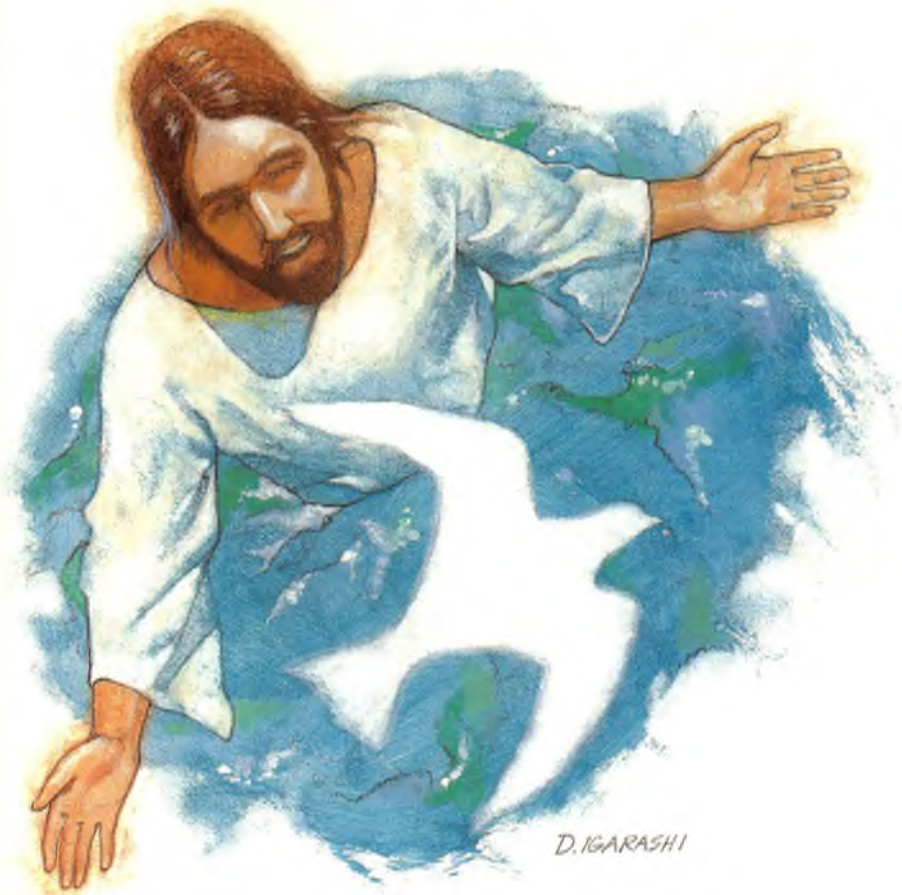


COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

General Conference Church Ministries Publication

July-September 1988

Faith's Foundations - Part 1



D. IGARASHI



Will I fit in?

My friends think I'm the most outgoing person around. Truth is, my heart starts to pound and my hands sweat when I walk into a room of strangers.

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COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

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Thirteenth Sabbath Offering Far Eastern Division

* Your offering will provide Junior Bible Seminaries in Burma, a college for Thailand, and a literature ministry seminary in the Philippines.

INTRODUCTION TO FAITH'S FOUNDATIONS—PART I

By George E. Knowles

A number of years ago I met a university student who told me he had been reared a Seventh-day Adventist. As a matter of fact, he was studying theology when a persistent, nagging question entered his mind, "If my mother had been something other than an Adventist—say, for instance, a Mormon or a Moslem—would I follow one of those religions through my mother's influence? Is the basic reason I am a Seventh-day Adventist simply that my mother was of that faith?"

This young man dropped out of college, stopped attending church, and, when I met him, was studying law and comparative religions. He told me he was investigating various churches to see which one seemed closest to the Bible. I asked him if he was including the Seventh-day Adventist Church in his research. "No," he said, "I was brought up on those teachings."

