleses out there, but I just prefer my own identity!) All of us are interested in the meaning of our own names, and hope that upon learning the definition it will be something significant.

Parents-to-be pore over *Three Thousand Names For Your Baby* in hopes of finding the perfect name for their would-be-perfect offspring. Some African tribes use names for their children that denote the time of birth or a recent family incident. American Indians choose names that are closely associated with nature. Chinese parents create an individual name for each child, and most Scandinavian names refer to leadership in battle, bravery, or Norse mythology.

In antiquity the meaning of a name had special significance. The Bible is full of names that even today are chosen for their profound meaning. In so doing there is the hope that the child upon whom that name is bestowed will live up to the character suggested. John means "gracious gift of God," Peter, "the stone," Timothy, "one who reverences God," Elijah, "Yahweh is my God," Mary, "the beloved one," and Sarah, "princess."

As we will see this week, there are many names for God, but unlike those of hu-

manity they seem to be beyond definition. No one name or word can describe fully "the One," "the Lord," the "I AM," God. Perhaps that is what makes us human and him divine.

Caroline Evahnenko is the director of Guidance and Counseling at Canadian Union College.

The One Who Needs No Name

LOGOS

As they did in the biblical era, names still possess great meaning and significance in some cultures today. A good example is China. The story is told of a Communist official named Lee who desired to exhibit his patriotism for the new regime following the 1948 revolution. He decided to select names for his children that reflected this attitude. He had three daughters and named the first one Lee Ai-kuo, or "Lee loves his country." He named the second daughter Lee Ai-min, or "Lee loves the people." And the third Lee Ai-tang, or "Lee loves the Party." His unique choice of names won him a stellar reputation as a model of proletarian fervor. All was well until the "Cultural Revolution" of the sixties, when a zealous cadre happened to notice that in combination the names of Lee's three daughters expressed a very different meaning than their father intended. The last character of each name when read in order spelled out "Kuomintang"—the name of the stridently anti-communist Nationalist Party, implacably hated foes of the Communists. Needless to say, poor Mr. Lee spent quite some time in prison for his innocent oversight.

Though Mr. Lee's daughters can in no way be compared to God, the naming of the girls is in some ways analogous to the biblical names for God. The first and most superficial similarity is the singular theme upon which each set of names is based. Lee chose his names to reflect patriotism, while God selected his names to represent superlatives. *El Elyon* and *El Shaddai* exemplify this criterion. "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High (*El Elyon*) will rest in the shadow of the Almighty (*El Shaddai*)" (Psalm 91:1, NIV). The second word in the name (*Elyon*) is a superlative of the Hebrew word meaning "go up."¹ Therefore the meaning of the name is not "the High One," but "the Highest One"—with heavy emphasis on the ultimate in that trait. *El Shaddai* is much the same. Its root connotes the meaning "mighty" or "powerful."

A second similarity lies in the descriptiveness of the names. The names of Lee's daughters specifically described a quality he envisioned in himself. God's names serve the same purpose. In them God attempts to express his personality to a race that finds it difficult to perceive him. *El Roi* is expressive in just such a way. It is encountered exclusively in Gen. 16:13, where Hagar tells God, "You are the God who sees me (*El Roi*) . . . I have now seen the One who sees me (*El Roi*)" (NIV). God is the only being who sees everything, who sees each one of his creatures in distress or despair, the only one who sees—and understands.

A third comparison that can be drawn is the hidden meanings that both sets of names reveal upon closer examination. Lee was unaware of the greater implications of his choices until the cadre clued him in—much to his horror. God's names, however, hold deeper *inherent* meanings which can be discovered by careful study. *Adonai* is a simple example. On the surface, it means only "lord, master, sire."² It is used simply for a human overlord, or even a

1. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. II (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983), p. 506.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 508.

husband. But when God takes it as a name for himself, it expands to much greater proportions. "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord (*Adonai*) is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners" (Isa. 61:1, NIV). *Adonai* now expresses the eminent dignity and absolute domain of God. God becomes not only master of the universe, but master of yielded hearts as well. He is the supreme Overlord, to whom all are subject.

The final similarity is that Lee's names are each separate entities holding distinct meanings which stand alone, but when joined together produce a significance far beyond that of the sum of the parts. God, too, possesses a number of distinctive names. Besides the names already mentioned, God is referred to in various cases as *El*, *El Bethel*, the I Am, *El Olam*, Father . . . the list is nearly endless. But each is unique in that it attempts to provide a description of God in terms of one facet of his character. Each facet depicts him as truly God, but leaves the picture partial and incomplete. Only when all of the names are combined can God best be perceived—albeit still dimly. For then he becomes more than just a collection of character traits, he becomes the ultimate, infinite Reality, the Absolute Standard by which all things are measured, the Perspective in which everything receives definition—he becomes *Yahweh*, the Indescribable One. For "Yahweh" is not so much a name, as an incomprehensible concept. He defies definition; he is his only common denominator.

When Moses asked what name he should give to God, the response was "I am who I am. . . ."

"God also said to Moses, 'You are to say to the sons of Israel, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers . . . has sent me to you''" (Ex. 3:14-15, Jerusalem Bible).

Thus God's names are actually just a condescension to his creatures—to enable them to conceptualize him in the most basic sense. His names are only models or representations of pieces of him. As a wise man once queried, "Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his son? Tell me if you know!" (Prov. 30:4, NIV). The lack of response indicates that in reality God has no name because he is the only being which a name cannot encompass. He needs no name.

Yet we can take great comfort in the fact that this God who is ultimately beyond knowing and naming relates to us so intimately that he is called our Father. "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" (Rom. 8:15, NIV).

L. R. C.

Music in God's Ears

selected by Reo E. Ganson

TESTIMONY **Reverence For His Name**

Key text:
Psalm 8:9

I saw that God's holy name should be used with reverence and awe. The words God Almighty are coupled together and used by some in prayer in a careless, thoughtless manner, which is displeasing to Him. Such have no realizing sense of God or the truth, or they would not speak so irreverently of the great and dreadful God. . . . Those who realize the greatness and majesty of God, will take His name on their lips with awe!¹

Reverence should be shown also for the name of God. Never should that name be spoken lightly or thoughtlessly. Even in prayer its frequent or needless repetition should be avoided. "Holy and reverend is His name" Psalm 111:9. Angels, as they speak it, veil their faces. With what reverence should we, who are fallen and sinful, take it upon our lips.²

**"God regards us
as His children.
He has
redeemed us
out of the
careless world
and has chosen
us to become
members of the
royal family,
sons and
daughters of the
heavenly King."**

A New Name

In order to strengthen our confidence in God, Christ teaches us to address Him by a new name, a name entwined with the dearest associations of the human heart. He gives us the privilege of calling the infinite God our Father. This name, spoken to Him and of Him, is a sign of our love and trust toward Him, and a pledge of His regard and relationship to us. Spoken when asking His favor or blessing, it is as music in His ears. That we might not think it presumption to call Him by the name, He has repeated it again and again. He desires us to become familiar with the appellation.³

God regards us as His children. He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King—Our Father.⁴

Lives that Uplift His Name

Closely examine your own hearts, and in your lives imitate the unerring Pattern, and all will be well with you. Preserve a clear conscience before God. In all you do glorify His name.⁵

In all you do, let your thoughts be, "Is this the way of the Lord? Will this please my Saviour? He gave His life for me; what can I give back to God? I can only say, "Of Thine own, O Lord, I freely give Thee." Unless the name of God is written in your forehead,—written there because God is the center of your thoughts,—you will not be meet for the inheritance in light.⁶

1. *Early Writings*, p. 122.

2. *Education*, p. 254.

3. *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 141, 142.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

5. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 211.

6. *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 46.

Reo E. Ganson is the Chairman of the Division of Education and Social Sciences at Canadian Union College.

Yahweh Is El

by Warren C. Trenchard

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Psalm 18:1, 2

The Hebrew people used many different names and titles for their God and left them sprinkled throughout what we call the Old Testament. They claimed that their God was different from and superior to the gods of all their neighbors. In fact, they declared that these other gods did not really exist at all. However, we must recognize that even though the Hebrews had this attitude, they were influenced by the gods of their neighbors in an important way. Some of the divine names and titles used by the Hebrews were also used by their neighbors for their deities.

One of these names was El. We find it used in Ps. 104:21 (RSV): "The young lions roar for their prey, Seeking their food from God (El)." The word *el* or its related forms was used throughout the Ancient Near East even before the time of Abraham. The term itself was the basic Semitic word for "god." El was also the name of the high god who ruled over the other gods.

The Hebrews not only referred to their God by the name El, but they also combined the name with other words to describe the God of heaven. They called him El Shaddai (Gen. 49:25), which probably meant "God, the one of the mountain(s)." The expression is often translated "God Almighty." Like the Canaanites, the Hebrews also spoke of their God as El Elyon (Gen. 14:19), which means "God Most High." Other combinations include: El Olam ("God the everlasting one"), El Roi ("God who sees me"), El Berith ("God of the covenant"). The name El is related to the word Elohim, which is very common in the Old Testament as a reference to God. This is also true of the less common term Eloah.

The Hebrews and their neighbors regularly included divine names or parts of them in the names which they gave to their children. These so-called theophoric names often included the word *el*. The Old Testament provides us with numerous examples of this practice. Sometimes *el* is at the beginning of the name, as in Elkanah ("God has created") and Elisha ("God is salvation"). In other cases *el* occurs at the end, as in Daniel ("God has judged") and Michael ("Who is like God").

The personal name of Israel's God was Yahweh. It was by this name that he revealed himself to Moses and through Moses to the Israelite slaves in Egypt (Ex. 3:15). When the Hebrews used the name El or the word *el* they did so with reference to their God, Yahweh. Yahweh is El. We find the two identified in Ps. 10:12 (RSV): "Arise, O Lord (Yahweh), O God (El), lift up thy hand; forget not the afflicted." Yahweh is not only a god (*el*), but he is *the* El, the high God. The real El is not the one who is worshipped by the Canaanites but Yahweh, the God of Israel. He is El Shaddai, El Elyon, El Olam, El Roi, and El Berith. He is El who is celebrated in the names of Israel's people. Yahweh is greater than the Canaanite El, not because he, instead of El, is the ruler of the gods, but because he is the only God of heaven and earth.

What he was for the Hebrews, he must also be for us.

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God Revealed

by Ernie LeVos

HOW TO Key text: Matthew 6:9

"What is it that we do not know; which it is so important we should know, and which we are so slow to learn? Only two things: we do not know ourselves; *we do not know God*. All teaching and preaching are to make us know ourselves and God."¹

Most names have meanings and reveal character qualities, and that is why a study of God's names can aid us in our quest to know him.

1. One of God's names is Yahweh—"one who is what He is."² He has exhibited his Lordship and revealed himself as the Truth, in love and righteousness. On the other hand, he also pronounces judgment on the disobedient. "Jehovah is righteousness: He must judge evil. But the sin of man crosses and grieves Him. If His creatures suffer, He too suffers."³

2. "Adonai" reveals another aspect of his nature. He is Lord. He is Lord in all aspects of our lives—our spiritual, intellectual, emotional and social; a Lord we can go to for help, deliverance and pardon. In the role of Lord, love is extended and in return the Lord longs for the reciprocation of this love. It is an intimate relationship like that of a husband and wife.

3. He is "El Shaddai," who sustains, nourishes and pours forth his love and his Spirit to those in spiritual starvation. God also poured forth his Son who gave his life and himself for the human family, so that in turn we may pour forth our lives to him and others.

But to those who are disobedient, he pours forth his judgment. "God creating, God illuminating, God sanctifying, God threatening and punishing, God forgiving and redeeming, are all but one and the same essential, immutable, never-ceasing working of the Divine Nature."⁴ Indeed, "El Shaddai" is God Almighty and "almightiness is the power to carry out the will of a Divine nature."⁵

4. In his almightiness, he is still heavenly Father to his children. Andrew Jukes states that "'Father' tells us of a source of life: of one in whom his sons have been, and from whom they come, and whose image and likeness they are called to manifest. 'Father' tells us of relationships, in nature, and in blood; and of a love, which, because it is in virtue of relationship, must be unchanging and unchanged, even when far off, and will fall on his neck and kiss him, while the rags of the far country still cover him."⁶

Jukes succinctly states that "They that know His name will put their trust in Him. And they that trust in Him shall never be confounded."⁷ And to this he has added that "In every age it has been true, that 'they who know God's name will put their trust in Him.' Much more should we, to whom by His beloved Son He has revealed Himself as 'our Father,' trust Him, and rest in Him, in every trial. Shall we not pray, 'Our Father, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done?'"⁸

1. Andrew Jukes, *The Names of God in Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1888), 1967, p. 1, emphasis supplied.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 198.

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Knowing God as King

by G. Ernest Wright

OPINION

Knowledge and truth in the Bible involve things to do, not simply a belief in a God of nature nor an experience of the God within. God is too busy, too active, too dynamic to wait for us to experience him in the acts of worship we devise in our schedules. He is to be known by what he has done and said, by what he is now doing and saying; and he is known when we do what he commands us to do.

Yet the awareness of a calling, of being sent to do something, comes in and through a community of life. The knowledge of God is not formed in us in our solitariness. It is not a private or mysterious something which one treasures within. Knowledge is not conveyed or communicated apart from a social form or structure of thought and experience. In the Bible, that structure is the covenant society, and the knowledge of God is communicated in and through it. In Israel the universe was conceived of as a cosmic state, ruled by one divine will. The world is in rebellion against this great Lord, and he is in the midst of the struggle to make it his faithful kingdom. Meanwhile he has formed a new society in this earth as a foretaste of the goal.

In other words, God is presented to us primarily in the form of a ruler who is doing definite things. He is a *king in warfare* to make the world his kingdom. He is the *king as judge*, trying people and nations for their rebellions against his rule. He is the *king as lord*, shepherd, and father of his new community which he has formed and with which he struggles to the end that it may become his faithful steward or agent. . . .

Knowledge of God in the Bible was communicated through a definite social form with its own particular language to describe the nature of God and the meaning of our human lives. In this structure of thinking the emphasis is not on some pious, private, or esoteric experience of the great King. One does not do that sort of thing with a king. Instead, our focus of attention is upon a knowledge of the Lord's will, on our attachment to him for what he has done, and on our loyalty to him in all that we do. The Lord has placed a vocation before his society and each member hears God's command addressed to him personally.

My description here has been drawn from the Old Testament, because it provides the key to the New. The essentials of this conception of the meaning of our lives under God have actually been fulfilled and realized in Christ. God has made Christ the head, the king, of this community, and to live in it is to live "in Christ," to love him and serve him loyally.

In other words, the knowledge of God in the Bible is first of all an acknowledgment that God is the sovereign, that he is the ruler who claims, and has right to claim, our obedience, because of all that he is and has done. God is not thought of as a being who has always existed and whose existence is to be argued about one way or another; he is known as the will who has a determined aim, who judges, who is gracious, who requires. Knowledge, then, is not of

"Man has knowledge only when he obeys."

God's eternal being but of his claim upon us. It is the reverent acknowledgment of God's power, of his grace and requirement. Hence knowledge is not a private, inner possession of the knower. Man has knowledge only when he obeys, only when he acts in obedience. Knowledge involves the movement of the *will*, so that *not to know* is an error not correctable by more good ideas; it is a *guilt*, a rebellion. He who knows God is he who reverently acknowledges God's power and God's claim, a claim which leads him to practice brotherly love, justice, and righteousness. . . .

. . . The Bible thinks of God in terms of the sovereign king or lord who is known in the form of a commander in chief of the armies, of judge, or of lord or father, though in themselves these picture-words do not confine him or convey all that is significantly to be known about him. What is important is what this great Lord has done. He is the concrete God, the Lord who led Israel from Egypt and the Father of Jesus Christ. He is not a principle; he is individual, personal, definite, all this without being an idol. As Professor Tillich has put it, he is independent of his nation, Israel, and he is also independent of his own individual nature as conveyed by the symbols. He is known, but not confined, by them.

**"The Bible
thinks of God
in terms of
the sovereign
king."**

Many people have used the term "symbol" and mean by it that since something is merely symbolic it need not be taken seriously. Yet we do not have in this life a choice between using a symbolic and non-symbolic language when it comes to matters that are vitally or ultimately important. A symbol or picture-word is the only way by which the ultimate and infinite is made real to us who are of limited minds and understandings. It always points beyond itself; it hints at reality without confining it; it relates us to the real while at the same time the real is opened for us to comprehend and to love. In other words, the religious symbol is a relationship word, and without it we would have no way of knowing God or anything that matters. Every religion has its system or structure of symbols which relate our lives to the meaning of the universe.

In Christian theology the Church through the centuries has made attempts in every generation to translate its message into the current idiom. It must always do this; its creeds are one means by which it has done it, while at the same time protecting its members from straying too far from the fold. Nevertheless the Church's theological and creedal attempts are always products of their situations. In the last analysis the Church must always go back to the Bible to discover the truths that lie behind all translation attempts. The whole biblical drama is actually our only means of presenting the Christian faith. For this reason the Bible is always at the center and must always be at the center of the Church's faith and proclamation.

Excerpted from G. Ernest
Wright and Reginald
Fuller, *The Book of the
Acts of God*, (Garden
City, NY: Doubleday &
Company, Inc., 1957),
pp. 22-29.

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REACT
Lesson 3

1. What do the various names of God reveal about his character? What implications can the meanings of each of the following have upon your relationship with God?

El Shaddai—
El Roi—
Adonai—
El Olam—
Yahweh—

2. What does the term *Abba* (see Rom. 8:15) as applied to God imply about our relationship with God (check commentaries for help)? Can the concept of intimacy with God be taken to an extreme? Explain.

3. Does God seem to you to be more of an individual or a concept? Can God be personalized? If so, in what way?

4. G. Ernest Wright (Opinion) states: "A symbol or picture-word is the only way by which the ultimate and infinite is made real to us who are of limited minds and understandings." Do you agree? Is this why God has so many "names"?

5. Is it difficult for those who live in a democratic society to relate to God as King? Is this title of God obsolete for them?

6. According to Wright, what is the nature of our knowledge of God as King or Lord? Do you agree with him?

7. With reference to Wright's concluding paragraph, does Adventism have a need to go back to the biblical drama and thereby rethink its "translation attempt"?
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Hello?

by Ed Wright

INTRODUCTION

In his fascinating book, *God and the Astronomers* Robert Jastrow makes this often-quoted statement: "The scientist has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."¹

Now let me ask, Where do you see yourself in that little diorama? If you are among the climbers, do you agree with his conclusions? Do they make you feel uncomfortable? Or if you see yourself among the theologians, what makes you think you're sitting on the mountaintop? What discoveries have placed you there?

As I reflect on Jastrow's statement, my initial delight is short-lived. Now, in the twentieth century, honest scientists following the path of discovery and reason, are willing to admit (almost against their will) a Beginning in this universe. But until this century, what were the choices? Were theologians, through special revelation (note Lesson 2) the only ones to arrive at a knowledge of a Creator God? And did that demand ignoring their senses?

What did Paul mean when he said, "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1:20, NIV). Really? Without excuse? *Clearly seen?*

Or consider these words of John Calvin. "God has been pleased . . . to manifest his perfections in the whole structure of the universe, and daily place himself in our view, that we cannot open our eyes without being compelled to behold him. His essence, indeed, is incomprehensible, utterly transcending all human thought; but on each of his works his glory is engraven in characters so bright, so distinct, and so illustrious, that none, however dull and illiterate, can plead ignorance as their excuse."²

Strong words! Do they make it sound like *all mankind* was intended to be sitting atop Jastrow's mountain?

What, really, does the world around us reveal about God?

What does the song say about the composer? What does the structure say about the architect? What does the poem say about the author? What does the painting say about the artist?

Certainly we see *something* of the Creator in his creation. But how much? What exactly does it tell us? There are obvious limitations and imperfections, so how accurately is the message communicated?

In summary, the question we must address this week is simply this: *If nature speaks, what does it say?*

1. Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), p. 116.

2. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (London: James Clark & Co., 1953), see Book One, Chapter V.

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The Ventriloquist

LOGOS Imagine yourself standing on a rocky promontory at dusk, looking out over a panorama of pines, lakes, and mountain peaks, watching the sun as it sets flaming orange, red, and purple. Listen. . . . Do you hear anything? Can you detect that faint whisper—more feeling than sound—that is the voice of nature? If you listen even more closely you will sense that although it is nature that is speaking, the words are those of Someone else. The Ventriloquist is at it again. Around the clock, through every rainbow, twig, and snowflake, he speaks, communicating himself to his creatures.

The message that nature conveys is foremost one of glory to God. According to David, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge." (Psalm 19:1-3, NIV). The elements of creation seem to have an inherent desire to glorify God—even though they are infiltrated by the effects of sin.

The power of God is another quality nature expresses. Nature is full of examples of destructive forces—such as volcanos, tornados, and floods. But nature testifies to the omnipotence of God in somewhat different ways. ". . . 'To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?' says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing" (Isa. 40:21, 22, 25, 26, NIV).

Another facet of God's personality declared by nature contrasts, yet complements, his power. This is his supreme love for us. The very existence of nature is a tribute to God's care and concern. He could have made man to live in a vacuum, but instead, "the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food" (Gen. 2:8, 9, NIV).