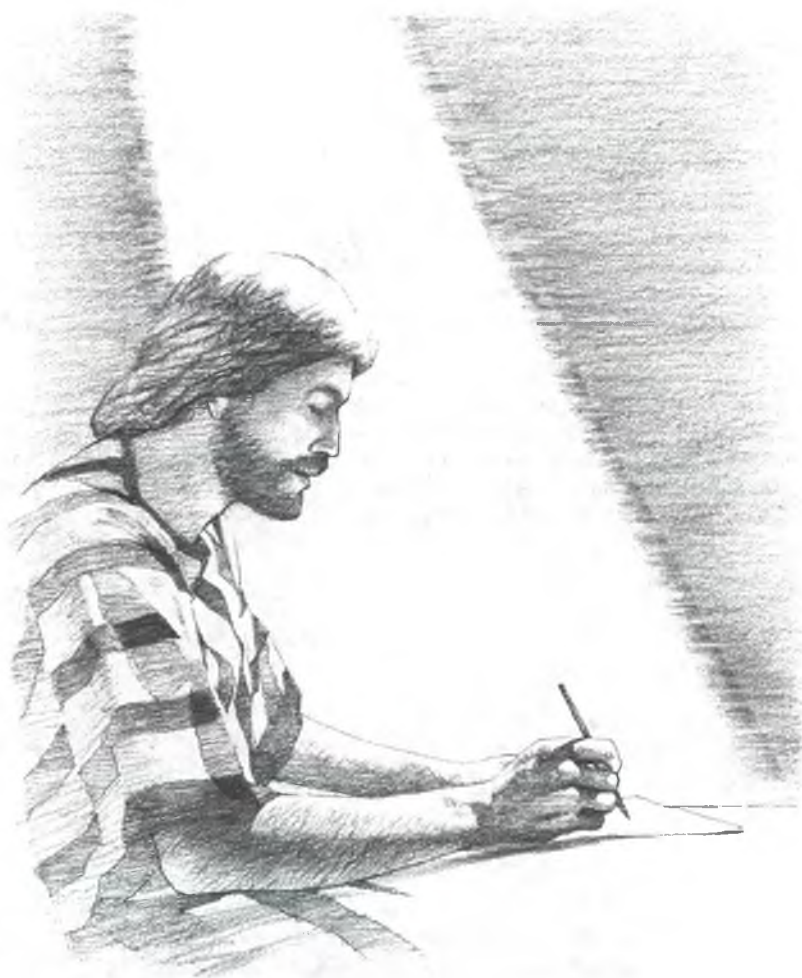
Our ensuing conversation helped the young man to see that he had taken the teachings of his mother's church for granted and had never really checked them out. He had never discovered them for himself. He agreed in fairness to include the church of his childhood in his research. As a result, he eventually concluded that this was indeed the faith he wanted to follow. He had experienced the thrill of discovery. He was excited about what he had found, and now he wanted to share his faith with others. For the first time in his life he recognized its value!

For two quarters we will be studying the twenty-seven fundamental principles of our faith. For those who have grown up with these beliefs, it is so easy to take them for granted. Hopefully, these lessons will lead many to the thrill of discovery and a depth of appreciation for a reasonable, logical, and Biblical faith that will motivate a deep desire to understand that faith well enough to share it with others.

Lesson 1, June 26 - July 2

The Holy Scriptures

"All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17, RSV).



The Scripture According to Krishna

by Teresa Cook

“Here is our scripture,” he said, his eyes emphasizing the importance of his words. “From these books, we learn how to live.”

He was a restaurant manager who also happened to be a member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON), more commonly known as Hare Krishnas. We were two Adventist college students enjoying an evening away from campus. Knowing that it was operated by Hare Krishnas, a friend and I had come to the restaurant for the unique food and culture. Friends had joked that it was going to be an evening of off-campus outreach.

However, we were there to learn, not teach. And I learned quite a bit.

As we stood in the restaurant’s adjoining temple, my senses were overwhelmed by the mystical atmosphere. It seemed so exotic compared to the familiarity of a church’s pews, pulpit, and preacher. However, the sincerity of the restaurant manager overcame my momentary apprehension. As he spoke, I was given a sense of his world, of what motivated his life.

He spoke about Krishna

(an Indian deity whom Hare Krishnas believe is God, Christ, and life). He also showed us the Srimad-Bhagavatam, a collection of more than sixty books. The Bhagavatam, according to Hare Krishnas, was written by Krishna. It was translated into English by Prabhupada, an Indian holy man.

Reflecting upon the evening I spent learning about Hare Krishnas, I’ve begun to realize several things about myself and my Christianity. Although I can respect a Hare Krishna’s belief in the Bhagavatam, it is merely a source of interesting culture to me. The Bhagavatam can help me better understand a Hare Krishna’s mindset, but it cannot help me truly understand myself better. Although I could benefit from it in an intellectual and cultural sense, the Bhagavatam cannot answer my questions and soothe my anxieties. The Bible can, but that is because it was created by Someone who protects, guides, and loves me. As a result, the Bible—my Scripture—reveals the way of salvation and shows me how to truly live, not just exist.

**INTRO-
DUCTION**
Scripture:
2 Timothy
3:16, 17 (RSV)

Teresa Cook is a junior English/journalism major at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

The Holy Scriptures

by Frank Holbrook

LOGOS **Theme:** "The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 1.*

1. God's Two Words

"In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb. 1:1, RSV).

Have you ever wondered about the "heavy questions"? "Where did I come from? Why am I here? What is the purpose of life? What is the explanation for the human predicament? Where do I go after death?"

Today's society has become all too familiar with scientific methods of research and analysis. As a result we are hardened to the excitement of new advances because of the multitudinous exploits of science. But the "heavy questions" of life are philosophical and religious and do not lie in the legitimate realm of scientific inquiry. Dr. Vannevar Bush, honorary board chairman of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, observed some years ago in a popular article: "On the most vital questions, it [science] does not even produce evidence." "On the central mysteries science cannot speak."

Revelation is the only method by which we could find satisfactory answers to life's ultimate questions. Some credible authority must tell us. This is Christianity's claim. The Christian faith rests upon two basic premises: (1) There is a God, and (2) God has revealed Himself to the human family in the Holy Scriptures.