After milleniums of sin it is surprising that the voice of nature can still be heard. For "there is only cursing, lying, and murder, stealing and adultery; they [sinners] break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying" (Hosea 4:2, 3, NIV). But a vestige of creation's original condition remains. And through all of sin's crushing effects, the distant voice of the Ventriloquist still whispers. It tells of a time when creation will be made perfect again. "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. . . . But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:10, 13, NIV).

L. R. C.

The Voice of Nature

by Lola C. Boggs

Nature directs our thoughts to a power greater than ourselves. In pagan cultures nature was often deified. Ellen White emphasized the importance of worshipping the God of nature, not nature itself.¹ She wrote much regarding the blessings, pleasures, and wisdom gained from the study of nature. In Eden "before the entrance of sin not a cloud rested upon the minds of our first parents to obscure their perception of the character of God. . . . Nature was their lesson book. In the Garden of Eden the existence of God was demonstrated, His attributes were revealed, in the objects of nature that surrounded them."²

The study of nature comprised a large part of Christ's early education. "And spread out before Him was the great library of God's created works. . . . He who had made all things studied the lessons which His own hand had written in earth and sea and sky. . . . He gathered stores of scientific knowledge from nature. He studied the life of plants and animals, and the life of man. From His earliest years He was possessed of one purpose; He lived to bless others. For this He found resources in nature; new ideas of ways and means flashed into His mind as He studied plant life and animal life. Continually He was seeking to draw from things seen illustrations by which to present the living oracles of God."³

"The impress of Deity, manifest in the pages of revelation, is seen upon the lofty mountains, the fruitful valleys, the broad, deep ocean. The things of nature speak to man of his Creator's love. He has linked to us Himself by unnumbered tokens in heaven and earth. This world is not all sorrow and misery. 'God is love,' is written upon every opening bud, upon the petals of every flower, and upon every spire of grass. Though the curse of sin has caused the earth to bring forth thorns and thistles, there are flowers upon the thistles and the thorns are hidden by the roses. All things in nature testify to the tender fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy."⁴

Most of us have experienced physical and spiritual revitalization while spending time in such beautiful places as Yosemite National Park. While standing in awe of the myriad stars in the night sky, or being delighted with the beauty of the desert flowers in the spring, the believer has his faith reinforced and the doubter becomes a believer in Someone greater than himself.

Ellen White made an encouraging statement about the influence of nature on the heathen. "Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. . . . Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things the law required. . . . they are recognized as the children of God."⁵

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Psalm 19:1-4

**"'God is love.'
is written
upon every
opening bud,
upon the
petals of
every flower,
and upon
every spire
of grass."**

1. See *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 263. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 263.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 255.

3. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 70.

4. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 599, 600.

5. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

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Science Vs. Religion, Round 12

by Grant Mitchell

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Psalms 24:1, 2

When ancient and medieval men and women looked at nature, they did not see an orderly universe; everything in the cosmos was the direct result of the Supernatural. Nothing happened unless it was specifically willed and caused by God or Satan. With this frame of reference, it was easy to see nature as a direct and precise revelation of God.

Then came the Enlightenment. And science. And scientists. On they came, destroying this God-controlled world view. They discovered "laws" operating in the universe; laws, and not God, that caused seeds to germinate and grow; laws, and not Satan, that caused rains to fall periodically. To many, this was a direct assault on God himself. Either you believed in a God who directly controlled the universe, or you accepted the scientific view of a cosmos ruled by natural laws for which a personal God was irrelevant.

This friction between science and revelation has continued to our day. There are many Christians who feel uncomfortable with scientific knowledge because it seems incompatible with faith in a personal God who acts in nature. Nevertheless, there have been several attempts lately to reconcile science and revelation. One is Harold F. Roellig's small but insightful book, *The God Who Cares*. In it, he writes, "Many scientific writers in the past have said that as scientists unravel the mysteries of nature, they are creating less of a need for God. It is pure speculation to say that man invented God to account for the unexplainable phenomena of nature. Man's quest for God was on a much deeper and more profound level.

"All science is in a sense theology for it leads us to a fuller understanding of the natural activity of God."

"It should be plain that when the pious monk, Gregor Mendel, the founder of the science of genetics, worked out the patterns of heredity in his sweet peas, he did not feel that he was pushing God further out of the picture by attempting to understand how the factors of inheritance of specific traits were transmitted from one generation to another. Rather, he was studying theology as a true theologian; coming to a fuller knowledge (*logos*) of God (*theos*) by probing what is ultimately God's handiwork. The history of science is replete with such divines. Out of a knowledge of the process of nature comes a fuller understanding of God's way with his creation."¹

He later adds, "What better motivation can there be to study the workings of the natural and physical world than to come to an understanding of these phenomena as the artifacts of the Creator? All science is in a sense theology for it leads us to a fuller understanding of the natural activity of God."²

So there is really no conflict between science and revelation. If nature does reveal God, then a more accurate and scientific knowledge of how nature works gives me a more accurate picture of how God works in nature. And this ultimately leads to a truer knowledge of God himself. Granted, it may cause me to discard painfully some long-cherished, but incorrect, notions about God. But isn't that what revelation is all about?

1. Harold F. Roellig, *The God Who Cares* (New York: The Brance Press) pp. 26, 27.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

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In the Eyes of the Beholder

by Tim Mitchell

Many honest searchers find a stumbling block in the problem of pain. "Why would a loving God allow the innocent to suffer?" goes the perennial question.

It is simplistic to answer the question by cataloging all natural phenomena into one of two columns, God's or Satan's. We simply don't know enough about the original order of things, or the extent of random mutation, or direct divine intervention since the entrance of sin to make such determinations in every case. To whom would we attribute rain? One farmer's meteorological boon is another's curse. Breath-taking mountains, for which we praise God, were formed by water and ice and seismic tremors that destroyed flora and fauna. The beauty of nature truly is in the eyes of the beholder, and so is the attribution of cause to God or Satan in many cases.

It shouldn't surprise us that the revelation of nature is sometimes ambiguous. God's revelation almost always contains ambiguity because it is mediated through sin-distorted channels: His thoughts are recorded in the limited words of men; his Son is sent "in the likeness of sinful man" (Romans 8:3, NIV).

One helpful principle for understanding this ambiguity comes from Augustine. It is that we ought to judge a thing by its own nature and use, not its abuse.¹ Sand is a good thing on the seashore, a painful thing in your eye. God is revealed in the former, not the latter.

Romans 8:28 suggests another principle for understanding God in nature. Though there are particulars that we don't understand, by looking at the overall picture we can see that God is still in control in some sense, even though there are forces in opposition. The greatest testimony to God's power is not that he can maintain a perfect world, but that a blighted world is still generally safe, generally beautiful, and generally enjoyable. With all of sin's results, God still orders a unified ecosystem, incorporating the principles of decay and death as means of perpetuating and preserving life.

Those who allegorize nature to discover what God is like ought to exercise caution, since this is largely guesswork. But scripture is an ally of this kind of nature study, drawing many such analogies. For example, God is a rock (Psalm 18:2 et al.); he is like a lion (Isaiah 31:4); he calls his people his sheep (John 10).

God is not revealed only through the wind, earthquake, and fire; and nature study is not limited to botany, geology, and ornithology. We find him revealed in psychology, sociology, music, math, and nearly every field of scientific and artistic human endeavor.

Perhaps the closest thing we have to an analogy of God is seen in the highest form of his creation, which was made bearing "the image and superscription of God. Though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, the traces of this inscription remain upon every soul."² Thus, one part of knowing God is knowing yourself. There you will find the good and the bad, image of God distorted by sin, sources of elation and grief—but tempered by the promise of God working toward his own perfect purpose.

HOW TO
Key text:
Romans 8:28

"With all of sin's results, God still orders a unified ecosystem."

1. *City of God*, Book XII, 4 and 5. Cited in *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, Bernard Ramm (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1954), p. 64.

2. *Ministry of Healing*, p. 163.

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Job's Dilemma

by Grant Mitchell

OPINION

Key text:
Job 42:1-6

I experienced the power of nature this afternoon. At 4:42 p.m., a major earthquake struck most of California and even parts of Nevada. Its epicenter was the small town of Coalinga only 50 miles from where I was sitting at my desk. Even as I work on this article, I am listening to radio reports of the utter devastation in Coalinga. And lest anyone start thinking smug thoughts about us crazy Californians and our earthquakes, let me add that Dan Rather spent a good deal of his time this evening describing massive flooding in Louisville, a plague of tornados in the Great Lakes region and the remnants of a killer blizzard in the Midwest. Wherever we may live, nature has ample calamities to worry us. And there's the rub. Is sin-marred nature, replete with natural disasters, a revelation of God? The seemingly logical answer is, "No." The scriptural answer is plainly, "Yes," as this week's authors frequently point out.

In trying to square the seemingly logical answer with the clear, scriptural answer, perhaps we should take God's advice to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job?" (Job 1:18, NIV). Job, you will recall, challenged God on a basic question: Since you are all powerful and all good, why is there indiscriminate evil? Job was asking God for a revelation; he wanted God to reveal the essence of his character. God responded to Job but he did not speak of himself. Surprisingly, he did not even tell Job about Satan's challenge and how it led to Job's misfortune. Instead, God spoke to Job of what must have seemed to him to be unfathomable mysteries of nature. The point was not lost on Job. He acknowledged that this was a revelation of God (Job 42:5) and that he had spoken "of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know" (Job 42:3, NIV). By pointing Job to nature, God showed him that there are ultimate questions about God and his character which men and women, with their finite minds, cannot, and should not even attempt to answer. If Job could not completely understand or explain creation, how could he fully hope to comprehend the Creator?

Our knowledge of the universe has come a long way since Job's time. If you read God's questions to him in Job 38-41, you will discover that we have amassed a great deal of knowledge about some of those "unfathomable mysteries." But you will also find that we still have no answers to some of God's questions. For now, it will suffice to say that the very fact that scientists are at work in proof of our less than perfect knowledge of the cosmos. Thus, nature remains a revelation of the greatness of God and the fact that his thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are his ways our ways (Isaiah 55:8). And, with its dark, catastrophic side, nature is also a constant reminder that we will never be able to solve Job's dilemma in this life. To an extent, God is unknowable.

But this is not nature's only lesson. The mere fact that we cannot fully understand everything about nature does not prevent us from experiencing it and generally enjoying it, or from studying it to learn as much as we can, or from responsibly appropriating from it

"With its dark, catastrophic side, nature is a constant reminder that we will never be able to solve Job's dilemma in this life."

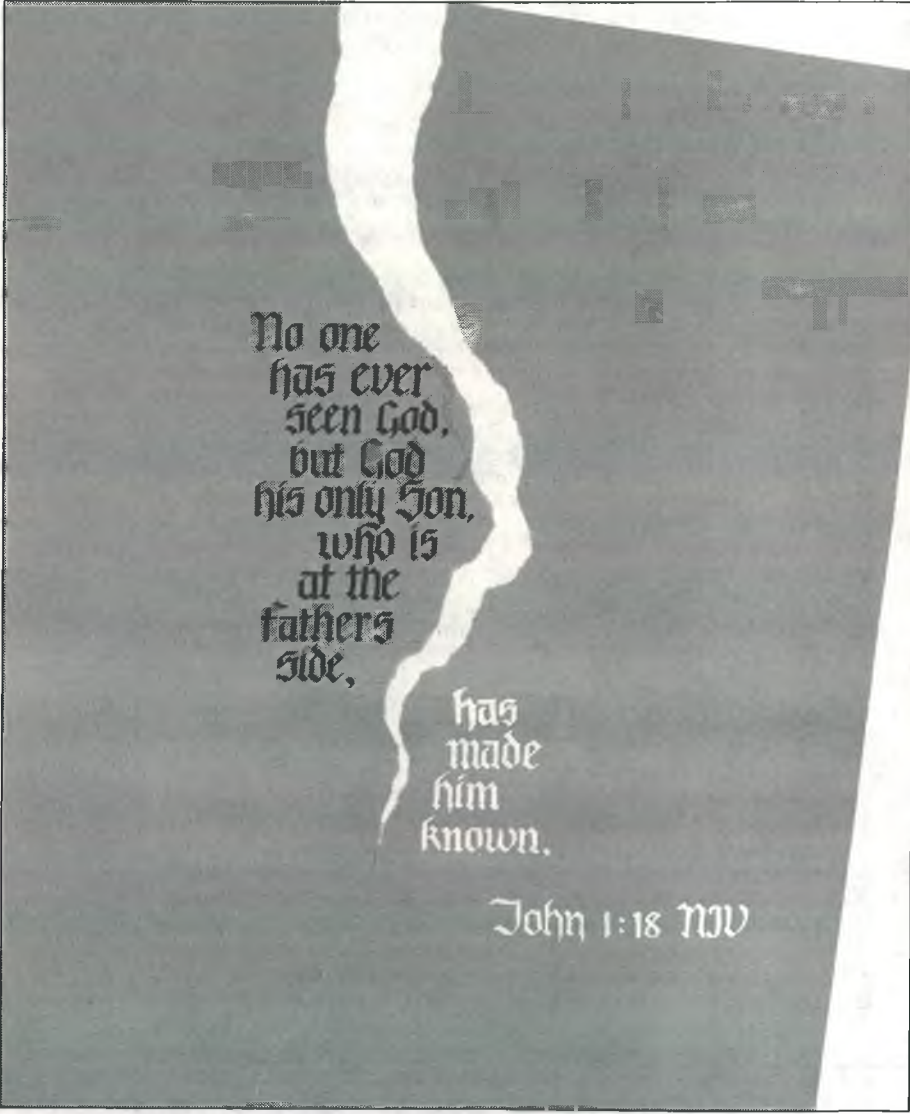
for our benefit. Job understood this lesson also. He had been in anguish because he could not understand the justice of his torment. Now, although no closer to an answer, he was able to simply accept it in faith because of his new relationship with God (Job 42:1-6). He had learned nature's other lesson: that God's ultimate unknowability need not prevent us from having joyous communion with him, from studying that which he has chosen to reveal, or from accepting his generous gift of eternal life with him in a new creation free of the enigma of evil. Perhaps this is nature's greatest revelation of its Maker.

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1. Having read all of this week's articles, refer back to the first two paragraphs of the Introduction. How would you now answer the questions in the second paragraph?
 2. Is science really an ally of God's revelation through nature? If so, why do so many scientists deny or question God's existence? Can discoveries about God be made through the scientific method, without the illumination of the Holy Spirit?
 3. The Evidence article asserts that more accurate scientific knowledge gives us a more accurate picture of God, and that this may necessitate discarding long-cherished notions about God. How, then, can one know when to revise his view of God in the light of science, or when to reject a discovery of science based on what he understands about God?
 4. If we judge anything by its own nature and use, and not its abuse, in order to see God revealed through nature (see How To) what standards do we use to determine what that thing's own nature and use is?
 5. Are all natural phenomena from the hand of God? Explain why or why not. If you answered "no" to this question, would you still maintain that God is in complete control of nature?
 6. The Opinion author suggests, based on the book of Job, that nature's primary revelation about God is that God is unknowable. Do you agree? Explain. What about the author's contention that "God's ultimate unknowability need not prevent us from having joyous communion with him"?
 7. Mark Twain once said, "No creature was created in vain. . . . But the fly came mighty close." How would you respond to this?
-

REACT
Lesson 4

GOD'S ULTIMATE REVELATION



No one
has ever
seen God,
but God
his only Son,
who is
at the
father's
side,

has
made
him
known.

John 1:18 NIV

Baby A

by J. B. Phillips

INTRODUCTION

It is a fascinating problem for us human beings to consider how the Eternal Being—wishing to show men His own Character focused, His own Thought expressed, and His own Purpose demonstrated—could introduce Himself into the stream of human history without disturbing or disrupting it. There must obviously be an almost unbelievable “scaling-down” of the “size” of God to match the life of the planet. There must be a complete acceptance of the space-and-time limitations of this present life. . . .

Suppose, then, that God does slip into the stream of history and is born as Baby A. A will, as far as the limitations of time, space, and circumstance allow, grow up as God “focused” in humanity, speaking a language, expressing thoughts, and demonstrating life in terms that men will have a great deal by which to live.

First, they will know now for certain what sort of “character” the eternal God possesses. For He is certain to inform them that the man who observes Him is observing God. Secondly, the facts about man and God, the perennial anxieties about such things as pain and sin and death, the dim hopes of a more permanent world to follow this one . . . will now have a fixed reference point, by which they can be adjusted if not settled. Thirdly, man will be able to gain at first hand information as to “what life is all about”

and as to how he can co-operate with the Plan and the Power behind time and space. Fourthly, if they are convinced, as we are assuming, that the one before them is really God-become-man, they will be able to observe something absolutely unique in the history of the world: God himself coping with life on the very terms that He has imposed upon His creatures. They will be seeing God not seated high on a throne, but down in the battlefield of life.

A, of course, having genuinely entered the space-time world and having become a human being, must enter at some particular locality. But within the limit he sets himself he will be a perfectly genuine and adequate focusing of the nature of God. He will not only be information and example, but the aperture through which men may see more and more of God. If men are once convinced of the genuineness of his extraordinary claim, they will probably find that God is, so to speak, visible through an A-shaped aperture. Knowledge, experience, and appreciation, may all expand enormously as the years pass, but that will not mean that men “grow out of” God. For A will have supplied by his demonstration in time and space one sure Fact, around which everything else of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, may be appropriately and satisfactorily crystalized.

Excerpted from J. B. Phillips, *Your God Is Too Small* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1954), pp. 77-79.

J. B. Phillips is a well-known British scholar and Bible translator.

Without Dissonance or Incongruity

LOGOS

Though there are many means through which God is revealed, most of them leave God, in varying degrees, out of focus. If we had only the writings of inspired prophets, the evidence of nature and the inner voice of the Spirit, we would be left with a picture of God that is still somewhat blurred, distorted and hazy. But, to borrow J. B. Phillips' analogy, God is brought clearly into focus through the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth.

According to the witness of John, the Word who is God "became flesh and lived for a while among us" (John 1:14, NIV). The God who had been inscrutable and intangible became supremely knowable and concrete in this Man. "No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (vs. 18, NIV).

Compassion is one of the most striking attributes of God that Jesus made known: "A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.'

"Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean'" (Mark 1:40, 41, NIV).

William Barclay points out that the compassion referred to here is "not ordinary pity . . . but an emotion which moves a man to the very depths of his being."¹ In contrast to the remote God of Greek philosophy who transcended humanity to the extent of being incapable of emotion, we see in Jesus a God who *feels*—intensely and empathetically.

Jesus reveals God as our friend, sinners though we are. He accepted and socialized with rip-off artists, prostitutes, terrorists, hypocrites and even ordinary people. Such radical behavior prompted a great truth from the Pharisees and teachers of the law, who muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2, NIV).

In the stories he told, Jesus revealed God's attitude toward us to be one of unconditional love (see especially Luke 15). That love doesn't depend on our reforming our lives or our spiritual accomplishments. It's always there, taking the initiative and seeking us out. And then he demonstrated that love supremely at the cross. ". . . God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8, NIV).

Lastly, Jesus made known what God's kingdom is all about. By his entrance in history, Jesus made the kingdom of God a dynamic, present reality on earth that we can participate in now (Mark 1:14, 15; Matt. 12:28). And he revealed that the kingdom is not based on manipulation and exploitation, but rather on self-giving service. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45, NIV).

"The biggest, widest, and highest ideas of God that mind can conceive arrange themselves without dissonance or incongruity around the character Jesus revealed."²

D. F. M.

1. William Barclay, *New Testament Words* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 276.

2. J. B. Phillips, *Your God Is Too Small* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 93.

The Purpose of Christ's Mission

selected by Annette Martinson

In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation. It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was his hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. "His strength setteth fast the mountains." "The sea is His, and He made it" (Ps. 65:6; 95:5). It was He that filled the earth with beauty and the air with song. And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father's love. . . .

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not mine own glory, but the glory of Him that sent Me" (John 8:28; 6:37; 8:50; 7:18). In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. . . . And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life. . . .

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. . . . Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings."¹

The Son of the infinite God, the Lord of life and glory, descended in humiliation to the life of the lowliest, that no one might feel himself excluded from His presence. He made himself accessible to all. He did not select a favored few with whom to associate and ignore all others.

Christ came to give to the world an example of what perfect humanity might be when united with divinity. He presented to the world a new phase of greatness in His exhibition of mercy, compassion, and love. He gave to men a new interpretation of God.²

Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to Him the praise, and giving to Him the credit, of the whole purpose of His own mission on earth,—to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfection of the Father. In His prayer just before His crucifixion, He declared, 'I have manifested Thy name. I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest Me to do.' When the object of His mission was obtained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that His work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men.³

TESTIMONY

Key text:
John 1:14

"He made Himself accessible to all."

1. *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 20, 21.

2. *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 260.

3. *Signs of the Times*, vol. 16, No. 3, January 20, 1890.

Annette Martinson is young adult co-leader at the White Memorial Church in Los Angeles.

What We See In Jesus

by Morris Venden, selected by
Arnie Roblez

EVIDENCE

Key text:
John 14:8-11

An inscription on an early American grave read: "Here lies Lem S. Frame, who has been credited to have killed 89 Indians to his name. He was hoping to have killed 100 by the end of the year, when he fell asleep in Jesus in his home at Hawk's Ferry." May he rest in peace!

The proper blend of God's love and justice has often been debated. The cheap brand of Christianity pictures him as being a God who never harms anyone, and eventually lets everyone into heaven. The other extreme views God as looking for every chance he can get to destroy His creatures.

These misunderstandings of God's character have caused some people to stay away from religion. If many had accepted what they have been mistakenly taught to believe about God, perhaps God himself would have been unhappy.

Philip said, "Show us the Father." Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, and yet you haven't known Me? *If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father.*" Jesus came to a world that was in complete misapprehension of God, in order to demonstrate what the Father is really like—what He always has been like and always will be like.

You see a man coming to the edge of a large crowd down by a lake. He has leprosy. As he comes, the people fall back. But Jesus invites him into His presence and touches him. And He says, "They consider you under the curse of God? I will make you clean." Who was this talking? This was God talking!

You see a woman being dragged through the dust into the presence of Jesus. Her accusers stand ready to heave huge rocks at her to crush her skull. Jesus says, "I don't condemn you. Go, and sin no more." Who was that? It was God—His love and justice perfectly blended.

You see a man hanging on a cross. He turns his head and manages to speak a few words, "Lord, remember me," and Jesus said, "I will. You'll be with me in heaven." Who is that? That's God. That's God—the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Excerpted from Morris L.
Venden, *Faith That
Works*, p. 7.

Arnie Roblez is Director of Plant Services at White Memorial Church in Los Angeles.

You Guys Must Be Kidding!

by Jim Ponder

HOW TO

Key text:
Jeremiah 29:13

The assignment looked simple enough. Write the "How To" page for lesson five of *Collegiate Quarterly*. All it involves is reading, gathering insights and putting it all together in a cogent, readable format. Why not? But, then, gulp, I looked over the objective for the week. "To discuss the ways in which Jesus reveals the attributes and purposes of God."

That would be fine for a sermon. Better yet, a series of sermons. But a one-page synopsis? Who are they kidding? It took Jesus some 30 years to show and tell all he wanted us to know about his Father. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John each needed a book to do it. Ellen White wrote volumes. And I am expected to outline—in two or three easy steps—the how to of incorporating what Jesus showed us about God into everyday life. Impossible!

Nevertheless, that is the assignment. So here goes.

1. **You can't get the whole picture in a short time.** The insights Jesus shared about God frequently run contrary to our gut-level assumptions. They cut across the grain of human nature. It takes months—even years—of seeing them from a host of angles before we begin to integrate them. They are full of surprises and as far from "rules and regulations religion" as the moon is from Mt. St. Helens. Maybe a little farther.

The person who really wants to discover what his only Son says about the Ruler of the Universe is going to have to invest some time. And not all at once. An athlete doesn't do all his training for the year in a two-week workout. It takes consistent, protracted effort to excel at anything. Even stand-up comics practice their routines for hours in front of a mirror.

2. **You can't get the right picture from the wrong sources.** You can't fully appreciate the majestic imagery of an Ansel Adams photograph in a newspaper reproduction. Nor can you catch the rich nuances of tone and power in Beethoven's Sixth over the radio. To really get at the essence of the thing, to feel its spirit pulsing in your veins, you've got to see an original print or sit a few feet from the orchestra. In terms of the gospel, you can't get it once a week in church. You've got to dig it out for yourself. A fresh new translation will do the job. And don't neglect Ellen White's *The Desire of Ages*, C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* or Charles Spurgeon's *All of Grace*, either. In very refreshing ways, they expose hidden dimensions of the gospel.

3. **Expect to hear from the Opposition.** The Prince of Darkness is no slouch. And he isn't exactly overjoyed to see a human being taking a new interest in the character of God as revealed in the life of Jesus. If you make a commitment to a deeper relationship with the Lord, you will encounter resistance. Satan will aim fiery trials in your direction. They never feel good when they hit. But remember, Christ is on your side. He has handled far more hassles than we have to face and he stands ready to jump in with grace, strength and companionship when we need him.

Jim Ponder is an Associate Pastor in the Southern California Conference.

OPINION

Key text:
2 Corinthians 4:6

Like millions of other Americans, I pound the pavement several mornings a week to keep in shape. My jogging beat is the block on which I live; my prime time, the early hours before sunrise. On clear, crisp fall mornings, the most striking attraction in the predawn heavens is Venus, the morning star. Rising a couple hours before the sun, Venus shines brilliantly in the eastern sky. One by one, other stars fade as the eastern horizon grows lighter. Long after all the other stars have disappeared, Venus glows on, reflecting the light from the unseen sun. Then, minutes before sunrise, Venus, too, disappears, lost in a brighter glory.

Earthbound, we stumble through the blackness of the world's night, groping for answers. We follow dim lights about us, the great minds of earth. One by one they rise and wane, and we are left alone in the darkness. It is then we turn to the Bright and Morning Star, a Glory surpassing all others, shining through infinite millennia. Piercing the darkness, it illuminates our minds with vision, our spirits with hope, our hearts with love, our beings with peace.

That glory of Christ reflected the glory of the Father. His consuming purpose was to reveal the Truth, who was his Father. He said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9, NIV).

We speak of possessing the "truth," thankful that God has entrusted it to us. Dare we limit truth to a system of belief or confine it to any earthly organization? We find truth as it resides in God alone, reflected in the life of his Son (John 14:6). The Father and the Son revealed that truth to men through self-sacrificing love. Jesus became one with humanity, experiencing our hungers, bearing our griefs, sharing our sorrows.

In a landmark trial, Clarence Darrow, defending John Scopes for teaching evolution, said to his attorney opponent, "Mr. Bryan, your God is too far away." Jesus' life exposed the lie of that opinion, for he revealed a God who walks among us, Immanuel, "God with us." His miracles displayed the Father's compassion for his suffering children. His parables revealed a loving Father running with outstretched arms to embrace his wayward children in unconditional love—a Father deeply concerned for each individual. His life was a constant reflection of the Father's self-sacrificing love.

The ultimate truth about God was revealed on a tree, for there God poured upon us his full measure of compassion. There the Lamb of God became our substitute, his death our bridge to everlasting life.

Can we know what God is really like? Only through the reflection of the Son, "For God . . . made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6, NIV).

Can we too reveal that glory? Only as we reflect the self-sacrificing love of the Father and the Son.

LeVerne Bissell is the assistant to the President and Director of Institutional Research at Union College in Lincoln, Neb.

REACT
Lesson 5

1. What attribute about God, revealed in the character of Jesus, is most striking to you? Are there things in the records of Jesus' life and teaching that leave you with questions about God?

2. What implications does the way Jesus treated sinners have for:
evangelism?
church discipline?
criminal justice?
a college campus?
your lifestyle?

3. How would you describe the relationship between the truth embodied in Jesus and truth as expressed by the system of beliefs held by the church?

4. Does recognition of God's character in Christ inevitably bring repentance and obedience? Why or why not?

5. If Jesus were living in the flesh in your community, what do you picture him saying and doing? How would your community relate to him?

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT



*But when he, the spirit of truth,
comes, he will
guide you into all truth*

John 16:13 NCV

Explaining the Mystery

by Sandra Beyer

INTRODUCTION

Imagine that you are a regular customer at the neighborhood Sav-A-Cent food store and each Friday afternoon you stock up on needed groceries. It is a habit to check out at the lane where Bernie the Bagboy bags groceries because you know he won't put the ten pounds of flour on top of your tender tomatoes. Not only is he efficient, but he is also observant. He deduces you are a vegetarian from the fact that you never buy meat, even when there is a Red-star special.

In response to his curiosity you told Bernie about vegetarianism and he thought that was neat. As the weeks rolled on Bernie wanted to know more, so you told him bits and pieces of your beliefs. Bernie always had more questions and his interest in God kept growing. Then one Friday on your trip out to your car with the groceries, Bernie asked you about the Holy Spirit. Inside, you're doing handsprings because the doors have been opened for you to share with Bernie the gospel about God's character and love.

But if you're like me when you try to explain the Holy Spirit, you encounter a few dilemmas. I can just barely comprehend a minute part of what that "being" is and what he does. It never fails to boggle my mind that the presence of something physically unseen, unfelt and unheard can soften hearts, open mouths to speak unfamiliar languages,

break fevers, reconcile enemies, save lives, and give comfort. How does he do all this? Is this being some sort of force that does something to our brainwaves? I don't understand what happens any more than a child can understand why oatmeal, despite its terrible taste, helps him grow strong and tall. Today, while I may understand a few elementary principles of body metabolism, the working of the Holy Spirit still remains a mystery to me.

And perhaps it is fortunate that the mystery remains. That way we don't become so preoccupied with the "how" of the Spirit that we lose sight of the "why." You don't have to know how a piano works to be moved by its music.

Jesus ascended to heaven so the Comforter could come to guide us to truth. He wants us to bask in the fullness of his gift and to be partakers of his power. In a world of depression, psychosis, child-abuse, starvation, war, exploitation and repression, there is great need for a counselor, a guide, a transformer of hearts, a bringer of love. For the Barnies in our world and for ourselves, we need to know the Holy Spirit touches our lives and brings beauty to a sinful world.

Sandra Beyer is a senior social work and religion major at Union College.

The Helper

LOGOS

Marvelous as the truths about God revealed in nature, scripture and in the person of Jesus Christ are, a problem remains. Our innate bent away from God makes it impossible for us to discern fully the saving truth from these sources on our own power (see 1 Cor 2:14). Thus, the activity of the Holy Spirit is essential, for it is through him that knowledge of God, clear perception of spiritual truth, and power to live the Christian life is mediated.

Jesus assured his followers that after he left, they would still enjoy the divine presence. "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16, 17, NIV). The word rendered "Counselor" by the NIV ("Comforter" in KJV) literally means "one who is called in to help or render service."¹ So perhaps the best comprehensive term for the Holy Spirit is simply, "The Helper."²

One way the Holy Spirit helps is that he gives us the spiritual insight to see the ultimate issues of life in their true light. "When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer: and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world stands condemned" (John 16:8-11, NIV). It is the Spirit's help that enables us to *progress* in our understanding of the truth. "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13, NIV).

In our human frailty, we cannot even adequately express our needs to God, but "the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes with groans that words cannot express" (Rom. 8:26, NIV).

The Holy Spirit's help also has a transforming impact on our lives—he brings the power that enables us to become more and more like Christ. "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18, NIV).

Through the Spirit's help we are incorporated into the body of Christ, the community of believers, and enabled to play a role that contributes to the success of a caring, unified community. "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. . . .

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink" (1 Cor. 12:7, 12, 13, NIV).

Finally, the presence of the Spirit helps us have full confidence that we do belong to God and that we will receive the glorious inheritance he has promised. "Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Cor. 1:21, 22, NIV).

D. F. M.

1. William Barclay, *New Testament Words* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 215-222.

2. See the New American Standard Bible rendering of John 14:16.

A Gift With Boundless Resources

by William G. Roberts

As a recent convert to the Christian faith, I can well remember the quandary I experienced as I stood at the point of decision. Intangible was the word I often used to describe what I felt happening in my life. I was experiencing something I could not eloquently explain, convicted of the presence of an invisible Spirit whose existence I could not fully authenticate.

But I discovered that this invisible Spirit affects our lives in very tangible ways. Ellen White gives the following summary of the Spirit's activity.

"Before offering Himself as the sacrificial victim, Christ sought for the most essential and complete gift to bestow upon His followers, a gift that would bring within their reach the boundless resources of grace.

"The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high. . . .

"At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. . . .

"In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the World's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church."

TESTIMONY

Key text:
2 Corinthians
3:18

"By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all."

Excerpted from *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 668-671.

William Roberts is a journalism student at Union College.

Life In the Spirit

by F. F. Bruce

EVIDENCE Part 1 Key text: Romans 8:2

In the gospel narrative Jesus receives the Holy Spirit at his baptism as the necessary endowment for his messianic ministry which involved baptizing others with the same Spirit. There are hints in the Synoptic tradition that Jesus knew that he was operating under limitations during his Palestinian ministry, and these become more explicit in the upper-room discourses of the Fourth Gospel, where Jesus' departure means the coming of the Spirit and the empowering of his followers to accomplish greater works than he himself had done. We are thus prepared for something like Luke's account of the descent of the Spirit at the first Christian Pentecost, accompanied by the signs of the new age on a greater scale than had been seen during Jesus' ministry.

"The Spirit pours the love of God into the hearts of believers."

This general understanding of the presence and power of the Spirit is presupposed in Paul. For him, the Spirit has come: his indwelling presence is experienced by the people of Christ both corporately and individually: the church and the individual believer may equally be spoken of as a temple of the Holy Spirit. And this concept is no mere *theologoumenon*; it is something which is experienced intensely and makes an immense difference to present existence. The Spirit pours the love of God into the hearts of believers and brings them increasingly into conformity with the character of Christ. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is", says Paul, "there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:17b, 18). What this "image" amounts to in practical experience is spelt out in the ninefold "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22f.—"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." These were the qualities which marked the historical Jesus, and Paul desires to see them reproduced in his converts—and, of course, in himself. Some of those qualities, he knew, did not come to him naturally. He was too fond of portraying the Christian life as a strenuous exercise—a race to be run, a battle to be fought (especially against himself)—for us to suppose that victory came to him "sudden, in a minute".

The tension could not be completely resolved so long as he lived at once in the present age (temporally) and in the age to come (spiritually)—that is, so long as he lived on earth in mortal body. But he found the secret of victory in the liberating "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:2). The central principle of this "law of the Spirit" is the love of God in Christ—first descending vertically and implanted in the heart by the Spirit and then flowing out into the lives of others. The canticle of love in 1 Corinthians 13 is an eloquent celebration of this truth.

Excerpted from F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 140-142.

F. F. Bruce is one of this country's leading New Testament scholars.

You Are Charismatic!

by Jürgen Moltmann

... As the power of resurrection, the Spirit is the reviving presence of the future of eternal life in the midst of the history of death; he is the presence of the future of the new creation in the midst of the dying life of this world and its evil state. In the Spirit and through the Spirit's powers the eschatological new thing—"Behold I make all things new"—becomes the new thing in history, reaching, at least in tendency, over the whole breadth of creation in its present wretchedness. That is why the energies of new life in the Spirit are as manifold and motley as creation itself. Nothing is to be passed over, pushed aside or given up. On the contrary, everything is to be made eternally alive. . . .

The charismata [spiritual gifts] are by no means to be seen merely in the 'special ministries' of the gathered community. Every member of the messianic community is a charismatic, not only in the community's solemn assemblies but every day, when members are scattered and isolated in the world. That is why in 1 Cor. 7:7 Paul also uses charisma for the historical place where a person is called, with his potentialities and powers. The call to the fellowship of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit makes a charisma out of bondage and freedom, marriage and celibacy, manhood and womanhood, Jewish and Gentile existence. For the call puts the person's particular situation at the service of the new creation. The Spirit makes the whole biological, cultural and religious life history of a person charismatically alive; 'Let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him'—'every one in the state in which he was called' (1 Cor. 7:17, 20, 24). This expansion of the doctrine of the charismata is not merely of interest where it affects the slaves and the free; it is even more so where it touches on the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Everyone is to bring into the church and the process of new creation everything he has, whatever he brings with him and whatever he can do. The foundation and goal of the charismatic enlivening make it clear that this does not mean any justification of existing circumstances and conflicts: 'You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men' (1 Cor. 7:23). This is particularly important for the people who are called as slaves. All are to 'deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it'—that is, use it as though they did not need it—and not misuse it, 'for the form of this world is passing away' (1 Cor. 7:31). Our dealings with the particular social, biological and cultural and religious conditions into which we are called are therefore to be free, determined by the eschatological freedom which overcomes this world and makes the new creation obedient. In principle every human potentiality and capacity can become charismatic through a person's call, if only they are used in Christ. It is not the facticity that decides what a charisma is; it is the modality. And this modality is stamped by the congregation's organization and by new obedience in the lordship of Christ. It is not the gift itself that is important, but its use.

EVIDENCE

Part 2

Key text:

1 Corinthians 7:7

"Every member of the messianic community is a charismatic."

Excerpted from Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), pp. 295-297. Copyright © 1977 by Jürgen Moltmann. Used with permission of Harper & Row, Publishers.

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How to Receive the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

by Morris L. Venden

HOW TO

Key text:
Acts 2:38

The baptism, or outpouring of the Holy Spirit is not for the purpose of making us happy, nor is it for the purpose of making us holy. It is given to make us useful. And even though many of us have experienced the convicting and converting work of the Spirit in our lives, and at least a degree of his cleansing work, the church as a whole has not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in its fullest sense, or we would not still be here.

Is it necessary to wait until some specified time for the baptism of the Holy Spirit? No. *Evangelism*, page 701 says, "The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church is looked forward to as in the future; but it is the privilege of the church to have it now. Seek for it, pray for it, believe for it. We must have it, and Heaven is waiting to bestow it."

Do you know how to seek for, pray for, and believe for this gift of the Holy Spirit? Let's notice several specific, tangible ways by which we can do so.

1. Accept Jesus as your only hope of salvation, and the only basis of your acceptance with God (Galatians 3:1-5). This is the first prerequisite for receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.

2. Know what it means to have a continuing relationship with Jesus Christ, through His Word and through prayer. The promise of the Holy Spirit in John 16:7-14, was given to disciples who had already learned what it meant to abide in Christ (John 15).

3. Renounce all sin. This is a hard one, and there are some today who would say that it is impossible. But look at Acts 2:38. What did Peter instruct the people on the day of Pentecost to do, in order to receive the Holy Spirit? "Repent, and be baptized." What does it mean to repent? It means to sorrow for sin, and to turn away from it. We are not talking here about the eradication of the sinful nature, nor about unknown sins, for which God obviously must be responsible. But we must turn away from all known sin. "It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer, and consecration to God that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now."¹

4. Baptism is also included in Acts 2:38. Most of us have been baptized. But it is evidently the rule (in spite of the exception in the case of Cornelius) that a person receives the outpouring of the Holy Spirit *after* baptism, after the public confession of faith in Jesus Christ.

5. Obedience. "And we are his witness of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). The context here is obedience in terms of service and witness and outreach.

6. Deliberately ask for it (see Luke 11:13). We are to ask, seek, and knock; for God is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask for it, than we are to give good gifts to our children.

7. Believe that you receive it (see Mark 11:24).

1. *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 507.

Morris Venden is the senior pastor of the College View Church in Lincoln, Neb.

Finding the Right Spirit

by H. Ward Hill

OPINION

Key text:
John 14:17

J. B. Priestly once said that people grew tired of having the "front of their minds tickled." It is much more rewarding to be challenged at the depth of one's being. This is apparently what the Spirit of God seeks to accomplish for all of us.

According to Scripture, God is in direct contact with us by his Spirit. "He dwelleth with you and shall be in you" (John 14:17). There can be no doubt about the critical importance of the Spirit in the life. As John tells us, it is the Spirit that gives life (John 6:63). This is the life exemplified in our Lord Jesus Christ.¹ A Catholic layman in Vermont suggested some time ago that we might more readily appreciate the work of the Spirit in our lives if we reversed the order in which we name the Trinity. Instead of speaking of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which in some minds might suggest a priority of importance, why not shock people a bit with the Holy Spirit, the Son and the Father?

The contemporary charismatic movement has shaken the Christian world and raises afresh the question of Acts 19—"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (vs. 2). The implication here is that those who had received the Spirit would indeed know whether or not this was the case. If there had been minimal sensation associated with the reception of the Spirit, then the temptation to doubt the arrival of the Spirit might be considerable.

When Peter Cartwright, the 19th century Methodist circuit rider was converted, a voice spoke to his heart saying, "thy sins are all forgiven thee".² He reported divine light flashing all around him, making it seem as though he were already in heaven. Even the leaves of the trees appeared to be praising God. The blaze of glory which launched his Christian life carried over into the daily walk along the path of sanctification. According to his testimony, from that time on, he never doubted the Lord for one minute.

Many attribute a bubbly, gushy jocularity to the presence of the Spirit in their life. Those of a shy nature and reticent personality may be made uncomfortable by the ease with which their more exuberant companions can enter into a "celebration" of the Spirit. However, the degree of enthusiasm and emotional involvement which is associated with our Christian experience may reveal more about our personality type than about the depth of our religious life.

For most Adventists the reception of the Spirit is a highly private and individual experience. Perhaps we have not stressed sufficiently the reception of the Spirit which may be associated with group worship.

It is most difficult to conduct a worship service for an entire congregation which will meet all needs. Some Adventists are only comfortable following a liturgy which is only a half-turn away from a high Anglican service. Others find the public worship lacking in life unless it features the pulsating rhythms and spontaneous expressions which pour forth in a Pentecostal rally.

"Many attribute a bubbly, gushy jocularity to the presence of the Spirit. . . ."

A wise use of small groups within the church may enhance the value of worship for different personality types. These could be arranged so as to foster the degree of expressiveness desired by a particular group. This is not advocating a wild abandon in which people self-indulgently permit themselves to have an emotional outburst which they rationalize into innocence in the name of being filled with the Spirit. It is simply that some seem to need to be more voluble and physical in their experience of spiritual things and feel unfulfilled when too much restraint and order prevails. Others find services where there is a great deal of backslapping and handshaking along with shouting and ecstatic expressions of joy shallow and irreverent. They long for quiet moments away from the din of joyful noise where they can hear the still small voice of the Spirit.