The Holy Scriptures, the Bible, is composed of the Old and New Testaments and is a library of 66 books written over a span of some 1600 years by more than two score writers. The two Testaments form a unit because, as the writer of Hebrews asserts, *the same God* who spoke to people in pre-Christian times has also spoken again by His Son, Jesus Christ.

Starting with Moses (15th century B.C.), the revelations

Frank Holbrook is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference.

from God began to be recorded. Over the centuries (literally, "in many portions and in many ways") God spoke by various prophets who wrote down their messages. By the time of Jesus the Old Testament canon of inspired books was complete (see Matt. 23:35; Luke 24:27, 44). God chose to make His ultimate disclosure through His Son. Jesus Christ has given the greatest revelation of God possible for humanity to receive (John 1:18). The New Testament canon is the inspired *apostolic* witness and interpretation of Jesus Christ and His teaching. His is an unrepeatable life and disclosure; theirs is an unrepeatable attestation to Him.

Although the Scriptures are written by many writers, on what basis does it claim a unified message? (see Heb. 1:1, 2; 1 Peter 1:10-12).

2. Evidences the Bible Is Inspired

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Scriptures' Claim. The apostle Paul states that Holy Scripture is "inspired" (literally, *Theopneustos*, "God-breathed"). While the apostle is referring primarily to the Old Testament, his statement would be true also of the divinely inspired writings that form the New Testament (cf. Gal. 1:11, 12; Eph. 3:5). Note four important points that surface in 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

a. Authority. God is their source and was involved in their formation. Although Holy Writ is the divine thought expressed in human language, it is still the authoritative Word of God.

b. Purpose. "To instruct you for salvation" (v. 15, RSV).

c. Sufficiency. "That the man of God may be complete" (v. 17, RSV). All knowledge necessary for salvation can be found in the teachings of the Bible. It is "profitable for doctrine."

d. Trustworthiness. If Scripture is "God-breathed," then God has guided in the selection of materials used by the writers, whether drawn from personal observation, oral or written sources, or by direct revelation. In sum, the apostle is asserting the trustworthiness of the Scriptures because of their divine Author, who worked through human instrumen-

talities (cf. 2 Peter 1:21).

Affirming Evidence. How can we know with certainty that the Christian Scriptures are a revelation from God and are not human productions expressing merely the views of its several writers? This is a fair question, and the Creator recognizes that faith in Him must rest on valid evidence. He says, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18). Here are a few important lines of evidence that certify the Scriptures as God's revelation. Can you think of others?

a. The Scriptures' perspective of life. The Bible gives, without ambiguity or hesitation, clear, satisfying answers to the "heavy questions." They explain the origin of the earth and the human family. They reveal the origin of evil and its devastating effects. They offer a solution to the human predicament through a marvelous plan of salvation. In short, the Scriptures give a sensible coherence to life. They provide a genuine sense of meaning for everyday living and for the future. This is the kind of revelation we would expect from a God of love.

b. High spiritual plane. If the Bible were of human origin it is doubtful that it would set so high a plane for daily living: "As he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct" (1 Peter 1:15, RSV). The Scriptures forbid all sin; they reject all human merit as insufficient for salvation. How could sinful human beings conceive a book whose teachings are so elevated above their natural desires and tendencies? (cf. Job 14:4). The exalted level of the Bible's teaching is an evidence of divine authorship.

c. Adaptability to human need. Although originating in the Near East, the Holy Scriptures continue to meet the human family at its deepest level, regardless of race, age, or the times. Its endurance is phenomenal; it continues to have an amazing vitality and worldwide influence.

d. Prophetic fulfillments. The fulfillment of prophecy in general, and especially in the life of our Lord, and the continual, current fulfillments of its last-day predictions authenticate—and continue to authenticate—the Scriptures.

e. Transforming influence. The Bible is a life-changer. Sincerely studied, it will refine, ennoble, and uplift. Christ's own life was an embodiment of its principles.

*"Science Pauses,"
Fortune, May, 1965,
pp. 168, 172.*

What essential part does the Holy Spirit have in convincing the human mind of the validity of the Christian Scriptures? (see 1 Cor. 2:14; Matt. 16:13-17; 1 Cor. 12:3).

Inspiration and the Bible

by Caroline A. Cameron

Ellen White clearly tells us that the Bible is inspired. She describes how God uses fallible men to produce what we call God's Word:

"The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. . . . The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants."¹

"The Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to exalt the Lord alone, and guided the pens of the sacred historians, that the record of the words and works of Christ might be given to the world."²

"The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. . . . The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. . . . It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts."³

"God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write."⁴

"This Word, arranged into books, the Old and New Testaments, is the guidebook to the inhabitants of a fallen world, bequeathed to them that, by studying and obeying the directions, not one soul would lose its way to heaven."⁵

"The union of the divine and the human, manifest in Christ, exists also in the Bible. The truths revealed are all 'given by inspiration of God'; yet they are expressed in the words of men and are adapted to human needs."⁶

"Those whose hearts are in harmony with truth and duty will search the Scriptures with a heart prepared to receive divine impressions. The illuminated soul sees a spiritual unity, one grand golden thread running through the whole, but it requires patience, thought, and prayer to trace out the precious golden thread."⁷

REACT

How does Ellen White's view of the Bible influence the way we accept the Bible's message?

TESTIMONY

Key text:

Amos 3:7

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. v.
2. *Gospel Workers*, p. 286.
3. *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 21.
4. *The Great Controversy*, p. vi.
5. *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 16.
6. *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 747.
7. *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 20.

Caroline A. Cameron is a sophomore English major at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

The Pepsi Challenge or How to Know Your Bible Is Valid

by Brenda J. Dupper

EVIDENCE

Key texts:
2 Timothy
3:16; John
5:39; Acts
17:11

Why do you believe in the Bible? What hard, cold facts prove to you that it isn't just a collection of nice stories about how things might have happened? For that matter, how do you prove anything? Simple. You test it for yourself.

There's an old saying, "The proof is in the pudding," which translates easily to, "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8, RSV). God knows testing is the only concrete means of acquiring proof.

Testing the Bible is a little different from the testing done in the science lab. It's not the kind of fact-finding test where once proven, the fact is accepted without question by everyone—like gravity or the rising of heat. No, testing the Bible and God (the two are inseparable) is a test that must be repeated by every individual. Because, just as with tasting, this kind of testing is a singular experience—you can't taste for anyone else.

God isn't afraid of the testing process. It's been encouraged by Christians of all ages (Acts 17:11). Coming to and staying with Christ is contingent upon testing. If you don't test out your legs every day you soon won't be walking. In the same way, if you quit testing God and His Word you won't stay a believing, active Christian, because you'll have no experience to stand on.

You've got to test the Bible. My test won't prove anything to you. But the results of your tests will be irrefutable proof to you of God's and the Bible's validity. If you have questions as to God and His Word, then test it for yourself.

Until you have found out whether or not the claims of the Bible and of God are true for you personally, all outside, extra-Biblical proofs won't mean much. All the for-sure, tangible proofs of the Bible's authenticity can't make the intangible promises contained within real to you. And until you're sure of the intangibles and their application now to your day-to-day life, all the authentic proof in the world will be useless.

Get active. Give the Bible a taste test. Taste and see whether the Lord is good. If He is, and it's important to you, then find historical and archeological supports for your basis of belief. Taste first and ask for the recipe later.

How do you prove the Bible? Taste it. See for yourself whether the Lord is good.

Brenda J. Dupper is a junior at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

The Importance of Scripture

by Troy D. Spring

How important is it to study the Scriptures? How can it help you understand God's way? Why is it such an important part of Christian worship? These are questions that all of us ask ourselves at one time or another.

When I was a young child my parents would read to me out of *The Bible Story* books. I remember that I loved to hear the stories written in them, especially the stories about Jesus when He was a boy. But when I became a teenager, something happened. I quit having my daily devotions and Bible study. I thought that reading the Bible was just a waste of time. When I would try to read the Scriptures my mind wandered on things of no importance. I kept asking myself, "WHY?"

The scripture that helped me to understand my questions the most was a text found in the Gospel of Mark. "Jesus replied, 'Your trouble is that you don't know the Scriptures, and don't know the power of God'" (Mark 12:24, TLB). How can we expect to know God without reading the Bible? The Bible is like God's textbook. It teaches us the things that Christ did and how He dealt with certain circumstances. It helps our relationship with Him grow as we get to know Him better.

Reading the Scriptures is an important part in every Christian's life, no matter how many of us disregard it. But how can we remind ourselves to read the Scriptures daily?

1. Remember Jesus' supreme love for us and His desire to know us better. Jesus' love for us was so great that He died on the cross for our sins. If you knew that someone loved you that much, wouldn't you want to get to know him better?

2. Pray about it. Tell God that you wish to get to know Him. Tell Him that you try to read the Bible, but your mind wanders. A simple prayer like this can clear your mind so that you might get a clear grasp on the Bible teachings.

3. Pick up the Bible every morning when you get out of bed. Daily devotions are something that are learned. As with everything we humans do, it takes time to develop habits.

Getting to know God is a beautiful experience. With a guideline like the Scriptures, how can we go wrong?

REACT

What other suggestions can you come up with on how to maintain a regular Bible-reading program?

Troy D. Spring is a student at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

HOW TO
Key text:
Mark 12:24

The Accuracy of the Scriptures

by Norman Gulley

OPINION

Key text:
2 Timothy
3:16,17

Imagine trying to teach quantum physics to a baby. This problem is what God is faced with in trying to communicate the grand truths of the universe to sinful, limited humanity. He is limited in how He can communicate to us, because we are limited in what we can understand. No more than you would start reading Albert Einstein's calculations to a baby, would God communicate to us through magnificent heavenly language, because we would no more understand God's infinite ideas than a baby could understand the theory of relativity. Therefore, just as Jesus came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), so the Bible was given in the language of humanity in order for us to understand truth.