Let us not forget that the scriptures do indeed speak of clapping our hands and shouting joyfully our praises to God. And Acts 2:13 suggests that there was a loosening of inhibitions at Pentecost which led some who observed the early Christians to doubt their sobriety. At the same time, some of us find great strength in the words, "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).

The final corroboration of the presence of God's Spirit appears to be the evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in the life. This ultimately translates down to how the recipient of the Spirit treats other people. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:25).

1. See *Gospel Workers*, p. 285.
2. *Autobiography of Peter Cartright* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 36.

H. Ward Hill is the Chairman of the Division of Humanities at Union College.

1. What impression does the term "Holy Spirit" create in your mind? How did this week's lesson effect those impressions?
 2. Is it possible to have the Spirit partially but not fully? Explain. Would following the steps in the How To guarantee fully the outpouring of the Spirit?
 3. Are there criteria which can be applied to determine whether or not a given event or state of mind is the work of the Holy Spirit?
 4. What do you think Jürgen Moltmann (Evidence, Part 2) means in saying that it is not "facticity" but "modality" that determines a spiritual gift? Do you agree? Explain.
 5. Does the Holy Spirit ever give us gifts that have little or no relationship to our natural abilities? Why or why not?
 6. How would you react if a worship leader in your congregation said, "In the name of the Holy Spirit, the Son and the Father"?
 7. Is it possible for those who appreciate more structured, "dignified" expressions of worship and those who prefer more spontaneous, enthusiastic manifestations of the Spirit to co-exist harmoniously in one congregation? What is your reaction to Ward Hill's suggestion (see Opinion) on how to deal with this problem?
 8. Would the Holy Spirit's influence ever lead us to *change* the pattern of worship that is most comfortable to us?
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TESTIMONY IN STONE



THE LAW

of Yahweh is perfect,
new life for the soul;
the decree of Yahweh is trustworthy,
wisdom for the simple.
The precepts of Yahweh are upright,
joy for the heart;
the commandment of Yahweh is clear,
light for the eyes.

Psalm 19:7,8 Jerusalem Bible

The Definition of Love

by J. B. Lethbridge

INTRODUCTION

If I tell you that the law reveals God's character, you can't be blamed for not being much wiser. We need something more. Perhaps we could say that the law is a sort of parable: a truth about God written in human terms. If so, then maybe we could put our first statement like this: The law is a definition of Love, that is heavenly, perfect love, in terms of human conduct. So God tells Moses, say: I Am Love. Moses wants to know what that means exactly, and who can blame him? He asks God, and God replies, In your terms Moses, it means this: Thou shalt. . . .

If we could think of the genesis of the law that way, we would be safe from the legalistic idea that it is a set of rules. God only wanted the Hebrews to love him. When they in turn asked him what on earth that meant exactly, he said, In your terms it means thou shalt. . . . So now they could go about loving God as he wanted them to.

Which raises an interesting point. Why "as he wanted them to?" Surely love is something different to different people? I love you in my way, you love me in your way. We all say, That's just his way of saying "I love you," don't we? Well, that may be alright for children, but in a love relationship there are two people, and one cannot simply do his own thing. His partner may not understand or like it. Just because collecting snakes is my hobby it

does not follow that my biggest cobra makes the perfect anniversary gift to my wife.

The law tells us how to love God. It is a definition of love in human terms; hence it is a definition of God, for God is love. It is a set of instructions on love. Christ came to make good a serious omission in the law: it says nothing about the spirit. God must have assumed that we'd know that there was a spiritual aspect buried in the practical.

The law is a lot of other things too. For example, it is a good test of your love for God. That's what we mean when we say "it shows us our sinful condition." You can check your love (for anyone actually) against the law. And it is a "guide to Christian living" because it shows us where the weak points in our love are and moreover shows us how to make them good: Stop stealing, stop lying, keep Sabbath properly and so on.

The one thing the law cannot do is give us strength to keep it. That comes from elsewhere. In fact that strength must come first. God wants you to love him; the Holy Spirit makes you want to love God. But that's frightfully vague, so here's the law to show you exactly what that means. That's why it is so important to understand the law through Christ, because there is more to love than merely going to church, or not stealing; or washing the dishes and doing the vacuuming, carrying the groceries. . . .

J. B. Lethbridge teaches English at Union College.

A Libeled Law

LOGOS Imagine you're nine again and you have a hero you virtually worship, say a sports star like Reggie Jackson. Because of your boundless admiration, you try to emulate Reggie in every way—the walk, the talk, even down to the cap and the jersey with his number on it. Would all this actually make you a miniature Reggie Jackson? No, but many of us use the law in the same manner as a child uses his perception of a hero. We seek to obtain the righteousness of God simply by a superficial application to our lives of his qualities revealed in the law. We try to use these external guidelines to change our internal motivations, but it doesn't work. This cosmetic effort cannot succeed in making us like God—just as wearing an Angels' baseball cap won't make you Reggie Jackson. The law has been misapplied—forced into a role it was never meant to fill.

The law does in fact represent the character of God. It is the embodiment of righteousness. "Righteous are you, O Lord, and your laws are right. The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy" (Psalm 119:137, 138, NIV). The transfer of God's righteousness to us, however, is in no way the purpose of the law. As Paul declares, "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his [God's] sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin" (Rom. 3:20, NIV). The law exists to illustrate the huge contrast between God's perfection and our degradation.

Before the antinomians fill the air with "amens," however, let me hasten to add that the law possesses a further objective. It is meant to be kept—for if that was not possible, Satan's original charges in Eden would be substantiated. But this law-keeping cannot be an intentional, mechanical action; instead the law can be truly kept only as the outgrowth of a heart motivated by Jesus Christ.

Jesus stressed the necessity of commandment-keeping and delivered a stern rebuke to those who would minimize the importance of a Christian's actions when he declared, "I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:18, 19, NIV).

With this understanding, the function of the law becomes clear. As a representation of God's character, the law can do nothing to save us. But if we do have a saving relationship with Christ, we will seek to become like him. Therefore, we will keep the law. So instead of being abolished at the cross, the law remains in force through eternity. God's character is static—which makes his law equally permanent and changeless. For he emphatically maintains, "I the Lord do not change" (Mal. 3:6, NIV). His law remains constantly relevant and effective—as does his grace.

L. R. C.

Ten Promises

by Peter Hammermueller

One important role God's law plays in the Christian's life is to show us our need of Christ's justifying righteousness.

"When the law was proclaimed from Sinai, God made known to men the holiness of His character, that by contrast they might see the sinfulness of their own. The law was given to convict them of sin, and reveal their need of a Saviour. It would do this as its principles were applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. This work it is still to do. In the life of Christ the principles of the law are made plain; and as the Holy Spirit of God touches the heart, as the light of Christ reveals to men their need of His cleansing blood and His justifying righteousness, the law is still an agent in bringing us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."¹

Frequently the law is seen in a negative light because of its seemingly impossible requirements. Ellen White points out that the commandments should be seen as promises and a guide for our life today. "The Ten Commandments, Thou shalt and Thou shalt not, are ten promises, assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe. If ye love me, keep my commandments. Here is the sum and substance of the law of God. The terms of salvation for every son and daughter of Adam are here outlined."²

"That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, this do, and you will not come under the domain and control of Satan. There is not a negative in that law, although it might appear thus. It is DO, and Live."³ "The Law is an expression of God's idea. When we receive it in Christ, it becomes our idea. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin."⁴

"... How wonderful in its simplicity, its comprehensiveness and perfection, is the law of Jehovah. It is so brief that we can easily commit every precept to memory, and yet so far-reaching as to express the whole will of God, and to take cognizance, not only of the outward actions, but of the thoughts and intents, the desires and emotions, of the heart. . . ."⁵

TESTIMONY

Key text:

Psalm 19:7-11

"In the life of Christ the principles of the law are made plain."

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 380.

2. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1105.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 235.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 217.

Peter Hammermueller is a junior history and theology major at Union College.

Christ—the End of the Law

by Ron Halvorsen

EVIDENCE

Key text:

Romans 10:1-4

In Romans 10:1-4, Paul is clarifying what he has discussed in 9:30, 31. He states emphatically that the Jew has no right to salvation based upon his national identity. The way of salvation was made clear to the Jews, but they refused to go that way. They stubbornly clung to Sinai, to their national heritage and to human works as the means to salvation. The Jews were willing to embrace Sinai, but not Calvary.

In verse 1 we discover Paul's burden for those deluded people—his people: "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved" (NIV). Endearred to them by his birth, he calls them "brothers" but he does not water down the truth. He loves them and because he loves them he prays for their salvation. These words were revolutionary, radical. In the cultural context in which they were spoken they were devastating. It would be like Ron Halvorsen telling the "brethren"—the church member, the elder, the Sabbath-keeper, the tithe-payer—that they are unsaved. Israel is lost and Paul gives two reasons for this:

1. **Misdirected religious zeal.** "For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge" (Romans 10:2, NIV).

"As a mirror it reflects my sinfulness. As a window, it opens upon a new world."

Who was better able to talk right to the point on the subject of misdirected religious zeal than Paul? He was a zealot, a defender of the faith. He was a Jew among Jews, a Pharisee among Pharisees. Paul had exhausted himself in religious activity. He was good at holding coats and holding chains. His orthodoxy was unquestionable. He was sincere about his cause although he was unsaved. But his religious assets were really his religious liabilities.

I have met many in the church who are religious activists, always on the go for God, working for the church and involved in the program only later to discover it was for the wrong reasons. Motion with the wrong motives. Working the treadmill of activity, but getting nowhere. Israel was unsaved because of misdirected zeal.

2. **Misdirected religious belief.** Not only were the Jews zealots, but they were also legalists. They were building an edifice of righteousness based upon the edict of Sinai, which in itself is a futile task.

Paul says, "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone that believeth" (vs. 4). The law acts as a mirror, but it also acts as a window. As a mirror it reflects upon my image, reveals my sinfulness. As a window, it opens upon a new world. The world of Creator, Sustainer and Saviour.

The law was never given to justify the sinner, to make him righteous. It was given to convince the sinner of the righteousness of God and drive the sinner to Christ. It was given to establish a need, to excite the craving for salvation. Righteousness is fully met by the righteous Saviour. The aim is satisfied in that it has fully revealed a perfect God, a perfect Saviour and a perfect plan of salvation.

At the time of this writing Ron Halvorsen was the Ministerial Director for the Mid-America Union.

Boundaries, Perimetered By Love

by Kathy Bollinger

HOW TO

Key text:
Proverbs 3:12

There is no one I know who is more concerned about the welfare of my two sons than their grandfather. With all the spunk and busyness of their seven and four years of life, they pester and adore him. Determined to be just like Grandpa, they wear his "size L" T-shirts to bed, change their favorite brand of pizza to his, and beg for tool sets for Christmas so they may learn to be carpenters too.

This idolization (natural, of course) comes not only from the love shared, but also from the consistency of knowing what Grandpa expects from them in everyday living.

If, while under Grandpa's care, my sons engage in "sand lot" or even "grassy lawn"—fist fighting, they will be assured of a little "biff on the bottom" to remind them of alternative ways to settle differences. There are certain rules which they need to abide by. Because my sons are human, they need that little reminder. When the reminder is administered in love it is well-taken and is exchanged with mutual respect.

Since we are sharing space with others in this world, there are rules we have to abide by. God set up guidelines for us and Jesus lived these basic rules while he was on earth. God's law, while exact and unchanging, reveals several things.

1. **God's law reveals God's love and concern for us.** To live in an ordered society we need laws. As one man put it, "Your space ends where my face begins." God wanted us to live in harmony with each other so he gave us boundaries, perimetered by love. God has promised when a person confesses and turns from sin, he will forgive.

2. **God's law shows us our sinful condition.** Often if there is no standard set, one is oblivious to just how far he has strayed from that which is acceptable. When we grasp the meaning of God's law, we are enabled to see how obedience to it is necessary. God's law helps us to see the importance of honesty, faithfulness, uprightness and respect. It not only defines our duties to God but also our duties to each other.

3. **God's law is a guide for Christian living.** By studying the life of Christ, we see that love is the thread that led others to him. So basic is love to each commandment in the law of God that possibly the tablet of stone could have been forever left unwritten if people would obey the one command, "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

Kathy Bollinger is a women's dean at Union College.

Fruit Tree Religion?

by George Gibson

OPINION
Key text:
James 2:24

I have often been told that justification is by faith alone. But one day while reading James, I noticed that "a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone" (James 2:24, NIV). I started to read on and then came awake mentally. Did I need to tear this page out of the Bible?

For many years Adventists concentrated on the law. Our focus was so narrow that we finally had to be told that we had become as dry as the hills of Gilboa. Because of our reaction to that extreme, it is possible that we have gone too far in the other direction. Our salvation is a gift. However, God holds us responsible for our actions since he will judge "every work" (Eccl. 12:14). Satan is happy if he can get us to concentrate on either extreme. If he can get us to concentrate on the gift and forget the responsibilities, he is happy. Or if he can get us to concentrate on works and forget the Giver, he is happy. When God's people will put the two together in the proper combination, then our "light will so shine" so that the world can see our "good works" and will "glorify God" (Matt. 5:16).

Some argue that we are to be like fruit trees that just let the fruit grow. But God did not make people like fruit trees. He created men and women in his image that have the power to think and act independently (Gen. 1:26 and *Education*, p. 17). We need to work out our own salvation (Phil. 2:12). Fruit trees were not given that privilege. Daily decisions have to be made as to how to live. Why should we be uncomfortable in using the power of choice that God has given and requires that we use? The law gives a tremendous standard to help us evaluate our behavior. God is honored when his children intelligently let their light shine. Daniel made a tremendous impact for God because he carefully thought through what his civil and religious behavior should be. Those who disliked him could find nothing wrong in his behavior. If Daniel had been slipshod, those around him would have held a much lower regard for his God.

There is no question that salvation is a gift. And there should be no question that the Giver of that gift asks that we return an intelligent life. We have a Christian obligation to encourage each other in good works. God made quite clear that we are "our brother's keeper." We are not to judge people, but we do have a responsibility to take a look at behavior, for "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:17, 20, 21). God is attempting to develop a people who will intelligently join faith and works. That kind of a people are the "light set on a hill" that he has asked us to become.

"What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has not works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead . . ." (James 2:14-17, NASB).

George Gibson is an assistant professor of history at Union College.

1. What, specifically, do the Ten Commandments tell you about God's character?
 2. Why do you think God expressed the Ten Commandments largely in negative terms, i.e. "thou shalt not . . ." ? Does this tell us anything about his character?
 3. Is it possible for sinful humans to keep the law?
 4. If one were perfectly obedient to the Ten Commandments, would he then be perfect?
 5. With this week's discussion of the purposes of the law in mind, how do you react to the following passages from Paul?
 - a) ". . . We have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code" (Rom. 7:6, NIV).
 - b) "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law" (Gal. 5:18, NIV).
 6. Is all true law-keeping natural and spontaneous? Explain. If I don't feel motivation from Christ to do something I think I ought to, should I then not do it?
 7. Do you agree with George Gibson's view (Opinion) that we have gone too far in stressing salvation as a gift, downplaying the necessity for responsible choices? Why or why not?
 8. Are the following violations of the Ten Commandments? Explain why or why not.
 - a) an insincere compliment given to avoid hurting another's feelings
 - b) killing enemy soldiers in war
 - c) lying to protect an innocent person from one who intends to harm that individual
 - d) killing another in defense of one's own life or life of a family member
-

SYMBOLS OF SALVATION



The Symbols Speak Love

by John Abbott

INTRODUCTION

A young girl busily prepared a recipe which most new and enthusiastic little cooks like to use: a pinch or two of this and a whole bunch of that!

When she had finished, she proudly served her meal onto her plate. Then she climbed on top of the counter to get one of the glasses stored in the cupboard.

Intently, she viewed the columns of finely cut glass and fancy chinaware. Then, on impulse, she took a spoon and tapped out a melody on the glass drums. Just at a crescendo her younger brother stormed in. Taking a sheriff's stance he cried:

"Uh-ohh . . . you're in trouble now, Jenny. You know you're not supposed to be up there. Just wait 'til daddy gets home—I'm telling on you!" The little sheriff grabbed a popsicle from the ice box and then hastily departed.

Jenny's eyes began to tear. All of her fun had been extinguished like a candle in the wind. Slowly, she came down from her mountaintop feeling like a 2 a.m. Cinderella.

She sat down to her meal but her appetite was gone, banished by the trembling thought of coming judgment. Fearful thoughts entered her mind.

"What's going to happen to me? Maybe daddy won't let me play chef anymore. Since daddy's a mailman he might send me away for good."

Her tears could have eased a

drought. Their unchecked flow from her eyes landed on her plate. This was the plate her father had given her. He had personally inscribed the words, "To my daughter, Jenny, whom I'll always love." She looked up and her gaze drifted down the hall and through the open door of her bedroom. There, on her bed were the stuffed animals her father had brought home for her. She remembered the many dresses and winter coats her father worked long hours to provide her. Everything she had, her father had given her because he loved her. She remembered how much fun it was to play with him and how nice it was to be held by him.

The child's storm abated and sun was shining. Surrounding her were signs and symbols of a father's love and sacrifice. And because of these symbols and her personal experience with her father, she couldn't wait for him to return home—"just for her."

John Abbott is a sophomore theology major at Union College.

Christ— the Meaning of the Sanctuary

LOGOS One of the most fascinating ways God used to make himself known was the ritual-drama of the Old Testament sanctuary services. God instructed Moses to have the Israelites “make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you” (Ex. 25:8, 9, NIV). Exactitude was necessary, for every component was to serve as a symbol of cosmic reality. The sanctuary was “a copy and a shadow of what is in heaven” (Heb. 8:5, NIV).

The sanctuary symbols lend special clarity to our understanding of Christ’s redemptive activity and what that activity teaches us about God. Notice that Christ is at the center of the New Testament interpretation of each of the following key sanctuary symbols.

1. The Lamb

The central function of the sanctuary was the removal of the guilt that caused alienation between God and humanity. To accomplish this, lambs and other animals were offered as sacrifices. One of the trespass offerings an individual could bring was a female lamb, without defect. The priest would then prepare the sacrifice and handle the blood according to the Lord’s instruction. “In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven” (Lev. 4:35, NIV). Thus atonement could occur only through the death of the sacrifice.

The sacrifice of each lamb dealt with the sin of one day or one act, but when Jesus appeared on the human scene, John the Baptist identified him as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, NIV). John the Revelator later envisioned heavenly beings, in a song of acclamation, declaring to the now exalted Lamb, “You are worthy . . . because you were slain and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9, NIV).

2. The Altar of Incense

The golden altar of incense was located just before the curtain veiling the holy of holies (see diagram in How To). Aaron, the high priest, was to “burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tends the lamps” (Ex. 30:7). Revelation suggests that the incense symbolizes the intercession of Christ, through which the prayers of sinful humans are brought to the throne of God.

“Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel’s hand” (Rev. 8:3, 4, NIV). What an awesome representation of what happens in heaven when we offer prayer in humility and sincerity!

3. The Ark of the Covenant

In the innermost room, the *sanctum sanctorum* of the sanctuary, stood the most crucial furnishing—the ark of the covenant (see Exodus 25:10-22). The tables of stone on which were inscribed the

Ten Commandments, or the Testimony, expressing the heart of the covenant relationship between God and Israel, were placed within the ark (cf. Deut. 10:1-5).

A vision of John in Revelation assures us that what is represented by the ark and its contents is still central to God's plan in the Christian era. "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant" (Rev. 11:18, 19, NIV). The Ten Commandments are thus seen to be eternally significant principles which form the moral foundation of the universe, and which guide us in a relationship of covenant faithfulness with Christ.

4. The Mercy Seat

On top of the ark, overarched by two golden cherubim facing each other, was the mercy seat. Here we find the heart of God's solution to the problem of sin. The moral order of the universe represented by the Ten Commandments in the ark is unchangeable, yet every human being has broken the covenant, and therefore deserves death. But mercy is here combined with justice—sacrificial blood is sprinkled on the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:15, 16), making a sinful people right with God again.

Paul writes that Christ Jesus was the one "whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (Rom. 3:25, RSV). The Greek word here translated "expiation" is *hilasterion*, which the Greek-speaking Jews used for "mercy seat." Thus Paul seems to be saying that the cross of Christ is our mercy seat. It is, in the words of Norman Perrin, "the place where the sin of man meets the forgiveness of God."¹

With the ark of the covenant ever in view, we will be safeguarded against compromising in any way the terms of the covenant relationship. With the mercy seat ever in view, we will be safeguarded against trusting anything but the cross for our acceptance with God.

5. The High Priest

The Jewish high priests carried out repeated sacrificial rituals which, in themselves, could not deal decisively with the problem of sin. But, "Christ has entered, not that sanctuary made by men's hands which is only a symbol of the reality, but heaven itself, to appear now before God on our behalf. Nor is he there to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the sanctuary year by year with blood not his own. . . . But as it is, he has appeared once and for all at the climax of history to abolish sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:24, 25, 27, NEB).

What we see in the sanctuary symbolizes the reality of God's judgment against sin and the death sin inevitably must cause. But we also find that we are invited to "enter boldly into the sanctuary by the new, living way which he has opened through the curtain, the way of his flesh" (Heb. 10:19, 20, NEB).