Humanity exudes imperfection: it's written in our genes, and it shows in our words, our language, our modes of expression. One word has several different meanings, and there is not one word for each distinct idea. Yet, even though human language, the language of the Bible, isn't perfect—it doesn't need to be. Keep in mind that the Bible was given for practical purposes to reveal the way to eternal life (John 20:30, 31; 2 Tim. 3:15). It just needs to be clear and understandable, which the Bible is. Human language, though imperfect, still functions as an accurate and sufficient vehicle for divine truth. The ideas are perfect, even if the words expressing them are not.

The inspiration of the Scriptures guarantees their trustworthiness, but does that mean they are free from mistakes? Of course, inaccuracies could have occurred through mistakes made by copyists or translators of the Bible. Yet the Bible is so big, so broad, so definite in the practical truths of salvation that whatever errors might have crept in would no more affect its transmission of the practical truths of salvation than an occasional crackle of static does to a day of radio programs.

How far did God safeguard the transmission of the text beyond assuring that its message is valid and true? It is clear from the condition of the ancient manuscripts that God did not protect His message from variant or different readings as long as the essential ideas and truths were preserved. Many alleged errors have turned out to be only misunderstandings on the part of scholars, as evidence from archeology and Near Eastern background have emerged. At times the problems were caused by reading the ancient bibli-

Norman Gulley is professor of religion at Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.

cal world and customs through Western eyes. It is, therefore, important to realize that humans know only in part, and their insight into divine operations is limited.

One must be careful not to allow assumed or supposed discrepancies to erode confidence in the Scriptures; these often are merely our inability to see the total picture. Is God on trial in a sentence that cannot be fully explained? Human beings may never be able to explain every text in Scripture, but neither do they have to. Sufficient broad evidences, especially in the fulfillment of prophecies, assure the reliability of the Scriptures and the veracity of their concepts and truths. These evidences should be a sufficient deterrent to prevent one from stumbling over a supposed error and proceeding to explain away the force of the rest of the Biblical testimony.

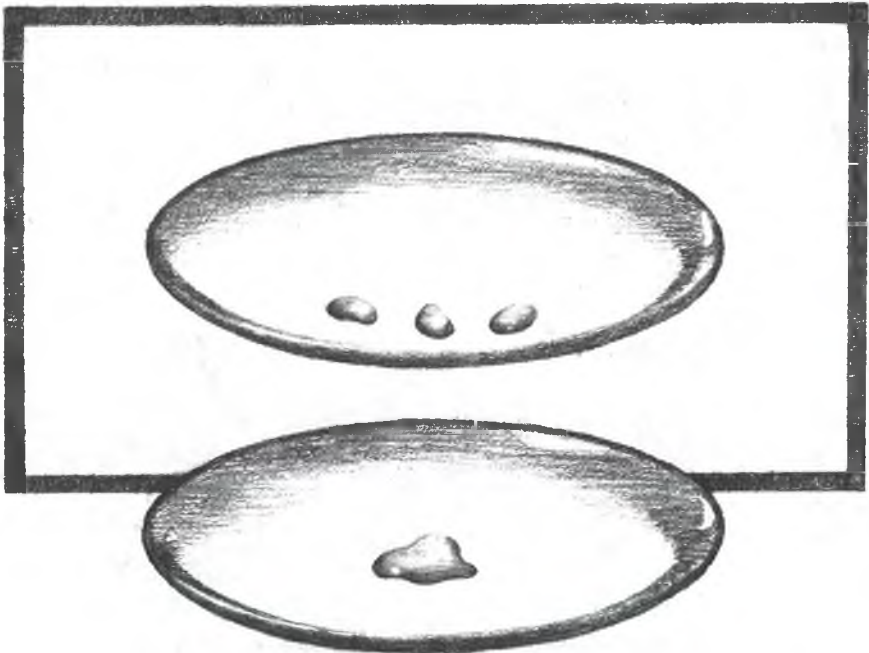
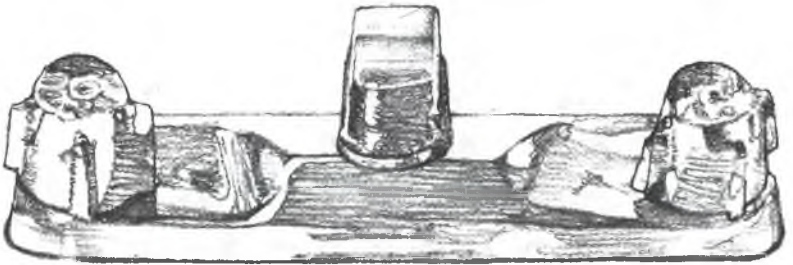
The Bible has been preserved with amazing, even miraculous, accuracy in spite of numerous attempts to destroy it. The comparison of the Dead Sea Scrolls with later manuscripts has helped prove that the Bible we are reading today is the Bible that was read thousands of years ago. W. F. Albright stated that the text of the Hebrew Bible "has been preserved with an accuracy, perhaps unparalleled in any other literature."

Though the Bible does not teach inerrancy, it is the infallible revelation of God's will. Human beings are fallible, but not His Word.

*Norman Gulley,
*"Truth as It Is in
Jesus"* (General
Conference Ministerial
Association Manuscript), pp. 20-22.

The Trinity

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord of our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deut. 6:4, 5, NIV).



The Young Man Who Had More Light Than His Father

by Deanna Davis

His message was from God. Of that he was certain. But who would believe him? Young men claiming to have more light on a subject than the General Conference president were not welcome commodities in 1888. He was co-editor of the *Signs of the Times*, but it could be argued, that was because he was Joseph Harvey Waggoner's son.

Dr. Ellet J. Waggoner, 33, had grown up in his father's massive shadow. J. H. Waggoner was an eloquent preacher and a personal worker who often walked many miles to give a Bible study. No one could doubt and few could match his dedication. Succeeding James White as editor of the *Signs*, he worked in Basel, Switzerland.

His son was in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to address the General Conference session. Ellet's messages would be remembered and celebrated one hundred years later. They established righteousness by faith in the grace of Jesus Christ alone as a cardinal doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But before he could establish that great doctrine, he had to establish Christ as fully God. To do that he had

to dismantle the arguments of his father, a militant anti-trinitarian, who believed Christ was a derived being subordinate to God, and that the doctrine of a Trinity was subversive to the atonement.

This Arian view was for a time widely held by the Adventist leadership. Again and again, Dr. Waggoner demonstrated from Scripture the truth of Colossians 2:9 that Christ embodied "all the fulness of the Godhead."

Ellet was accused of arrogance and conceit. Some disdainfully dismissed him as "a product of the schools." But not all of the older generation rejected him.

Among his supporters was a prominent 60-year old. Before the Conference ended, this worker wrote a letter addressed to all of the ninety delegates. "Dr. Waggoner has spoken to us in a straightforward manner. . . . There is precious light in what he has said. . . . I want to receive every ray of light that God shall send me, though it should come through the humblest of His servants."* Ellet must have breathed a sigh of relief when he read the letter. It was signed by one of his father's friends, Ellen G. White.

**INTRO-
DUCTION**
Scripture:
Deuteronomy
6:4, 5

*Manuscript 15, 1888.

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Trinity—the Central Mystery

by Henning Guldhammer

LOGOS **Theme:** “There is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation.”—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 2.*

1. The Old Testament Witness to the One God (read Deuteronomy 6:4; 4:35)

The Bible seldom deals systematically with any topic, and in the Old Testament there are only allusions to the nature of God. The main contribution is to emphasize the unity of God. Here God is not one among others. He is single and unique and demands that all pretended rivals be excluded.

This insistence on the unity of God eliminates the idea of tritheism (three distinct Gods) as a way to explain the Trinity. Yet we find clues to the plurality of persons within the basic unity of God. For example, in Genesis 1:2 we already find mention of the Spirit of God. The plural “let us make man in our image” in Genesis 1:26 should also be noted. The plural of the divine name and the way the Lord appeared to Abraham in Genesis 18 is a clue, as well.

Another indication of personal distinctions in God is found in those Old Testament passages that refer to the Angel of the Lord who is sometimes identified with Yahweh, and sometimes distinguished from Him. The importance of the word of God and the wisdom of God are further pointers. Then in Isaiah 48:16 we find, in the midst of a strongly monotheistic context, what seems to be an almost trinitarian formulation, “And now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit” (NASB).

While these clues (and others) could not of themselves have led to the doctrine of the Trinity, their presence in the Old Testament makes the further revelation of Jesus more understandable.

How did you understand the Trinity when you were a child? How do you understand the Trinity now?

2. The New Testament Witness to Jesus the One Lord (read John 8:53-59; 14:6-11)

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The unity of God in the Old Testament is reflected in the New Testament. But the dawning realization that Jesus Christ had been sent into the world affected the Christian doctrine of God. The New Testament statements did not come as a result of speculation about God, but came by inspiration as those who experienced Jesus (and the Spirit) attempted to put the meaning of their encounter into words. While there is no *explicit* statement of the doctrine in the New Testament, the trinitarian evidence is overwhelming. God is still preached as the one God. Yet Jesus proclaims His own divinity and accepts the faith and worship of His disciples. As the Word, He is equated with God, and He is associated with the Father in Paul's salutations. The Spirit too is brought into the same relationship.

In the New Testament, Jesus Himself uses passages from the Old Testament to bear witness to His divinity. For instance, in Matthew we find Christ quoting Psalm 110:1. Jesus asks the Pharisees, "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" And they answer Him, "The son of David." Then Jesus says to them, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, till I put thy enemies under thy feet'?" (Matt. 22:42-44, RSV). In verse 44 the words translated "Lord" both come from *kurios*, the Greek equivalent of *Yahweh*, the most sacred of the Hebrew names for God.