D. F. M.

1. Norman Perrin, *The New Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974), p. 109.

Two Sides of the Sanctuary Truth

TESTIMONY Judgment

Key text:
Psalm 96:13

We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin, by humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life, should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin, and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged in by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet he will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. . . .

When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. . . .

"Watch ye therefore, . . . lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." Perilous is the condition of those who growing weary of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world. While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure-lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments,—it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence, "Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting."¹

"The purity and devotion of one will not offset these qualities in another."

Intercession

The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiations, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. . . .

Oh, that all may see that everything in obedience, in penitence, in praise and thanksgiving, must be placed upon the glowing fire of the righteousness of Christ. The fragrance of this righteousness ascends like a cloud around the mercy seat.²

1. *Review and Herald*,
Nov. 9, 1905.
2. *Selected Messages*,
Book 1, p. 344.

In the Stream of Time

by L. K. McDowell

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Leviticus 23

Any visitor to Israel is impressed with how much Christians venerate holy places. We inherited this from the Romans. To them any cave or grotto could be a "numen"—the palpable presence of a divinity. Judaism is quite different. It commemorates, not places, but times.

The Sabbath, the Jubilee years, and the great Annual Festivals all celebrated times, times that find their fulfillment in the unfolding plan of salvation. They are symbols of salvation—signposts that signal the march of time to its inevitable close. Leviticus 23 lists seven of these. The first four will be mentioned briefly and the last three autumn festivals will be studied in more detail.

1. **The Passover** (Leviticus 23:5). The Passover commemorated redemption from slavery in Egypt and celebrated salvation to come through "the Lamb of God." Jesus, "our Passover," was crucified at about 3:00 p.m. on the 14th of Nisan, just as the Passover lamb was being killed (Exodus 12:3-5; Heb. 11:28).

2. **The Feast of Unleavened Bread** (Leviticus 23:6). This began the day after the Passover and all leaven, which represented sin, was put away from every home. Christians are to be "unleavened. For Christ, our paschal lamb, was sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7; see also Ex. 12:17-20; Gal. 5:9).

3. **The Feast of Firstfruits** (Leviticus 23:10-12). Christ rose on Sunday morning, the 16th of Nisan, the day of the first fruits. He was "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep," (1 Cor. 15:20, NIV).

4. **The Feast of Pentecost** (Leviticus 23:15-21). This summer festival came seven weeks after the Wave Sheaf. It celebrated the wheat harvest. Christ, the Sower, saw the harvest of his work on earth reaped when three thousand were converted on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41). Pentecost empowered the disciples to proclaim the gospel, first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles (Acts 1:8).

5. **The Feast of Trumpets** (Leviticus 23:23-25). Trumpets sounded warning (Joel 2:1; Jeremiah 4:5; Zephaniah 1:14-17), and this festival prepared the people for the judgment to come ten days later. The Talmud taught that the trumpets signify "God's loud call to repentance," and there were "litanies and petitions for forgiveness."¹ The ten days were "days of serious meditation."² What parallel do we find in modern times of this festival?

The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 ushered in a new era both in philosophy and theology.³ Men began to think and write about the judgments of God and the end of the world. This in turn gave rise to the great Advent Movement of the 19th century. We can list names of many trumpeters: Johann Petri, Johann Bengel, Manuel Lacunza, and J. A. Brown. Even a Scottish layman, William Cunningham, proclaimed the cleansing of God's church at the close of the 2,300 days. Joseph Wolff, Edward Irving, and illiterate youth in Sweden, proclaimed the message of repentance.⁴

In America the warning message attracted the attention of thousands. As early as 1840 Josiah Litch began to write of a pre-advent judgment,⁵ and William Miller spoke of the autumn festivals that would see their fulfillment in 1843/44. Some advent people in Maine "embraced the view that the judgment must precede the advent."⁶

6. **The Day of Atonement** (Leviticus 23:26-32). Special services marked this festival. It was the only day on which the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary. A final atonement was made "for the tent of meeting . . . , for the priests, and for all the people" (Lev. 16:33, RSV).

Jewish tradition makes it clear that Satan stood as the accuser on this day. "The Divine Judge receives on that day the report of Satan, arch-fiend and accuser"⁷ (see also Revelation 12:10, 11).

Just how God answers those accusations is seen in Zechariah 3:1-5. In this judgment the books are opened, judgment is pronounced in favor of God's people, and Christ receives His kingdom. (See also Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14, 22).

Besides justification by judicial verdict, there is also a process of sanctification⁸ foretold by Malachi: "He will purify the sons of Levi . . ." (Mal. 3:5, RSV). Thus the prayer recited on that day is answered "on this day he will forgive you, to cleanse you from all your sins before the Lord: ye shall be clean."⁹ In the final act of judgment, Azazel, representing Satan, was taken and cast over a cliff and the people celebrated the event with dancing and singing.

Judgment is also declared against the world. The destruction of Jerusalem is an example of what happens when men pass the limits of divine forbearance. Just as the Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem in A.D. 66, so today 50,000 nuclear warheads, totalling 1,600,000 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb, surround a doomed world.¹⁰ How true is the statement by Ellen White: "This earth has almost reached the place where God will permit the destroyer to work his will upon it."¹¹

7. **The Feast of Tabernacles** (Leviticus 23:33-36). Fifteen days after the Day of Atonement came the final harvest festival. "Ye shall rejoice . . .", God commanded (Deut. 16:14). This festival kept before the minds of the people the completed work of the Messiah. What a celebration of joy will be ours when this festival is fulfilled when we meet on the sea of glass before God's throne! (Rev. 14:1-5; 15:1-4; Isa. 12:2, 3).¹²

These seven festivals mark the passage of time through the centuries. They are symbols of salvation fulfilled at specific times in history and which, like the chiming of the clock, tell us just where we are in the stream of time.

1. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Art., "Day of Atonement," p. 286.

2. *Ibid.*

3. See Thomas Kendrick, *The Lisbon Earthquake* for a complete discussion of the significance of this earthquake.

4. See R. W. Schwartz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, pp. 25-29.

5. C. Mervyn Maxwell, *The Sanctuary and Atonement*, p. 550.

6. *The Midnight Cry*, October 31, 1844.

7. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Op. Cit.

8. See E. G. White in *Review*, June 22, 1886: "Here is the process, the refining, purifying process. . . ."

9. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Op. Cit. Also Ellen G. White in *The Great Controversy*, p. 484.

10. For a discussion of the nuclear threat see Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth*.

11. *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 7, p. 141.

12. In *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 49, Ellen White captures the joy experienced during the Feast of Tabernacles.

God in Human Skin

by Beatrice S. Neall

The sanctuary is a symbol of God getting into human skin to become one with us. The gold and the glory covered over by bedouin goatskins represented the divinity of Christ concealed in human skin. "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us" (John 1:14). Every part of the sanctuary represented Jesus—the bread (John 6:35), the light (8:12), the sacrificed animals (1:29), and the priests who offered them. The altar was his cross, the laver his baptism, the incense his intercession, the ark his throne. The three sections of the sanctuary tell of three phases of his ministry (see chart).

HOW TO

Key text:
1 Cor. 6:19, 20

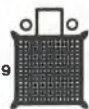
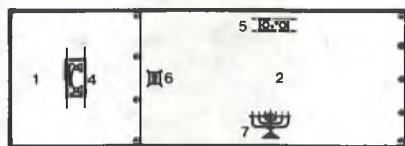
The three divisions of the sanctuary also represent three phases of our Christian experience. The court initiates us to life with God. There we first encounter the altar where the blood was shed. Gazing at the Substitute suffering in our behalf, we experience repentance and forgiveness. Next we encounter the laver where our sins are washed away. Surrounding us on every side are the white linen curtains of Christ's righteousness. The court, then, represents our JUSTIFICATION.

We press further into the Holy Place where we find the symbols of our new life with Christ. On the table to our right is the living Bread on which we feed for the nourishment of our souls. Eagerly we approach the altar of incense which stands before the Throne (Rev. 8:3) and to our joy discover that the veil has been lifted so that we stand boldly before the throne to find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 6:19; 4:16). Our prayers rise like incense morning and evening (Ps. 141:2; Rev. 8:4). Next we turn to the south wall where the golden candlestick burns radiantly with the oil that is constantly fed into it. We ask God to impart the oil and sacred fire to our lives so that they may burn brilliantly in a world of dark despair. In this sacred place we find the emblems of our spiritual life of Bible study, prayer, and witnessing. The Holy Place represents SANCTIFICATION. From there we await the Most Holy Place experience of GLORIFICATION when we shall see our God face to face and sit with him on his throne (Rev. 22:4; 3:21).

What is the sanctuary? God coming to dwell in human skin. It tells Jesus' story. And ours.

JUDGMENT ← INTERCESSION

← SACRIFICE ← Jesus' Life



GLORIFICATION ← SANCTIFICATION

← JUSTIFICATION ← My Life

1. Holy of holies
2. Holy place

3. Outer court
4. Ark and mercy seat

5. Table of shewbread
6. Golden altar

7. Candlestick
8. Laver

9. Brazen altar

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Present Truth From the Sanctuary

OPINION Key text: Revelation 11:16-19

Seventh-day Adventists have always seen "present truth" in the symbols of the sanctuary's Most Holy Place—truth that makes a tremendous difference in one's outlook on life. Revelation 11:19 suggests to me an aspect of what the Most Holy Place symbolizes which is indeed present truth for today's world.

Verse 18 is part of a heavenly liturgy in which the "twenty-four elders" affirm that God will execute justice. "The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants . . . and for destroying those who destroy the earth" (NIV).

Immediately after this scene John declares, "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm" (vs. 19, NIV).

Several commentators have noted the relationship between verses 18 and 19. J. Massyngberde Ford states that the "manifestation of the ark at this stage, implies that God has pledged himself to fulfill all the great deeds celebrated in the heavenly song sung in vs. 17-18; i.e. to win the victory and reign."¹ And Robert H. Mounce points out that from the "most holy place proceed both the promise of covenant love and righteous anger (cf. 16:1). The opening of the temple serves to reveal a heavenly ark, the symbol of God's faithfulness to his covenant promises."²

The spectacular vision of the Most Holy Place afforded us by John thus is powerful assurance that despite the suffering and oppression of the present age, God's everlasting covenant will prevail. Its reality surpasses the vicissitudes of our sin-ridden existence; God's commitment to the covenant relationship and the future it promises is unailing. And those who enter the covenant will soon be vindicated.

Furthermore, God's law, enshrined in the ark, remains the standard by which the world will be judged. Despite appearances to the contrary, the integrity and love enjoined by the law are the principles that make the universe tick, and only the life loyal to those principles can endure in the long view of God's eternal plan.³

Here is present truth of overwhelming significance. It is a word of divine judgment against those "who destroy the earth"—the oppressors, the polluters, the perpetrators of mass nuclear horror. But for those who remain faithful to the covenant, it is a cherished word of hope and promise.

We who are called to proclaim this present truth must do so with more than words that point to a future day. Our message will be convincing when our deeds bear witness to peace and justice, when we give a living demonstration in the present of what God has promised for the future.

D. F. M.

1. J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation, The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1975), p. 182.
2. Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation, New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), pp. 232, 233.
3. See Desmond Ford, *Crisis*, vol. 2 (Newcastle, CA: Desmond Ford Publications, 1982), pp. 498, 499.

1. Does the sanctuary symbolism tell us anything about God and his truth that hasn't been revealed in other ways? If so, what? If not, what is the value of the sanctuary for today?

2. What truth about God is of greatest significance to you in the following sanctuary symbols:
- a) the Lamb (and other animal sacrifices)?
 - b) the altar of incense?
 - c) the ark of the covenant?
 - d) the mercy seat?
 - e) the structure of the sanctuary?

Do any of these symbols disturb you or leave you with questions? Explain.

3. What is your reaction to the Evidence author's application of the Jewish autumn festival to the Advent movement and the current era? What evidence is there that we are now living in the "Day of Atonement"?

4. Does the belief that we are now living in the time symbolized by the Day of Atonement have any specific implications for the way you live your life? Explain.

5. Does the judgment aspect of Adventist sanctuary theology (see Testimony) destroy one's assurance of salvation? Explain why or why not. Is there any sense in which judgment itself is "good news"?

THE FAMILIES OF GOD

ephesians 5:25 niv

HUSBANDS

Love your AS

WIVES

CHRIST

Loved the

CHURCH

AND
GAVE
HIM
SELF
UP
FOR
HER

Except as Little Children

by Jackie Ordelleide

INTRO- DUCTION

As a small girl I would run to the kitchen each morning, as the clock struck 6, to meet my dad. Here we could begin our time of talking together until the rest of the family awoke for breakfast. Having the energy of a five-year-old, I never tired of waking early to talk with him. Each morning would open up new worlds as I would learn such things as tying my shoes, writing my name, and other equally important achievements—all the while listening to the weather report. I soon acquired the weatherman's nickname, "Overshoes," (a most unique name for a little girl) and because I didn't know any better, it came to have a special meaning to me—it symbolized our time together in the morning.

One particular morning stands out in my mind as I recall firing my array of questions as usual.

"Daddy, who turns off the street lights every day?" I inquired.

"Well, Overshoes, there's one man that goes around to every light in the city and turns it off every day," my dad responded.

I had acquired so much confidence in my dad that nothing seemed out of perspective in his response, though I've since learned to detect his use of humor.

Now, when I look back on that time, I am awed at both the unlimited energy I must have had to voluntarily rise at six every day, and at the

unshakeable trust I had in my father. But nonetheless, maybe that's the close kind of relationship God intended for his sons and daughters to have with him—a relationship with an eagerness to spend time with him, irrespective of surroundings or circumstances, and a willingness to accept his counsel even if it seems out of perspective to us at that moment.

This week's lesson discusses familial relationships in comparison to the God-man relationship and how we can draw closer to him as his sons and daughters.

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To Show a Point

LOGOS How does an infinite God reveal himself to finite man? How does God, whose ways and thoughts are so above our own (Isaiah 55:8, 9), touch our consciousness? The most common method God uses to communicate concepts and ideals to us is through the use of similies and metaphors. Some of the most effective of those are derived from family relationships. We call God "Father." We refer to Jesus Christ as "his Son." And we also refer to ourselves as "his children." Now God didn't conceive "his Son." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1, NIV). Nevertheless, to facilitate our understanding of the Godhead, Christ is known as the "Son of God."

Father, son, children, these are all familiar to us and perhaps this is why God chose the family as a method of revelation. He takes the family's love to portray the relationship he desires and he uses the pain and sorrow of broken vows and vanished love to illustrate the result of a severed relationship.

One of the most pointed and clear illustrations of this is found in Ezekiel 16. "On the day you were born your navel string was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you. No eye pitied you . . . but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born. And when I passed by you, and saw you weltering in your blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live' " (Eze. 16:4-6, RSV). The girl was taken care of and she grew up. After some time the man came back and saw her again. "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, behold you were at the age for love" (Eze. 16:8, RSV). He married her and they started a home together. "I swathed you in fine linen and covered you with silk and I decked you with ornaments, and put bracelets on your arms, and a chain on your neck. . . . You grew exceedingly beautiful, and came to regal estate. And your renown went forth among the nations because of your beauty" (Eze. 16:10, 11, 13, RSV).

So far the story has the making of a beautiful romance. Boy saves girl, falls in love with her, marries her, and lives happily. But that's not how it goes. "But you trusted in your beauty, and played the harlot because of your renown and lavished your harlotries on any passerby. . . . And you took your sons and your daughters, whom you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed" (Eze. 16:15, 20, RSV). Suddenly the story's not so nice anymore. But it gets worse when you remember that this is an allegory; a story told to make a point. Here, in terms we can understand, God is trying to illustrate what a broken relationship with him really means. Can you feel the pain?

The story doesn't end here. After all the pain and injury, "Yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish with you an everlasting covenant" (Eze. 16:60, RSV). Can you see the love?

Stories, parables, families and other object lessons, all to show a point, all to tell of a Father's love and pain. Can you see it? E. R. M.

Illustrating Heaven

selected by Ralph Schnell

Like every other one of God's good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty. In both the Old and the New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people, the redeemed ones whom He has purchased at the cost of Calvary. "Fear not," He says; "thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." Isaiah 54:4, 5; Jer. 3:14. In the "Song of Songs" we hear the bride's voice saying, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." And He who is to her "the chiefest among ten thousand," speaks to His chosen one, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." Song of Solomon 2:16; 5:10; 4:7.

In later times Paul the apostle, writing to the Ephesian Christians, declares that the Lord has constituted the husband the head of the wife, to be her protector, the house-band, binding the members of the family together, even as Christ is the head of the church and the Saviour of the mystical body. Therefore he says, "As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives." Ephesians 5:24-28.

The grace of Christ, and this alone, can make this institution what God designed it should be—an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent the family of heaven.

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Jeremiah 3:14

"The marriage relation is to represent the union between Christ and His people."

Excerpted from *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 64, 65.

Ralph Schnell is a junior youth ministries and business administration major at Union College.

Analogies for God

by Ralph E. Neall

EVIDENCE
Part 1
Key text:
Psalms 103:13

Every good teacher knows that he must present new ideas to his students in terms of things they know already. In the early grades the facts of addition and subtraction are taught in terms of apples, crayons, and books. In college the ancient problems of Jews and Gentiles are related to modern racial tensions. Back in his village in Sarawak after visiting New York City, a General Conference delegate described a skyscraper as a "longhouse standing on end," thus putting his memories in terms his villagers could understand.

God also uses analogies in describing himself to us. Eternal, omnipotent, holy, he is different from everything we know. In order to reveal himself to us, he compares himself with people we are familiar with. Indeed, it seems as though God always speaks of himself in terms of analogies and illustrations. "Without a parable spake he not unto them." If we try to get behind the illustrations to literal language, we find ourselves using still other analogies. The only vocabulary we have for speaking about God is the vocabulary of poetry and symbol. In the Gospel of John we read of Christ as light, a lamb, water, bread, wine, a temple, a shepherd, a serpent, and a grain of wheat. In Matthew we see God in terms of a Father who loves his children, and in Paul Christ is the husband who gives himself for his bride.

**"The only
vocabulary
we have for
speaking about
God is the
vocabulary
of poetry
and symbol."**

Our lesson this week emphasizes these family illustrations. They are personal, not abstract and impersonal like "ground of all being," "ultimate concern," and "first cause." These terms seem to be literal language, but actually they are only new illustrations—poorer than the ones we find in the Bible.

God is a Father who lovingly yearns for his son's happiness, weeps when he flees to the far country, and rejoices when he comes home. He is a Father who knows what we need before we ask him, and loves to answer our requests. He sometimes has to discipline us, but always for our good. He is the origin of all true fatherhood.

He is also the heavenly Bridegroom who chose us for his bride, gave himself for us, and is preparing us for an everlasting home with him. We can get a divorce if we insist, but he rejoices when, like Hosea, he can bring us to himself again. He is the origin of all true married love. Furthermore, he is the Mother who never forgets her child, and the Brother who shares his inheritance with us.

These analogies, of course, don't say much to an orphan or an abused wife. Perhaps that is why God has used so many of them, in the hope that somewhere in each person's life there will be someone who loves him and will thus show him the love of God.

This is the common thread that runs through all these family illustrations, the thread of love. It is impossible to teach someone about God unless he has known the love of another human being. This places a heavy burden on Christian parents: they stand in the place of God to their children. But it also opens a blessed opportunity to every soul winner, for as he loves others he can draw them to love his Father in heaven.

Ralph E. Neall is Associate Professor of theology at Union College.

Marriage as Sacrament

by Sakae Kubo

EVIDENCE
Part 2
Key text:
Ephesians 5:25

The Catholics consider marriage as one of the sacraments. However, in the technical sense of the word as that which mediates a special divine grace, they have a hard time showing how marriage does so even when both parties are Christian. Protestants consider as sacraments only those institutions by which we share in the redemptive grace of Christ, such as baptism and the Eucharist. Technically, then, it is not proper to designate marriage as a sacrament. But Phipps has accepted Augustine's broad definition of a sacrament as a "visible symbol of something sacred." Thus he concludes, "Even as the physical elements of water, bread, and wine are outward signs pointing to inward grace, so marital coitus is a fleshly event symbolizing something invisible and hallowed."

He goes on to show how we can especially compare the sexual act to the Eucharist. In the latter, *koinōnia* is a union between Christ and the church. As the Christian partakes of the elements, he comes into union with Christ.

Bailey makes the same analogy and quotes Doms, who says, "In both [the marital and the Christ/Church relations] the mysterious unity of husband and wife is realized through their participation in an act of the body which somehow enables them to share each other's vital forces. Physical participation in the giving of the whole Christ is the foundation of the life of the Church; the personal giving of husband and wife to each other, and the *physical* realization of this giving in the marriage act, mark the highest point of attainment in their participation in the life of each other."

D. S. Bailey sees the Eucharist also in the following way: "Part of the importance of sexual intercourse is that it affords husband and wife a medium for those mutual disclosures for which no words can be found; the senses become the channel of communication for all that lies too deep for utterance and yet must somehow be told." Elton Trueblood says, "Love needs language for its adequate expression and sex has its own syntax."

Earlier we mentioned that marital oneness reflects also the oneness of the Trinity. Bailey sees the oneness of husband and wife as exemplifying the union of God and man in the Incarnation.

Paul had seen the relationship of Christ and the Church as analogous to that between a husband and wife. The analogy emphasizes love as the bond that binds them together in oneness, setting the procreative element completely aside. The idea had already been developed in the Old Testament that the covenant relationship between God and Israel was like that of a marriage. Thus "human marriage became the means of revealing the covenant of salvation." The relationship of God to Israel was also a means of demonstrating to them what marriage should be. "The consequences of this was what we might call a 'reciprocal illumination.' Revealing his covenant through the medium of human marriage, God simultaneously revealed to men a meaning of marriage which they had not hitherto suspected."

"Marriage became the means of revealing the covenant of salvation."

Excerpted from Sakae Kubo, *Theology & Ethics of Sex* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), pp. 39, 40.

Sakae Kubo is president of Newbold College in England.

Christ in the Home

by Marla Unterseher

HOW TO Key text: Ephesians 5:21-6:4

Christ's love for our sinful world is greater than the human mind can comprehend. He longs to draw near to us with a love that we do not know. "Closer than father, mother, brother, friend, or lover is the Lord our Saviour."¹

This kind of love we are to manifest in our daily lives, including our family lives (Eph. 5:21 to 6:4). But how do we reflect this love in our home which is to be a "little heaven upon earth"² and involve the most tender, sacred, and closest tie upon earth?³

Here are some suggestions.

1. **Make Christ first.** Jesus did the will of his Father on earth and leaned wholly on him for guidance (see John 5:30). Likewise, we should develop a relationship with Christ by having daily Bible study, prayer, and family worships.

2. **Cultivate cheerfulness.** Jesus is our example. He never possessed a doubtful spirit, exercising the greatest cheerfulness and tact in his interaction with others. "Educate the soul for cheerfulness, thankfulness, and to the expression of gratitude to God for the great love wherewith he hath loved us. . . . Christian cheerfulness is the very beauty of holiness."⁴

3. **Practice courtesy and kindness.** Jesus exercised the greatest courtesy and kindness towards others. "In principle firm as a rock, his life revealed the grace of unselfish courtesy."⁵ As we exercise courtesy and kindness towards those around us we will be blessed and be an encouragement to those with whom we come in contact. "Sweet, kind words are as dew and gentle showers to the soul."⁶

4. **Maintain cleanliness and neatness.** Jesus practiced cleanliness and neatness in all things. When He rose from the grave it was he who carefully folded his graveclothes. And it was he who commanded the children of Israel to put away all impurity from their encampment (see Ex. 19:10). There is no disorder or uncleanness in heaven, likewise, our homes should contain no disorder or uncleanness, which is the symbol of heaven. "Remember that in doing faithfully from day to day the little things to be done in the home, you are a laborer together with God, perfecting a Christian character."⁷

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 327.

2. *The Adventist Home*, p. 15.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

4. *Child Guidance*, p. 146, 147.

5. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 69.

6. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 336.

7. *Child Guidance*, p. 110.

At the time of this writing, Marla Unterseher was a music education major at Union College.

Hurting Parents

by Becki Anderson

One day in the park, I overheard two little girls talking. "Come on Katie, nobody will ever know." "Yeah," replied the little pig-tailed girl, "But if my mom finds out she'll be mad!"

I can remember feeling the same way. Actions were bad only if someone caught me or if they upset my mother. Those feelings kept me out of potentially painful situations. But, we know that as we get older, we must develop a more mature attitude toward sin and moral decisions.

Thus, I now base many decisions on whether my action would hurt my parents. When I was young, I didn't raise my voice at them because I knew if I did I would be punished. Now, I don't, not because I might get spanked or sent to my room, but because I know it would hurt them.

It's similar with God. As Christian children we tend to say, "No, I can't do that. God will find out and then I'll be in big trouble." But, as adult Christians, we know that God isn't going to instantly strike us with lightning if we sin. But, because God is so completely good, sin hurts him even more than dishonor hurts parents.

As we come to know God as a loving Father, our attitude toward sin should change. The realization that sin causes suffering is nothing in comparison to the knowledge of deeply hurting our heavenly Parent.

OPINION
Key text:
Romans 8:14

Becki Anderson is a Journalism major at Union College.

1. In what ways is a marriage relationship similar to the Christian's relationship with Christ? In what ways are the two dissimilar?
2. What does the relationship between Christ and the church teach us about what should characterize a Christian marriage?
3. Is Paul's counsel that husbands are the head of the household and wives should submit relevant for twentieth-century Christians? Explain.
4. Do you think it's proper to see sex as a sacrament (see Evidence, Part 2)? What are the implications of your answer for a sexual ethic?
5. Is a desire to not hurt God a good motive for avoiding sin (see Opinion)? Explain.

REACT
Lesson 9

TEMPLES FOR GOD'S SPIRIT



Missile Silos and the Total Man

by Lilya Wagner

INTRO- DUCTION

On a vast expanse of farmland in eastern Nebraska lies a large cement slab, almost unnoticeable from the air and certainly indistinguishable when viewed from the dirt road that passes the neglected area. Neither the cement slab nor the run-down brick guardhouse gives any clue to the importance this area once held.

Yet approximately two decades ago this cement slab, and many others like it in eastern Nebraska, camouflaged one of the main bulwarks of the United States defense system. The mammoth, highly developed, underground silo housed an Atlas Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.

Technological experts in defense systems planned, designed and built a notable marvel of concrete and steel. The silo itself was surrounded by platforms and intricate mechanisms for servicing the important missile. Another underground area, connected to the silo by tunnels, contained the living and working quarters of the experts assigned to the missile.

Then after a decade of activity, defense experts declared the Atlas ICBM obsolete. The missiles were removed and dismantled. The silos and the remaining contents were sold as surplus. By the late sixties a once significant technological marvel so important to the nation's defense system lay abandoned.

To explore this fascinating monument to advanced technology, a visitor must first

crawl through a hole knocked into the concrete wall that blocks the entrance. As he descends the steep stairs and enters through the massive steel door that opens into the silo itself, a darkness so complete and so close as to be tangible surrounds him. A damp chilly air lends to the sinister feeling. The immensity of the cavern, the appalling deterioration, the frightening heights, the water creeping toward the lower platforms, the filth left by previous visitors, all complement that sinister feeling.

The missile silo no longer represents a worthwhile endeavor. It represents obsolescence, profligacy, neglect.

Yet it serves as a valuable reminder, as an object lesson, to the concerned Christian. The human body was designed by an expert. It is an intricate system, amazing in its capability. The potential of this mass of material so marvelously put together by the master technologist is awesome. There are possibilities for worthwhile activity, for pleasurable recreation, for discriminative thinking, for disciplined action, for creative efforts. All this is possible if the human being takes responsibility for this marvel of creation.

But if the human being becomes profligate with his potential, is neglectful of the possibilities he has, wastes his body and mind in pursuits not suitable for the Christian, and abandons all effort to glorify God, he will be no better than the abandoned missile silo.

At the time of this writing Lilya Wagner was an Assistant Professor in the Division of Humanities at Union College.

No Regrets

LOGOS

Groan . . . ! As I write this my body is aching! You see, yesterday I told my boss that I couldn't come to work, as I had an appointment in Omaha—an hour away from Lincoln. The appointment was to go boardsailing, or windsurfing as it is commonly referred to. Having a fast approaching deadline, though, I had debated whether to go have some fun or to stay and work. After a few seconds of careful consideration, I opted for the fun. The water was cold but the wind was great, and to a boardsurfer a good wind is everything! However, because the few summer muscles I had so recently acquired have all vanished with the onset of a new school year, I now moan and groan with every movement. I have no regrets though, that is, unless tomorrow I find that I'm fired!

Exercise, occasionally enjoyable, like the above experience, is often painful. But its necessity to a healthful life is beyond contention. And though the Bible does not directly refer to exercise, the call for living healthfully is there. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit! . . . You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (Cor. 6:19, 20, NIV). But how does one honor God in such a way?

The list is undoubtedly endless but here are a few principles. First, honoring God with your body involves constructive activity. This is indicated by God's purpose for man. "The Lord God took the man, and put him in the Garden of Eden to work and care for it" (Gen. 2:15, NIV). In Proverbs Solomon observed that, "The way of the sluggard is overgrown with thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway" (Prov. 15:19, RSV).

Second, to balance work, there is a need for recreation. After the disciples had come back from their first evangelistic tour, Jesus said, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest. So they went away by themselves in a boat" (Mark 6:31, 32, NIV).

Another important facet of good health is self-control. "Add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge self-control" (2 Peter 1:5, 6, NIV). Why is this important? Paul explains: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run the race that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable" (1 Cor. 9:24, 25, RSV). Our goal is good health, but it is more than that. A Christian's goal is good health because good health enhances our ability to know God and this ability is the imperishable wreath.

So "do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. . . . 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, 2, 5, 6, NIV). And what's more, you will have no regrets. E. R. M.

A Reasonable Service

To make natural law plain, and to urge obedience to it, is a work that accompanies the third angel's message. Ignorance is no excuse now for the transgression of law. The light shines clearly, and none need be ignorant; for the great God Himself is man's instructor. All are bound by the most sacred obligations to heed the sound philosophy and genuine experience which God is now giving them in reference to health reform. He designs that the subject shall be agitated, and the public mind deeply stirred to investigate it; for it is impossible for men and women, while under the power of sinful, health-destroying, brain-enervating habits, to appreciate sacred truth.

Those who are willing to inform themselves concerning the effect which sinful indulgence has upon the health, and who begin the work of reform, even from selfish motives, may in so doing place themselves where the truth of God can reach their hearts. And, on the other hand, those who have been reached by the presentation of Scripture truth, are in a position where the conscience may be aroused upon the subject of health. They see and feel the necessity of breaking away from the tyrannizing habits and appetite which have ruled them so long. There are many who would receive the truths of God's word, their judgment having been convinced by the clearest evidence; but the carnal desires, clamoring for gratification, control the intellect, and they reject truth because it conflicts with their lustful desires. The minds of many take so low a level that God can not work either for them or with them. The current of their thoughts must be changed, their moral sensibilities must be aroused, before they can feel the claims of God.

The apostle Paul exhorts the church, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. 12:1. Sinful indulgence defiles the body, and unfits men for spiritual worship. He who cherishes the light which God has given him upon health reform, has an important aid in the work of becoming sanctified through the truth, and fitted for immortality. But if he disregards that light, and lives in violation of natural law, he must pay the penalty; his spiritual powers are benumbed, and how can he perfect holiness in the fear of God?

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Romans 12:1

"It is impossible, while under health-destroying habits, to appreciate sacred truth."

Excerpted from *Counsels on Health*, pp. 21, 22.

Choosing the Optimum

by Bruce Forbes

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Daniel 1

Daniel was aware of "the close connection between plain living and high thinking"

The story of Daniel is the story of a man's decision to make his body a "temple for God's spirit."

Arriving as a captive in Babylon, along with members of the royal family and a group of outstanding young students from the Judean court, Daniel was trained in the language, customs, and sciences of the Babylonian kingdom. The choice of Daniel as one of this select group indicates that he exhibited a combination of physical perfection and intellectual abilities. He had diplomatic training, and was "capable of benefitting from the specialized education designed [for the captives] by the Babylonian king."¹ His captors obviously recognized Daniel's potential as a leader and a wise man.

Once in Babylon, Daniel accepted a heathen name and adjusted to his new surroundings, but he made a firm decision concerning his diet. His choice to decline the king's food seems logical enough. Any pious Jew would have avoided the royal food for a number of reasons. All Babylonian and Assyrian food was ritually unclean.² The animals had not been killed according to Levitical law, and at least a symbolic portion of the meat had been offered to Babylonian gods. Daniel desired to avoid a flesh diet, as well as rich and unhealthful food and drink.³

But beyond these purely dietary or ceremonial reasons for avoiding the king's fare, there were larger issues involved. By eastern standards sharing a meal was an act of "covenant significance. . . . It would seem that Daniel rejected this symbol of dependence on the king because he wished to be free to fulfill his primary obligation to the God he served."⁴

He feared not so much the ritual defilement as a moral defilement, a restriction of his will and freedom to serve his God according to his convictions.

By tactful negotiations, Daniel was able to arrange for the diet of the common people of Babylon. He and his friends were aware of the "close connection between plain living and high thinking," and they knew that "their prospects of success would be enhanced or lessened according to the nature of their physical habits."⁵ At the conclusion of a ten-day trial they were allowed to continue the diet which they had chosen, and they excelled in their studies. When, at the end of the three-year training period, Daniel and his friends were verbally examined by the king of Babylon, he found them to be ten times wiser than the wisest men in the kingdom.

This success was no mean achievement. The Hebrew youths "excelled the men of their profession in matters of exact science, such as astronomy and mathematics and in matters of linguistic studies."⁶

Daniel and his friends recognized their source of wisdom, and "attributed their success to the blessing of God. God works with those who cooperate with Him."⁷

Bruce Forbes is an English and Art Major at Union College.

1. Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1978), p. 79.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

3. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 760.

4. Baldwin, p. 83.

5. Desmond Ford, *Daniel* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1978), p. 81.

6. *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, p. 763.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 760.

“Come Ye . . . and Rest Awhile”

by Susan Spotts

In such a fast-paced society, it is almost impossible to heed the advice, “Be still and know that I am God.” Our work, family and friends play tug-of-war with our already-too-short 24 hours.

Paul’s instruction to glorify God in our bodies means not only to be temperate in our diet and life-style, but temperate in our work as well. Consider this counsel: “I was shown that Sabbathkeepers as a people labor too hard without allowing themselves change or periods of rest. Recreation is needful to those who are engaged in physical labor and is still more essential for those whose labor is principally mental. It is not essential to our salvation or for the glory of God to keep the mind laboring constantly and excessively even upon religious themes.”¹

Just as we must commune daily with God (not just on Sabbath), we must also daily seek rest and relaxation (not just two weeks a year!). Everyone must find his or her own special way to relax, but here are some suggestions that may be helpful:

1. **Organize your week and day before they begin.** Set aside a certain amount of time for yourself—to do something YOU want.
2. **Spend time outside.** Fresh, clean air can invigorate your mind, your body, and your soul. Try camping, gardening, biking, or just plain walking.
3. **Select a hobby.** Choose something that you will enjoy and look forward to. Be creative; don’t collect stamps just because everyone else does.
4. **Before going to sleep, let yourself wind down.** Read a book, sit on the porch, listen to relaxing music, or watch an approaching storm.
5. **Most important is to keep up a daily communication with God.** No matter how hectic your day may be, never neglect to begin or end each day with God.

“And He said unto them, come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going and they had no leisure so much as to eat” (Mark 6:31).

HOW TO
Key text:
Mark 6:31

¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 1,
p. 524.

Susan Spotts was a senior office administration major at Union College at the time of this writing.

Olympic Building Contractor Sued

by Dan Klein

OPINION

Key text:
3 John 2

Dateline Los Angeles, May 11, 1983 (CQP)—Rennis Nam and Associates, general contractors for the '84 Olympics, included inferior materials for facilities to be used by international athletes. Although the schedule of building for all areas is right on time for completion, it was discovered last week that Mr. Nam had allowed and, in some cases ordered low quality materials to be used in facilities construction. Violations of code in almost all areas of construction have been noted since last week's discovery of inferior quality materials having been used in the foundation. "Quicker, less costly . . . no one will ever know," Rennis is reported to have told his foreman some months back. Cracks and breaks were discovered after tremors in California sent shock waves through the west coast last week. Although all structures were designed to withstand stresses far in excess of those measured in Los Angeles, the circumstances of natural stressors revealed the substitution in materials and results of the quality of workmanship.

"Some parts of the facilities are condemned for future use and will need to be replaced," indicated Y. M. Drol, international inspector and facilities judge. "Others will need to be remodeled and upgraded by the carpenter and other workers so that all operations are coordinated and smoothly running," Drol continued. "If people would only follow the Guide Book for Specifications and Operating Codes I really wouldn't need to judge the safety and operations. All areas would be running harmoniously."

Initial estimates to correct deficiencies and repair all problems run five to twenty times original costs. The main problem is now time. Even with the infinitely larger cost, time is the critical factor. "I believe we've caught the problem in time and with cooperation and right choices all will go off as scheduled for next year's great event," Drol concluded.

As the rest of the world looks on, major changes have begun. Many are smugly saying, "It can't be done," but then scoffers and individuals like Rennis who are willing to compromise, remind us of the final results of making poor choices.

Dan Klein teaches physical education at Union College.
He assures us that things now look good for the Summer Games.

REACT
Lesson 10

1. Is conscious failure to live up to the health standards to be considered sin? How far does our "temple" responsibility extend? Will anyone be lost simply because they failed to live healthfully?
2. Is healthful living so crucial to knowing God that Adventists are correct in making health standards a test of fellowship?
3. Consider Ellen White's statement that Adventists largely work too hard without taking enough time for recreation (see How To). Do you think it still holds true today, or are we now in an era when Adventists tend to take too much leisure time and need to work harder?
4. What implications for healthful living do you see in the story about the Olympic buildings (Opinion)?
5. What, in your opinion, comprises the "Guide Book for Specifications and Operating Codes" for health?
6. Is it possible to go too far in being concerned about health? Discuss specific extremes that need to be avoided.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT GOD

... 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,
for in these I delight,
declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 2:24 NIV

Distorted Images, Cherished Myths

by Judy Duncan

INTRO- DUCTION

The black transistor radio that sat on the breakfast table among the orange juice and scrambled eggs was a source of great stimulation for my childish imagination. I would sit there munching toast and wondering what the little people who lived in the radio were having for breakfast. One day I asked my father how the little people got their food. His laugh shattered my belief in minute houses and furniture and symphonies. But when he started to explain radio waves I became so confused that I chose to maintain my belief in the little radio people as a more feasible alternative. It wasn't till sometime later when the back of the old radio fell off, exposing an ungainly mess of wires, that I was convinced there really weren't any people in there after all.

If I were the first person to have ever so willfully cherished a misconception (albeit in my childhood), I would feel more chagrin than I do. But the world is full of examples of those who have done the same. Jesus continually reminded his disciples that his kingdom was not of this world, but they cherished hopes that he would overthrow the Romans. The rich young ruler thought that keeping the ten commandments was enough. However, when Jesus suggested sacrifice and benevolence, he wrapped his wealth and misconceptions of truth around him and slunk away.

Unfortunately, since the beginning of time God has had

to contend with people who do not merely have mistaken ideas about him, but who also willfully cherish these notions even when they are corrected.

Misconceptions about God range from representing him as another Stalin ready to purge the world, to a mystic Santa Claus who gives presents but never disciplines. The only way we can dispel mistaken concepts of God is to get to know him well and be ready to shed any preconceived myths that we have gleaned from society or our own interpretation. Paul says, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men . . . and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

The Christian church is full of people who hang onto erroneous concepts of God and his will for man. It takes courage and effort to discard comfortable ideologies and to dig for a personal understanding of God's character, regardless of where it may lead.

God wants us to search individually for his truth and not wait around for handouts of someone else's philosophy. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The real truth will set us free from preconceived fallacies that limit our relationship with God. If we are willing to bury our misconceptions, instead of cultivating them for our own comfort, we will grow close to him.

Judy Duncan is a music and English major at Union College.

Everyone's God

LOGOS

Perhaps the most durable and widespread misconception of God is simply that he is impossible to know. Termed agnosticism, this view emphasizes the futility of seeking divine direction, because God is impossible to decipher. God has something to say about this, however. He declares, "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 (Jer. 9:23, 24, NIV).

The view of an uninvolved God is also held by many, particularly those embittered by grief. According to this concept, God exists, but is detached from day-to-day human experience. But Paul gives us a radically different view. "All this [a new creation] is from 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" (2 Cor. 5:18, 19, NIV). Hardly the picture of an uncaring God!

This faulty image is carried to a further extreme by those who perceive God as a sort of vengeful, uncompromising resident policeman. But this is totally inconsistent with the God that Christ depicted. When confronted by the Pharisees with the adulterous woman he failed to deliver the expected denunciation, but rather demonstrated quiet understanding and loving concern. "Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:11, NIV) was his only reproof.

Of course there is danger in taking this picture of God too exclusively and viewing him strictly as a sort of celestial "Mr. Nice Guy." God is not "Santa Claus in the sky." He doesn't benignly shower blessings and rewards upon mankind without consideration of their actions. He is the universal standard of right and wrong, and as such becomes the Judge who must administer ultimate justice. He cannot tolerate sin and its effects indefinitely. " 'Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,' says the Lord Almighty. 'Not a root or a branch will be left to them' " (Mal. 4:1, NIV).

Perhaps the most insidious and currently dangerous misperception of God, however, is that which creates a "God-in-a-box"—exclusive property of a segment of society or religion. We commonly err in this fashion when we see God as being partial to those who hold beliefs just like ours—the infallibly correct ones in our opinion. But God is not an Adventist God. He's just God—of everything and everyone who ever existed or ever will. We grossly limit him—and his appeal—when we express this idea even subconsciously. For this is the same God who queried, "Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites? . . . Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?" (Amos 9:7, NIV). "Are not you Adventists the same to me as the Catholics. . . ?"