So while there is no theological statement of the Trinity in the New Testament, the clear references to the three Persons of the Godhead are not surprising. The Three are mentioned at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:16ff). The disciples are to baptize in the name (singular) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). The Pauline blessing in 2 Corinthians 13:14 includes the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Peter 1:2 reference is made to the election of the Father, the sanctification of the Spirit, and sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ, all in relation to the salvation of believers. What the writers intend for us to understand in these instances is inescapable.

Who are the two "Lords" to whom David refers in Psalm 110:1?

3. The New Testament Witness for the One Indwelling GOD (read John 14:16, 17; Rom. 8:9-11)

While few have difficulty with the *personhood* of the Father and the Son, through the centuries many have tended to think of the Holy Spirit in terms of a “divine force” or power that God uses to work out His will. But the Biblical description of the Spirit points in a different direction. John introduces the Holy Spirit as “another Counselor” (Paraclete), indicating a parallel between the Son and the Spirit.

The New Testament use of gender when speaking of the Holy Spirit points us to a personality. Just as English uses the masculine, feminine, and neuter pronouns, so does Greek. When John speaks of the Spirit (John 14:26 and 16:8, 13-15, for example) he uses the masculine form of the pronoun, *ekeinos* rather than the neuter *ekeino*. For him to do this unless he clearly meant to communicate personhood would be to deliberately mislead anyone reading his account.

The personality of the Spirit is confirmed in the writings of Paul and Luke where the Spirit is described as having *intelligence* (Rom. 8:16), *will* (Acts 16:7; 1 Cor. 12:11), and *affections* (Eph. 4:30). In addition, He acts in ways consistent with personality. He *speaks expressly* (1 Tim. 4:1), *sends* (Acts 11:12), *forbids* (Acts 16:7), *calls ministers* of the gospel (Acts 13:2), *appoints* them to spheres of duty (Acts 20:28), *testifies* (1 Peter 1:11), *makes intercession* (Rom. 8:26, 27), can be *grieved* and *tempted* (Eph. 4:30; Acts 5:9), and *comforts* (John 14:16, 17). Divine works are performed by Him, and divine honor is paid to Him.

Conclusion

The Scriptures reveal to us the one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—three Personalities, interdependent as they accomplish one work, possessing one character, in fact, one God.

So, we can affirm the concept of the Trinity because the Scriptures teach it, but ultimately we must acknowledge the mystery in what we affirm. We stand before the infinite-personal God who is not like us and whom we do not understand and cannot describe.

What is the most perplexing question you have about God (the Trinity)? How do you think you can get an answer to it?

Three in Unity

by Nancy Cross

To explore the *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* for references to the word *Trinity* is to find nothing. Further searches, however, reveal that she saw the Godhead as three “personalities” sharing godly characteristics. Rather than use the word *Trinity*, she chose to describe them in such terms as “the three holy dignitaries of heaven,”¹ and “the three dignitaries and powers of heaven.”² Ellen White sees these as the “three living persons of the heavenly trio.”³

“The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight.” “Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God. . . . He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. . . . He is the eternal, self-existent Son.” “The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead.”⁴

She sees these personalities working together, cooperating to achieve a common purpose—the salvation of mankind.

“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit give Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin.”⁵

“The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. . . . 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.”⁶

Apparently, Ellen White did not organize a theological statement about the functions and relationships of the members of the Godhead. What we have we catch in passing—statements she made while describing Jesus’ walk in the garden with His disciples, comments related to John 3:16, and words of counsel directed to those who dabbled in Pantheism.

Whatever the variations in belief of those who worked with Ellen White, she appears to have taken an orthodox view of the Trinity, but without using that word to describe it. We see the three members of the Godhead as equal personalities, as all-powerful, as all-giving, and ever worthy of our devotion and love.

REACT

What can we learn from the Trinity about our individuality and our unity with God and other believers?

TESTIMONY

Key text:

John 14:16-20

1. *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1110.

2. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 1075.

3. *Evangelism*, p. 615.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 614, 615.

5. *Counsels on Health*, p. 222.

6. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

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It's Not That Simple

by Tom Thompson

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Romans 8:9-11

Father, I adore You,
Lay my life before You,
How I love You.
Jesus, I adore You,
Lay my life before You,
How I love You.
Spirit, I adore You,
Lay my life before You,
How I love You.¹

It is all so simple in the popular Christian tune, and singing the three-part round makes it beautiful. But it was not always that simple. And it still is not that simple.