L. R. C.

Removing the Dark Shadow

God made man perfectly holy and happy; and the fair earth, as it came from the Creator's hand, bore no blight of decay or shadow of the curse. It is transgression of God's law—the law of love—that has brought woe and death. Yet even amid the suffering that results from sin, God's love is revealed. It is written that God cursed the ground for man's sake (Gen. 3:17). The thorn and the thistle—the difficulties and trials that make his life one of toil and care—were appointed for his good, as a part of the training needful in God's plan for his uplifting from the ruin and degradation that sin has wrought. The world, though fallen, is not all sorrow and misery. In nature itself are messages of hope and comfort. There are flowers upon the thistles, and the thorns are covered with roses.

"God is love," is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green,—all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God, and to His desire to make His children happy.

The Word of God reveals His character. 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" (Ex. 33:18, 19). This is His glory. The Lord passed before Moses, and proclaimed, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Ex. 34:6, 7). He is "Slow to anger, and of great kindness," (Jonah 4:2) "because He delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18).

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men. . . .

Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God. It is from the Father's heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men. Jesus, the tender pitying Saviour, was God "manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16).

TESTIMONY

Key text:
2 Corinthians
5:18, 19

**"from the
Father's heart
streams of
divine
compassion
flow out
to men"**

Excerpted from *Steps
to Christ*, pp. 9-13.

We See in a Mirror Dimly

by Karl-Heinz Schroeder

EVIDENCE

Key text:
1 Corinthians
13:12

"The God that was hung on the cross two thousand years ago also went into the torture cells of the twentieth century."

Recently my six-year-old daughter and I played ball in our backyard. During the game we lost the ball in the shrubbery. We knew exactly where it had vanished, but despite all our looking, we were unable to find it. After a while, somewhat desperate, my daughter said she would pray and ask God to help her find the ball. It wasn't long until she found it. She was absolutely convinced that Jesus had helped her find the ball.

A few days later my wife had a bad migraine. Our little girl saw her suffering and felt quite concerned. Later in the afternoon she walked over to my wife and almost shouted, "This no good God!" Not knowing what had elicited this unusual and strong statement, my wife asked her for an explanation. "Well, Mom, I had prayed to God to help me find my ball and he did. I also prayed to God to help you and he didn't!" Here it was in a nutshell: Why would God help to find an insignificant ball but not relieve Mom's suffering?

Our six-year-old girl had experienced what most of us and even many of the great men of faith had to face—the shattering of a favorite concept of God. Many of the greatest minds from the past to the present have tried to make sense of God. We find that each generation, indeed each individual, needs to find God for himself. The attempts by various great writers to explain God have not proven to be satisfactory for very long. The apostle Paul states appropriately that our knowledge of divine things is inadequate and partial. "For now we see in a mirror dimly . . . now I know in part . . ." (1 Cor. 13:12, RSV).

Our knowledge of God will remain somewhat distorted until the day when we will be allowed to see him face to face. Does this mean we should give up talking about God? Not at all. The Bible is all about God and Man. But it does not try to prove or explain the existence of God—*God is*; and the Bible's people of faith *encounter and experience* God. The Bible also shows that it is God who meets us and not us God. It is God who initiates the encounter. God cannot be conjured up; he meets us when we need him.

Intellectual definitions of God are just like a painting or photograph of a person. However beautiful and well done it may be it always lacks life. John says so appropriately in 1 John 4:8, "God is love." Just as it is impossible to know—to understand—love intellectually, so it is impossible to fathom God intellectually. God must be experienced personally.

The God that was hung on the cross two thousand years ago also went into the gas chambers and torture cells of the twentieth century. "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me" (Ps. 23:4, NIV). Even if my prayer may not be answered I can be sure that the God of the cross is by my side and suffers with me. Beside this kind of "God experience" all philosophical or theological defining will fade into insignificance.

Karl-Heinz Schroeder is assistant professor of history at Union College.

Setting the Record Straight

by Linda M. Sprengel

If you're like me, you've got your own private set of distorted images of God. I'd like to suggest ways to rid yourself of these damaging pictures.

1. **Identify your misconceptions.** Pretend someone who knows nothing about God asks you to describe him. Almost undoubtedly, pictures and analogies will come to mind. List them verbally, or better yet, write them down. Be concrete.

Now analyze them. Certainly, many images will be accurate and helpful. However, you will probably be surprised to recognize some misconceptions. Don't worry too much. Once your conscious mind sees these falsehoods for what they really are, you should have little trouble rejecting them permanently. Finally, other phrases will conjure up unpleasant or defective associations which you project onto God. It is imperative that these deadly truth-and-error mixtures be cleared up. (My tally: three blatant lies and ten mixed associations out of 35 characteristics.) Now that you have pinpointed your faulty ideas, you can begin to clarify or replace them.

2. **Get the facts.** Satan has a huge repertoire of subtle fallacies to deceive us. Often we pick these up from second-hand sources: preachers, books, films, etc. It is easy to get wrong impressions of others if we don't know them for ourselves. How many times we find that a teacher, boss or friend is not at all like we believed before becoming really well acquainted. Fortunately, God has given us a powerful tool for understanding himself—the Bible. He intends for us to use prayer and the guidance of his Spirit to ensure our comprehension. However, many find the New Testament, with its example of loving Jesus, much easier to swallow than the Old Testament. I'd like to share a way of understanding even difficult portions of the Scriptures.

Select a section of the Bible which has perhaps always puzzled you or given you a warped image of God (i.e. the story of Uzzah). Read it through prayerfully and carefully, being sure to include the context. Now divide a sheet of paper in half vertically. In the left column summarize the account in your own words. Then in the right column record what it tells you about God. What characteristics are revealed? Why do you think he behaved the way he did? What other options did he have? Does he still relate to people in the same manner? If you still have trouble, compare the story with similar ones, with Christ's methods, and look at it in the light of the cosmic controversy.

Such honest and thoughtful study should provoke further questions and reveal exciting, practical implications for your daily living. Be sure to reserve the back of your paper to write these down. And finally, don't forget to share your findings about God with someone else. That may prove the most rewarding part of all!

HOW TO
Key text:
Exodus 3:14

Linda M. Sprengel is a sophomore elementary education major at Union College.

The Death and Rebirth of God

by Kristin Heslop

OPINION

Key text:
Isaiah 58:6, 7

The fact that babies are allowed to starve in the poor, underdeveloped countries by my rich, so-called Christian nation used to bother me a great deal. While we concern ourselves with the economy, the price of gasoline, and whether or not we can blow up the world more times than the Russians, we let our brothers die from hunger, malnutrition, and contaminated water. If living is a human right, what has happened to theirs?

After watching a gruesome documentary on world hunger, I cynically said, "God is dead. If he were alive and were as loving as we are told, why are all these innocents tortured by war, terrorism, revolution, poverty, and famine? If God was really love, he would not tolerate this pain; he would not permit such suffering!"

I was also angry with my pious, religious friend's meaningless, abstract, doctrinal discussions of "Christ." Where was his practical love? His people were not the beautiful people of his day, for they did not need him. The whores, thieves, corrupt politicians, the handicapped, the poverty stricken, the ugly and the unwanted were the ones who needed him. And he met their practical needs in practical ways.

I continued to revel in my negative, atheistic misconceptions, taking great pride in shocking my Christian parents and friends. Then it dawned on me that if God is alive, there must be a good reason for his allowing pain and suffering. God, I reasoned, allows painful hunger and malnutrition to afflict people, not because he likes it, but because it gives us a chance to demonstrate his love, to show our God in a practical way to those who need him. To me, service is synonymous with Christianity.

Somewhere I read that a man's true quality is demonstrated by his behavior toward those who can do him absolutely no good. Perhaps in doing good to those who cannot benefit us, we will come closer to a true knowledge of God, and thus, ourselves.

"His people were the whores, thieves, corrupt politicians, the handicapped, the poverty stricken, the ugly and the unwanted."

Kristin Heslop is a junior music and English major at Union College.

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1. What, to you, is the most damaging misconception about God among those you come in contact with? What is the scriptural perspective on this misconception?

REACT
Lesson 11

2. Suppose a Vietnam veteran, who has had both legs amputated and has seen all the horrors and agony caused by war first hand, said to you, "After what I've been through, I can no longer believe in an all-powerful, loving God." How would you respond?
 3. Is there in fact no complete explanation for suffering in this world—as Karl-Heinz Schroeder (Evidence) suggests? Do you agree with his concept of suffering? Does this lead to a passive, apathetic attitude toward suffering?
 4. What role does faith in a just God play in this discussion? Are we to believe blindly? Or are we to attempt logical rationalizations?
 5. Are Adventists guilty of the "God-in-a-box" misconception (see Logos)? If we do not have God in a box, what makes us special? Does God favor us over other groups or denominations?
-

KNOWN BY GOD

I am the
**GOOD
SHEPHERD**

*I know my sheep and
my sheep know me.*

John 10:14 NIV

Future, Past, and Present

by Donald L. Vanterpool

INTRO- DUCTION

Omniscience has ever posed a problem to the human mind. Although there is some understanding of how actions of the past are retained, much less is understood about accurately knowing the future. This lack of understanding has often been projected into the realm of the unexplainable supernatural. To many Christians God is omniscient simply because he is God.

It is true that God knows us, personally and individually. As with Jeremiah, God says of us, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you . . ." (Jer. 1:5, RSV). After birth he continues to know us intimately, in every detail—even to the minutiae of the number of hairs on our head (Matthew 10:30). This intimate knowledge, which includes our comings and goings, is not acquired by him historically—after the fact—but is known before it happens (see Psalm 139:1-16).

Trying to understand the "how" of God's all-knowing leads us to the conclusion that he inhabits the present. To him there is neither past nor future.

After spending a few hours at the stadium watching his favorite ball team defeated by the underdog opposition in a crucial game, Dave returns home to watch a tape-delayed replay of the afternoon's action on TV. With the details of the game, including the final outcome, still vivid in his memory, Dave watches, hoping

somehow things will be different.

His wishes are in vain, the score remains the same, his team remains the loser. His knowledge is incapable of altering the results of the tape-delayed replay.

No one will contend that his "foreknowledge" of the events in any way has an effect on the outcome. No one believes that his foreknowledge interfered with the choices made by the players as he watches them on TV.

Bob did not attend the game but he also watches it on TV that evening. He, however, must wait for each event to unfold. To him the final outcome of the game is still future. He must wait for it. That which is future and unknown to Bob is known to Dave.

This helps us understand the concept of God's all-knowingness. That which is future and unknown to us is already known by him. He knows our future before it happens; it is ever before him. We must wait for it to unfold. It is in this sense that God inhabits the present. With him events, which are to both past and future, exist in the present.

Says the Psalmist, "Your eyes saw my unformed substance, as in Your book all the days of my life were written, before ever they took shape, when as yet there was none of them" (Psalm 139:16, Amplified Bible). Our future is ever present before God.

Donald L. Vanterpool is Assistant Professor of Religion and Theology at Oakwood College.

Predestination Revisited

LOGOS

Can God make a boulder so big he can't lift it? This enigmatic question and others like it have baffled theologians, philosophers, and common people alike for centuries. The limits of God—if there are any—have always been a lively topic for discussion. The central theme of this week's lesson deals with such limits—specifically the limits to God's knowledge. How much does he know? What implications does the extent of his knowledge have upon us?

The search for answers to these questions takes us first to the Old Testament, where Jeremiah is told, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5, NIV). Apparently God has the ability to reach forward and earmark persons whom he has selected to do a special work for him. Other examples such as Samson, Samuel, and Cyrus support this concept. But Samson's experience clearly shows that this touch of God does not guarantee success. The decision for right or wrong, and therefore the ultimate choice of direction, remains the individual's.

The concept of God's election of individuals before birth is expanded to include all of us by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians. "For he [God] chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Eph. 1:4, NIV). Predestination? It definitely seems like it—but of a different sort than that which evokes horrified gasps from the throats of Christians in the Wesleyan tradition. This predestination, in contrast with the view that our lives are preprogrammed, can be cancelled by a simple choice not to abide by it. It becomes an equitable opportunity, not a helpless resignation. We are all foreseen by God—predestined to be saved. But we are still given the choice *not* to be saved.

God's knowledge, however, is not limited to the theological intricacies of salvation. If we are to believe David, God's knowledge of us extends far beyond a simple consciousness of our imminent presence before we exist. "O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord" (Psalm 139:1-4, NIV). Just imagine trying to keep up with the *thoughts* of four billion people!

Even though this knowledge provides God with full realization of the extent of our faults, his knowledge of what his infinite power can accomplish enables him to see through the rampant corrosion of our lives and perceive what we can become. His aspirations for us, like his knowledge, are without limit: "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom. 8:29, NIV).

Here is an incomparable offer. God promises to transform us from limited, insignificant humans into creatures which transcend time and space—and imagination. All for only a guarantee of noninterference. Sounds like my kind of predestination! L. R. C.

An Innermost Knowledge

by Bernard and Ursula Benn

God is omniscient. He knows everything that happens in every corner of the universe as well as every secret that lurks in the corner of every soul. It should be comforting, not disconcerting, to the Christian that his life is open to an all-knowing God and that he will eventually be judged by an omniscient God.

"Nothing can happen in any part of the universe without the knowledge of Him who is omnipresent. Not a single event of human life is unknown to our Maker."¹

"... Consider that the Lord knows every one of us by name, and just where we live, and the spirit we possess, and every act of our life."²

"Every soul is as fully known to Jesus as if He were the only one for whom the Saviour died. The distress of every one touches His heart. The cry for aid reaches His ear. He came to draw all men unto Himself."³

"God knows the end from the beginning. He is acquainted with the hearts of all men. He reads every secret of the soul. He knows whether those for whom prayer is offered would or would not be able to endure the trials that would come upon them should they live. He knows whether their lives would be a blessing or a curse to themselves and to the world. This is one reason why, while presenting our petitions with earnestness, we should say, 'Nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done' Luke 22:42."⁴

"'Man looketh on the outward appearances, but the Lord looketh on the heart,'—the human heart, with its conflicting emotions of joy and sorrow,—the wondering, wayward heart, which is the abode of so much impurity and deceit. He knows its motives, its very intents and purposes. Go to Him with your soul all stained as it is."⁵

"God will be better glorified if we confess the secret, inbred corruption of the heart to Jesus alone than if we open its recesses to finitude, erring man, who cannot judge righteously unless his heart is constantly imbued with the spirit of God. God knows the heart, even every secret of the soul; then do not pour into human ears the story which God alone should hear."⁶

Although God knows everything, even before it happens, and although He knows us completely, even before we were born, He does not coerce our will.

"The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, and unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. 'Come now, and let us reason together,' is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given."⁷

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Psalm 139:1-6

**"Go to Him
with your soul
all stained
as it is."**

1. *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1141.
2. *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 1159, 1160.
3. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 480.
4. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 230.
5. *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 333.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 645.
7. *Steps to Christ*, p. 43.

Bernard Benn is Chairman of the English Department of Oakwood College and Ursula Benn is Assistant Professor of Spanish at Oakwood College.

The Existentialist Challenge

by Anthony Campolo

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Colossians
2:6, 7

Does God's knowledge of our futures mean that he has a predetermined plan for each of our lives to which we must submit? For modern existentialists, this would mean that human beings are not truly free. In the following excerpt, Tony Campolo discusses how God's direction for our lives relates to our freedom.

Atheistic existentialists (and there are other kinds) argue that if there were a God who dictated the values and purposes of human existence, then human beings would lack freedom. If there were a God, they argue, then people would not be at liberty to decide for themselves what is right and wrong, for such things would be divinely ordained. Instead of choosing their own destinies, individuals would be required to submit to the will of the One who designed them. . . .

I suggest that the God who is revealed to me in the Scriptures, rather than dictating my *raison d'être*, invites me into a dialogical relationship with him out of which the meaning of my life will be created. I believe that Jesus makes me His brother and entreats me to share my dreams and aspirations with Him while He reveals His hopes for me. For me, prayer is a dialogue in which I interact with God, and with Him evaluate the various choices and options which confront me. In this mystical relationship, I gradually become aware of the pros and cons of each alternative, and even have new options opened to my consciousness. I believe that God tells me that the decision is ultimately mine. Willing me to be free, He allows me to choose an option that might displease Him, while giving me the assurance that even when I fail, His grace affirms me and invites me to choose again.

"God invites us to collaborate with Him in writing the script."

. . . To be a follower of Jesus Christ is to *not* have a grand plan for the rest of one's life, but to be totally committed to walking with Jesus, daily seeking His will, hourly working out one's salvation with fear and trembling. It is to be open to the possibilities inherent in each existential moment and to believe that commitment to Christ can be expressed today in ways that were totally undreamed of yesterday. . . .

The Christian does not view life as the acting out of a play that was written a long time ago. Instead, God invites us to collaborate with Him in writing the script, and to lean on Him as the perfect prompter when the time has come to act. . . .

To summarize my position, I believe that God calls us to make the choices that determine our lives. Unlike Sartre, however, I do not believe that these choices must be made alone. To live by faith is to make life's decisions in the context of a fellowship with One who loves me and gave Himself for me. The Christian is free from the tyranny of predetermined identity and purpose, although he is not autonomous in the full sense, for he is committed to a relationship in which God and he, as friends working together, create the meaning for his life.

From *A Reasonable Faith*
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Waco, Texas 76796.

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Responding to God's Omniscience

by Clarence J. Barnes

When we speak of knowing a person we generally mean that we are acquainted with him or her. We can distinguish that person from someone else. We are able to call that person by name and identify some character traits. But, do we really know that person? It is doubtful that we really know much about ourselves, let alone someone else.

But there is no question that God has complete knowledge of our lives and entire beings. Scripture is very specific about this. It is written of Jeremiah, "I knew you before you were formed within your mother's womb; before you were born I sanctified you and appointed you as my spokesman to the world" (Jer. 1:5, Living Bible). Note that God's knowledge of us involves our election to a destiny of service, mission, and purpose in life.

How do we respond to his divine election? How do we choose our career in harmony with his knowledge of us?

1. **Our Response:** God said of Israel, "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2, NIV). The fact that you are studying this lesson is evidence that you have been chosen for specific work in God's great scheme of things. In light of God's investment in us, he expects corresponding response to his offer of grace. His love, mercy, longsuffering, and kindness draw from us a joyful, whole hearted, and positive response. His election involves predestination to conform to the Divine plan laid from the foundation of the world. However, his predestination is "consistent with human freedom of action and personal responsibility."¹ He has created each of us with particular faculties, powers, tendencies, and possibilities but it rests with us whether or not these powers are developed, and whether or not his specific mission for us is achieved. We are absolutely free to accept or to reject his plan. His admonition is "choose life."

2. **Our Choice of Career:** Nothing that concerns our good is left to chance. "In the book of God's providence, the volume of life, we are each given a page. That page contains every particular of our history; even the hairs of our head are numbered. God's children are never absent from His mind."² God's selection of us involves our work not only for time but for eternity.

Moreover, it must be noted that our work extends beyond this world to the unfallen worlds. "The work of God's dear Son in undertaking to link the created with the uncreated, the finite with the Infinite, in His divine person, is a subject that may well employ our thoughts for a life-time. This work of Christ was to confirm the beings of the other worlds in their innocence and loyalty, as well as to save the lost and perishing of this world."³ In selecting us, God conferred on us the honor of uniting with Christ for the security of the universe. Therefore, any career we choose must have Christ's approval. God's knowledge of us should lead us to ask, "What will you have me to do?" It should make us humble, submissive, diligent, and obedient in whatever service to which he guides us.

HOW TO
Key text:
Jeremiah 1:5

1. *The Pulpit Commentary*, vol. 11, p. 5.
2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 313.
3. *Review and Herald*, Jan. 11, 1881.

Clarence Barnes is the Chairman of the Department of History and Political Science at Oakwood College.

The Science (or Art?) of "Making It"

by
Claude Thomas, Jr.

OPINION

Key text:
Philippians 4:13

Everybody in the world wants to be somebody special, an extraordinary human being in some unique way that others can recognize and admire. "That's the way it should be," say the popular psychologists and motivators of the day; and they proceed to tell us how we can make it happen.

The key is understanding and fully utilizing the power of the mind. We are told that people have the inherent ability to: (1) discard old ways of thinking and behaving that have been depriving them of the joy, happiness and successes they may have been wanting out of life; (2) focus on new goals and objectives that will get them what they want; (3) identify and operationalize the characteristics associated with the desired lifestyle; (4) plan a course of action that can successfully negotiate *all* the problems and pitfalls that stand in the way of their getting what they want; (5) visualize themselves continuously and consistently carrying out the plan and enjoying its benefits; and (6) forge ahead with a will to win, letting *nothing* deter the fulfillment of their aspirations.

Sounds good, doesn't it? But is it really true for everybody? Does everybody have the inherent ability to engage in such a process of living and carry it out to a successful conclusion? Are there really no barriers that are formidable enough to keep some people from achieving ends that should rightfully be theirs by reason of their intelligence, natural abilities and aptitudes, developed skills, and commitment to work? Are there really no people who may not even have a chance to begin this utopian journey to the stars?

"Nothing
can stand
in our way
without
his approval!"

I have problems with the assumptions addressed by these questions. Somehow they don't possess the ring of truth. I refuse to believe that all of the poverty, decay, illness, hunger, pain and joblessness are the fault of those who may be victimized by these realities. There *are* some things that people can't do much about no matter how hard they try nor how appropriately they may go about it. The deck stacked against them is just too thick and the forces determined to keep them in their "place" too powerful to overcome in their own strength. Extraordinary help is needed that transcends the natural, economic, social and political limitations and restrictions imposed by life on this earth.

That's where the Word of God becomes a blessing to all who will accept its message of love, hope and faith. There is a Power that transcends all. There is a plan that encompasses all, with each of us having a part to play that *no one else* can fill! And there is a way to go about attaching ourselves to this Power so that all of his power and wisdom are available to us, whenever we need them, for the goals and objectives which he has approved, provided we also choose to accept his methods for accomplishing them.

And nothing can stand in our way without his approval! As a matter of fact, the powers that stand behind all that would afflict and restrict us must ask his permission to do so and he determines how long they may continue their course of adversity.

Once the availability and accessibility of our Champion is assured, then we can apply the principles and utilize the methods that have been shown to be characteristic of the high achievers in our world. And whatever we achieve by his grace is a success and bound to bring joy and happiness and total satisfaction to those known by God.

Claude Thomas, Jr., is Director of Counseling at Oakwood College.

1. Does the fact that God knows you intimately frighten or comfort you? Do you find it restrictive or liberating? Explain.
2. Does God have in mind a "master plan" for each individual that we should seek to discover and follow? Do we have any role in developing the plan?
3. For many, God's perfect knowledge of the future means that our lives are determined. What do you think? Do you find the illustration used in the Introduction helpful?
4. If God knows our futures in detail, how does he relate to us on personal, day-to-day basis? Can he feel sorrow and pain with us if he knows things will turn out for the best? Can he share joy with one whom he knows will forsake him one day?

REACT
Lesson 12

A SAVING KNOWLEDGE

I HAVE NOT
LOST CONFIDENCE
BECAUSE
I KNOW
WHO IT IS THAT
I HAVE PUT MY
TRUST IN
AND I HAVE NO DOUBT
AT ALL THAT HE IS
ABLE TO TAKE CARE
OF ALL THAT I HAVE
ENTRUSTED TO HIM
UNTIL THAT DAY.

2 TIMOTHY 1:12

Dungeons, Death and God

by Benjamin F. Reaves

INTRO- DUCTION

"It is only on account of this that I am experiencing fresh hardships here now; but I have not lost confidence, because I know who it is that I have put my trust in, and I have no doubt at all that he is able to take care of all that I have entrusted to him until that Day" (2 Tim. 1:12, Jerusalem Bible).

Moving words, stirring words, words bubbling with confidence, overflowing with resolve. Words that trumpet a testimony of triumph, words that have a prayer meeting ring.

Actually, these words sprang forth from the harshness of a dungeon reality. In the damp underground darkness this man sat knowing that life or death for him hinged on the dissolute whims of the degenerate Nero. Paul knew that execution would be the only door out of the dungeon, a door that would open on the valley of the shadow of death.

Yet, incredibly, in the face of an indisputably perilous reality he testified, "I have not lost confidence." The reason for this surprising confidence obviously is unrelated to his dungeon circumstances; rather, the pillar of his confidence seems to be set in the concrete of the word "know"—"I know who it is that I have put my trust in. . . ." I am convinced beyond the shadow or trace of doubt.

But how did it all end? Did his knowledge of God save

him? Ellen White in *The Acts of the Apostles* describes the rest of the story: "Not long afterward Nero pronounced the decision that condemned Paul to a martyr's death. Inasmuch as a Roman citizen could not be subjected to torture he was sentenced to be beheaded."¹

Some insistent questions force their way out of this story.

What kind of knowledge about God did Paul have? He was trained in the best rabbinical schools. Was this intellectual knowledge? Is intellectual knowledge of God beneficial or undesirable? And what about the fact that in 2 Timothy 1:12 the "I know" speaks of a relationship, a trust in God that had begun in years past and continued to the present? Does this experiential knowledge deny, complement or supersede intellectual knowledge? Can intellectual or experiential knowledge stand alone as saving knowledge? Is saving knowledge acquired or received? Finally, did Paul have a saving knowledge? Why didn't it save him? What does a saving knowledge save us from?

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 509.

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The Climax

LOGOS

The final lesson of a quarterly is sometimes anticlimactic. It can be a letdown, especially if it is a tepid summary of the quarter's discussion—which serves more to bore the reader than to provoke any productive thinking. This lesson, however, isn't that way. The preceding lessons have been extended prologue or background to the simple but crucial thrust of this lesson. This is where all the components are brought together—not as a weak, shallow summing up, but as a vibrant, practical application of the principles discussed. The climax is here.

Without a *saving* knowledge, all of the other facts in this quarter are completely without merit. This saving knowledge must be acquired in two ways. First, God must be known intellectually. Like Paul, we must be able to say, "Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day" (2 Tim. 1:12, NIV). Second, we must also know God experientially. "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him" (Psalm 34:8, NIV). A personal relationship with God is the only way we can trade our deserved punishment for his deserved reward. Not only is our knowledge of God ineffectual without this relationship, but it is also incomplete. Some facets of God can only be discovered through experience.

We arrive at this holistic understanding of God via two equally important channels. The study of scripture informs us of the universally expressed will of God. For "the holy Scriptures . . . are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:15-17, NIV). Prayer, on the other hand, enables us to communicate directly with God and allows him to provide specific direction for our lives through his Spirit. This channel should be kept open at all times. The succinct advice offered by Paul is "pray continually" (1 Thes. 5:17, NIV).

Throughout this process our focus must be constantly upon Christ. Only in this way can we be assured of preserving the effectiveness of our saving knowledge. For if we are always concentrating upon the central thing—Jesus Christ—everything else will fall into place. We need only to follow Paul's example: "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2, NIV). Apparently we could use a little more "selective ignorance." Because knowing nothing except Jesus will cause us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18, NIV)—right through eternity. Maybe salvation is simpler than we think!

L. R. C.

Transforming Knowledge

by Morris Iheanacho

Precisely stated, a true knowledge of God is the putting into practice of the Christ-like character that has been revealed through the study of the Holy Scriptures. Such knowledge must bring about a change in character. The following quotations will help in understanding what it means to have a saving knowledge:

"The knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is the knowledge that all who are saved must have. It is the knowledge that works transformation of character. This knowledge received, will recreate the soul in the image of God. It will impart to the whole being a spiritual power that is divine."¹

"In all human experience a theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul. It does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness."²

"Obtain an experimental knowledge of God by wearing the yoke of Christ. . . . The Holy Spirit teaches the student of the Scriptures to judge all things by the standard of righteousness and truth and justice. The divine revelation supplies him with the knowledge that he needs."³

"Every soul must have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will and ways of God. . . . Through study of the Scriptures, through earnest prayer, they may hear His message to them."⁴

"Thus through faith they will come to know God by an experimental knowledge. They have proved for themselves the reality of His word, the truth of His promises. They have tasted, and they know that the Lord is good."⁵

"In His prayer to the Father, Christ gave to the world a lesson which should be graven on mind and soul. 'This is life eternal,' He said, 'that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' This is true education. It imparts power. The experimental knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, transforms man into the image of God. It gives to man the mastery of himself, bringing every impulse and passion of the lower nature under control of the higher powers of the mind. It makes its possessor a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings him into a communion with the mind of the Infinite, and opens to him the rich treasures of the universe.

"This is the knowledge which is obtained by searching the word of God. And this treasure may be found by every soul who will give all to obtain it.

"'If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God'" (Prov. 2:3-5).⁶

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Colossians 1:9, 10

"... theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul."

1. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 425.
2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 309.
3. *Counsels on Health*, p. 371.
4. *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 440, 441.
5. *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 321.
6. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 113.

Morris Iheanacho is the Cataloger of the Oakwood College Library.

Does Knowledge Save?

by Clifford S. Pitt

EVIDENCE

Key text:
John 17:3

Knowledge of the truth is necessary for the well being of the church, but it is not equally as necessary for individual salvation.

We decide who may become a member of the church on the basis of what a candidate believes and how he lives. We would not make a member of an atheist who attended church regularly just because he liked the music; or extend that privilege to a criminal who came every Sabbath because he was seeking a Christian wife. We use the same yardsticks to decide who may remain in church fellowship. What this means is that the church defines its boundaries on the basis of the life of faith and the content of faith.

The church must therefore decide on a corpus of beliefs which it holds to be fundamental and non-negotiable. Unless it does so, it cannot with equity and precision decide who can be and who cannot be a member. The church therefore needs a knowledge of God and his relationships with man and his world, as expressed in doctrine.

The same cannot be said for individual salvation. Mere knowledge cannot save. This becomes clear when we consider that while the Old Testament was in use when Jesus lived in Palestine, no one would be saved if he had decided to return to heaven before going to the cross. We would have had a Bible with all of the knowledge stored in it, but none of it would be profitable for salvation. Only a crucified and risen Savior can save. It takes a person to save a person and a soul to save a soul. This means that although there may be doctrines of salvation, there is no saving doctrine—no saving knowledge. It is this fact that distinguishes Christianity from eastern religions; it is what makes it unique. We are saved through our relationship with a crucified person and not by what we know.

In any church group or body that puts a high premium on doctrine, there is the ever present danger that its members may indulge the egoism and pride that goes with the knowledge that one has "the message" and is "in the truth." This may reflect itself in the severity with which heresy is challenged and punished while hypocrites may go virtually ignored. The irony of such a situation is that the heretic is usually following the dictates of his conscience—wrong though he may be—while the hypocrite is actively violating his.

There is no virtue in possessing truth if it does not regulate our lives. And there is the constant danger that while we call others out of Babylon (false belief), Babel (confusion and sin) may be very much alive in our hearts.

Although individual salvation is not contingent on how much we know, it is impossible to have a saving relationship with Christ without some knowledge of him. We come to know him in the sense of experiencing him as a person, partly because of what we know of him. Intellectual knowledge is both a precursor and concomitant of our experience of him whom to know is life eternal.

Clifford Pitt is Assistant Professor of Theology at Oakwood College.

"... there is the constant danger that while we call others out of Babylon (false belief), Babel (confusion and sin) may be very much alive in our hearts"

To Know God

by Jannith L. Lewis

To know God deeply and personally requires time and effort. We can gain understanding of God by earnest prayer, diligent Bible study, and by love and service to others. Daily communication with God strengthens faith, belief, and hope in eternal truth. We must ask, seek, and knock to receive, find, and have opened unto us God's great wisdom (Matthew 7:7, 8). Get to know God by:

1. **Daily prayer.** Establish an enlightened and warm relationship with God by starting each day with a quiet, private, and unhurried prayer period. Reach out and touch God with your first waking thoughts. Listen and talk to God early in the morning confidently, simply, sincerely, directly, and reverently. Call upon the Lord in prayer, and he will hear, respond, and be found by those who seek and search for him with all of their hearts (Jeremiah 29:12, 13).

God gives wisdom liberally to those who ask (James 1:5). He provides guidance and direction to solve problems and to make decisions with wise insight and good judgment when we acknowledge him (Proverbs 3:6). Ellen White has said that we are brought into connection with the Infinite mind of God through sincere prayer.¹ At the close of each day, we should give thanks to God for his blessings.

2. **Daily Bible study.** When we let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly, we receive wisdom (Colossians 3:16). Again, Ellen White has said that nothing strengthens the intellect more than study of the Scriptures. Nothing is more powerful than the Word of God to elevate the thoughts and to invigorate the mind. The Bible gives human beings a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen today.²

The Bible describes the past, present, and future. It reveals the unparalleled life, teachings, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Matthew 5 teaches us how to obtain happiness by being humble, compassionate, merciful, kind, pure, and peaceful. 1 Corinthians 13 gives us an unmatched formula for a successful life which contains love, patience, kindness, generosity, unselfishness, and sincerity. The Bible teaches lessons for character development by describing persons such as Moses, David, Daniel, Peter, Paul, and John. However, the greatest knowledge we find in God's Word is how to be saved and receive eternal life.

3. **Daily acts of love.** We minister to Christ when we do good to the poor, hungry, and needy (Matthew 25:40). We put into practice our knowledge of God by personal ministry to the sick, blind, depressed, addicted, abused, and handicapped. We can help others by giving Bible, health, and temperance studies and by visiting hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons. Love, joy, peace, kindness, and gentleness are fruit we bear when we know God and seek to make him known (Galatians 5:22, 23). Treasure this privilege of knowing God in heart, mind, and soul.

HOW TO

Key text:
Matthew 7:7, 8

1. *Steps to Christ*, p. 97, pocket ed.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

Jannith Lewis is director of the library and chief librarian at Oakwood College.

The Fool Has Said in His Heart . . .

by E. E. Cleveland

OPINION

Key text:

1 Timothy 3:16

An infidel boasted to a crowd, "If there is a God, let him strike me dead in three minutes." When nothing happened, he shouted in triumph, "The time is past, and I am still alive! You see, there is no God!" A little lady, having observed it all, said, "Sir, do you have children?" "Why, yes," was the reply. "If one of them asked you to strike him dead in three minutes, would you do it?" she asked. "Of course not. I love them too much," he replied. "That, young man, is why God has ignored your foolish request," she answered.

"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Psalm 14:1). That God has impacted on humanity and nature is repeatedly affirmed in history, both secular and religious. Heathen kings acknowledged him (Daniel 4:34). Secular historians have dated time by his presence in history (B.C. and A.D.). Pagan armies have felt his wrath (2 Chron. 32:21). And there is order and complexity in nature that defies human explanation.

But the supreme revelation of God is in his Son, Jesus Christ, who was "manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16). He was "the mighty God" in human flesh (Isa. 9:6). He was divinity incarnate. What greater *proof* of God may we demand than that God tabernacled with man in human flesh for thirty-three years, and "we beheld his glory" (John 1:14).

"That our obedience, at its best, is imperfect, should not discourage conscientious effort."

At the end of his fruitful life, he experienced the supreme purpose of his coming—he died for us (Isa. 53:4, 5). Yes, he provided the atoning sacrifice by which millions would find reconciliation to God. But we must come to "know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings" (Phil. 3:10). A mere intellectual knowledge of him, though essential, is insufficient. We must "follow on to know" the Lord experientially. To form a living relationship with God based on faith, love, and respect is the supreme object of living.

There are certain essentials indispensable to this experience.

(1) *Communication*. There can be no relationship without it. God has continually spoken to us in the Bible. Unless, however, we read it, the Voice in the Book will go unheard. Communication is a two-way experience. God invites us to talk to him. We call this prayer—for it is the *lesser* speaking to the *Greater*. If prayer is the breath of the soul, how often must one breathe to remain spiritually alive?

(2) And, of course, one's relationship to God is strengthened through obedience. Grace saves, but obedience strengthens the relationship. Obedience is therapeutic; hence it is essential to growth. In Christianity, practice does not make perfect, but it does improve the performance. That our obedience, at its best, is imperfect, should not discourage conscientious effort, for God's saving grace requires no less. The nature and pace of behavioral change are determined by the quality of our *faith*, the depth of our love, and the height of our respect.

E. E. Cleveland is Director of the Department of Church Missions at Oakwood College.

What Matters Supremely

by James I. Packer

SUMMARY OF THE QUARTER

To survey what . . . it means to 'know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent', we may underline the following points.

First, knowing God is a matter of *personal dealing*, as is all direct acquaintance with personal beings. Knowing God is more than knowing about Him; it is a matter of dealing with Him as He opens up to you, and being dealt with by Him as He takes knowledge of you. Knowing about Him is a necessary precondition of trusting in Him ('how could they have faith in one they had never heard of?' [Rom. 10:14, NEB]), but the width of our knowledge about Him is no gauge of the depth of our knowledge of Him. . . .

Second, knowing God is a matter of *personal involvement*, in mind, will and feeling. It would not, indeed, be a fully personal relationship otherwise. To get to know another person, you have to commit yourself to his company and interests, and be ready to identify yourself with his concerns. Without this, your relationship with him can only be superficial and flavourless. 'O taste and see that the Lord is good,' says the psalmist (Psalm 34:8). To 'taste' is, as we say, to 'try' a mouthful of something, with a view to appreciating its flavour. A dish may look good, and be well recommended by the cook, but we do not know its real quality till we have tasted it. Similarly, we do not know another person's real quality till we have 'tasted' the experience of friendship with him. Friends are, so to speak, communicating flavours to each other all the time, by sharing their attitudes both towards each other (think of people in love) and towards everything else that is of common concern. As they thus open their hearts to each other by what they say and do, each 'tastes' the quality of the other, for sorrow or for joy. They have identified themselves with, and so are personally and emotionally involved in, each other's concerns. They feel for each other, as well as thinking of each other. This is an essential aspect of the knowledge which friends have of each other; and the same applies to the Christian's knowledge of God, which, as we have seen, is itself a relationship between friends.

The emotional side of knowing God is often played down these days, for fear of encouraging a maudlin self-absorption. It is true that there is nothing more irreligious than self-absorbed religion, and that it is constantly needful to stress that God does not exist for our 'comfort', or 'happiness', or 'satisfaction', or to provide us with 'religious experiences', as if these were the most interesting and important things in life. It is also necessary to stress that anyone who, on the basis of 'religious experiences', 'saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him' (1 John 2:4; cf. verses 9, 11, 3:6, 11, 4:20). But, for all this, we must not lose sight of the fact that knowing God is an emotional relationship, as well as an intellectual and volitional one, and could not indeed be a deep relation between persons were it not so. The believer is, and must be, emotionally involved in the victories

"The believer must be emotionally involved in the victories and vicissitudes of God's cause in the world."

and vicissitudes of God's cause in the world, just as Sir Winston's personal staff were emotionally involved in the ups and downs of the war. The believer rejoices when his God is honoured and vindicated, and feels the acutest distress when he sees God flouted. Barnabas, when he came to Antioch, 'and had seen the grace of God was glad' (Acts 11:23); by contrast, the psalmist wrote: 'rivers of waters run down my eyes, because they keep not thy law' (Psalm 119:136). Equally, the Christian feels shame and grief when convicted of having failed his Lord (see, for instance, Psalm 51, and Luke 22:61 f.), and from time to time knows transports of delight as God brings home to him in one way or another the glory of the everlasting love with which he has been loved ('transported with a joy too great for words' [1 Pet. 1:8, NEB]). This is the emotional and experiential side of friendship with God. . . .

Then, third, knowing God is a matter of *grace*. It is a relationship in which the initiative throughout is with God—as it must be, since God is so completely above us and we have so completely forfeited all claim on His favour by our sins. We do not make friends with God; God makes friends with us, bringing us to know Him by making His love known to us. Paul expresses this thought of the priority of grace in our knowledge of God when he writes to the Galatians, 'now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God . . .' (Gal. 4:9). . . .

What matters supremely, therefore, is not, in the last analysis, the fact that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it—the fact that He knows me. I am graven on the palms of His hands. I am never out of His mind. All my knowledge of Him depends on His sustained initiative in knowing me. I know Him, because He first knew me, and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend, one who loves me; and there is no moment when His eye is off me, or His attention distracted from me, and no moment therefore, when His care falters.

This is momentous knowledge. There is unspeakable comfort—the sort of comfort that energises, be it said, not enervates—in knowing that God is constantly taking knowledge of me in love, and watching over me for my good. There is tremendous relief in knowing that His love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point of prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now can disillusion Him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself, and quench His determination to bless me. There is, certainly, great cause for humility in the thought that He sees all the twisted things about me that my fellow-men do not see (and am I glad!), and that He sees more corruption in me than that which I see in myself (which, in all conscience, is enough). There is, however, equally great incentive to worship and love God in the thought that, for some inathomable reason, He wants me as His friend, and desires to be my friend, and has given His Son to die for me in order to realise this purpose.

James I. Packer is professor of historical and systematic theology at Regent College, Vancouver.

“All my knowledge of Him depends on His sustained initiative in knowing me.”

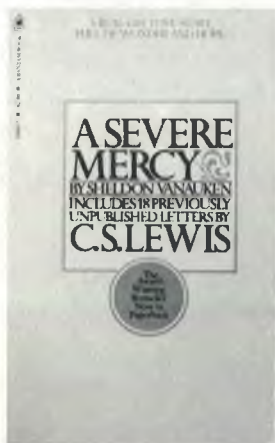
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REACT
Lesson 13

1. Is saving knowledge received or acquired?
 2. What does saving knowledge save us from (keep in mind Paul's story as discussed in the Introduction)?
 3. Discuss in as specific terms as possible what it means to have an "experimental knowledge" of God? How may we be sure we are experiencing such knowledge?
 4. If we cannot be saved through mere intellectual knowledge of God, is any intellectual knowledge necessary for salvation? If intellectual knowledge isn't necessary for salvation, then is intense, thorough theological study necessary for those not inclined to it?
 5. The How To suggests daily acts of love as a means of developing a saving knowledge of God. In what way do such acts help us know God?
 6. Would the following in any way mediate a true knowledge of God? Why or why not?
 - a) reading a work of quality literature
 - b) listening to a Beethoven symphony
 - c) spending leisure time with friends
 - d) snow skiing
 - e) other experiences . . .
 7. In your own final assessment, what is "saving knowledge" to you? Shouldn't your answer have a profound impact upon your life? If it doesn't, is it truly "saving knowledge"?
-

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