The word *Trinity* was first used in its Greek form by Theophilus of Antioch (c. A.D. 180). Tertullian, one of the Church Fathers of the third century, was the first to use the Latin term *trinitas*. His concept included the Son strongly subordinated to the Father.² Others since then have used the term to describe, in greatly varied language, the relationship among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Trinitarians have tried to hold to a view of the Godhead balanced between extremes. Intermixed into this tension is a whole spectrum of views of the Godhead. For example, Arians view the Son as having a delegated deity. Others, called "modalistic monarchians," view the Godhead as taking on the forms of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in sequential order.³

Early Adventism was not united on the issue. Uriah Smith, *Review and Herald* editor for many years, was a fairly strong Arian until his death in 1903.⁴ Even James White, in earlier years, had Arian leanings.⁵ No doubt the lack of "official" doctrinal statements in the early years led to some diversity. James White, as editor of the *Review and Herald*, had repeatedly warned against "creed-making." Nevertheless, by 1872 the press at Battle Creek had issued a pamphlet containing 25 propositions, which began with, "We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, . . . but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them."⁶ Those portions dealing with God could be viewed as sympathetic to Arianism.⁷

By 1931 Adventism had become much more orthodox in its approach to the Trinity.⁸ The current statement, ham-

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mered out in Dallas in 1980, contains an expanded version with few changes. One notable exception is the emphasis on the eternal nature of all three members of the Godhead.⁹

REACT

Adventism has always maintained that Holy Scripture was to be the basis for all belief. How, then, does one deal with apparent doctrinal changes? Are such changes inevitable? Can they be dealt with constructively?

1. Words and music by Terry Coelho. Copyright 1972. Maranatha! Music ASCAP.

2. L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1949), p. 82ff.

3. *Ibid.* See also for example: *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1912), vol. 12, pp. 18-23; L. E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 1971), p. 148ff; and Gerald Wheeler, *Is God a Committee?* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Assoc., Nashville, 1975), pp. 8ff.

4. Froom, p. 157ff.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 175-179.

6. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, Rev. ed., D. F. Neufeld, ed., (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 1976), p. 395.

7. G. Land, ed., *Adventism in America* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.), Appendix 1 A.

8. Neufeld, pp 396-398.

9. G. Land, Appendix 1 C

Personal and Powerful

by Kristy Guldhammer

HOW TO
Key text:
John 14:8-10

As finite beings, we find it difficult to understand thoroughly all the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is human impulse to package knowledge in such a way as to explain completely what may not be completely comprehensible.

1. Since all the persons of the Trinity have the same characteristics, knowing Christ helps us to begin to comprehend the persons of the Father and the Holy Spirit. When we come to know Jesus Christ through prayer and the reading of Scripture we can understand the Father's love and accessibility to humanity. We know that if we have seen Christ we have seen the Father (John 14:8, 9). The ability to communicate with Christ makes Him personal and powerful in our lives. This, in turn, makes the Father and the Holy Spirit more real to us. No longer need the Holy Spirit be an enigma that floats about exuding impulses; He is a person. The truth is that when we pray or when we read Scripture we are in direct communication with the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18).

No longer is the Father the God who only dispenses justice and controls and rules the universe. He is also the One who cares for and loves His creatures—just as Christ expressed genuine compassion for us.

2. Christ is shown to be merciful and righteous, and because of His perfect character and the love He shows toward His creatures, we are drawn to Him. He has called us His brothers and sisters, and we have been told that, because of this, God has adopted us as His own children.

3. Christ expressed His deep love for mankind by bringing Himself down to the low level of the fallen human race. His love was expressed through His service to others. He humbled Himself and became a servant to even the most humble.

How, then, can we express to others Christ's compassion for us? Perhaps, by becoming servants to those around us and by letting the Holy Spirit teach us to be compassionate individuals, we will become examples of Christ's love. If others see Christ through us, then they may also be drawn to the Father.

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Who Needs a Creed?

by Terrie Dopp Aamodt

It seems so easy now. God is a Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, coequal and coeternal. To say otherwise would be as unthinkable as singeing our bare feet on red-hot coals or handling rattlesnakes in church. Besides, it's un-Christian. Being a Trinitarian spreads a soothing aura of orthodoxy over our religious self-image. When referring to the practices of some other groups, we can shake our heads and say regretfully, "They're not even Christians."

It wasn't that easy for James White, Joseph Bates, Uriah Smith, J. N. Loughborough, J. H. Waggoner, and D. M. Canright. They thought Trinitarians were misguided pagan Catholic clones who perverted Scripture to create three Gods, just as they had invented Sunday sabbaths and immortal souls.¹

We're pretty proud of our ancestors. But we don't spend a lot of time telling the world that many of them were Arians. And we try not to picture other denominations looking at them and clucking, "They're not even Christians."

That, of course, leads us to wonder whether the groups we disparage today may someday see the light and become Trinitarians. And if they enter the fold, will we still be inside? Do we know all there is to know about God, or will we progress to some yet unimagined knowledge? And if time should last long enough to produce them, will our grandchildren blush (or chuckle indulgently) when they read of our views?

What future generations of Seventh-day Adventists may believe depends somewhat on what we believe about ourselves. Our spiritual ancestors wanted the freedom to be independent. Many of them were kicked out of established churches because their millennial views did not match denominational creeds.² They scrupulously avoided establishing a creed of their own. The Bible was enough.

But some went too far and did things in the name of Adventism that the church felt it must disavow. Officials began to develop a statement of fundamental beliefs. It has changed somewhat over the years, and the way we see ourselves has changed, as well. We're a lot closer to orthodoxy than we were at the turn of the century. Our views of God don't deviate as much, and our rate of change is slower than it was then.

OPINION

Key text:

1 Corinthians

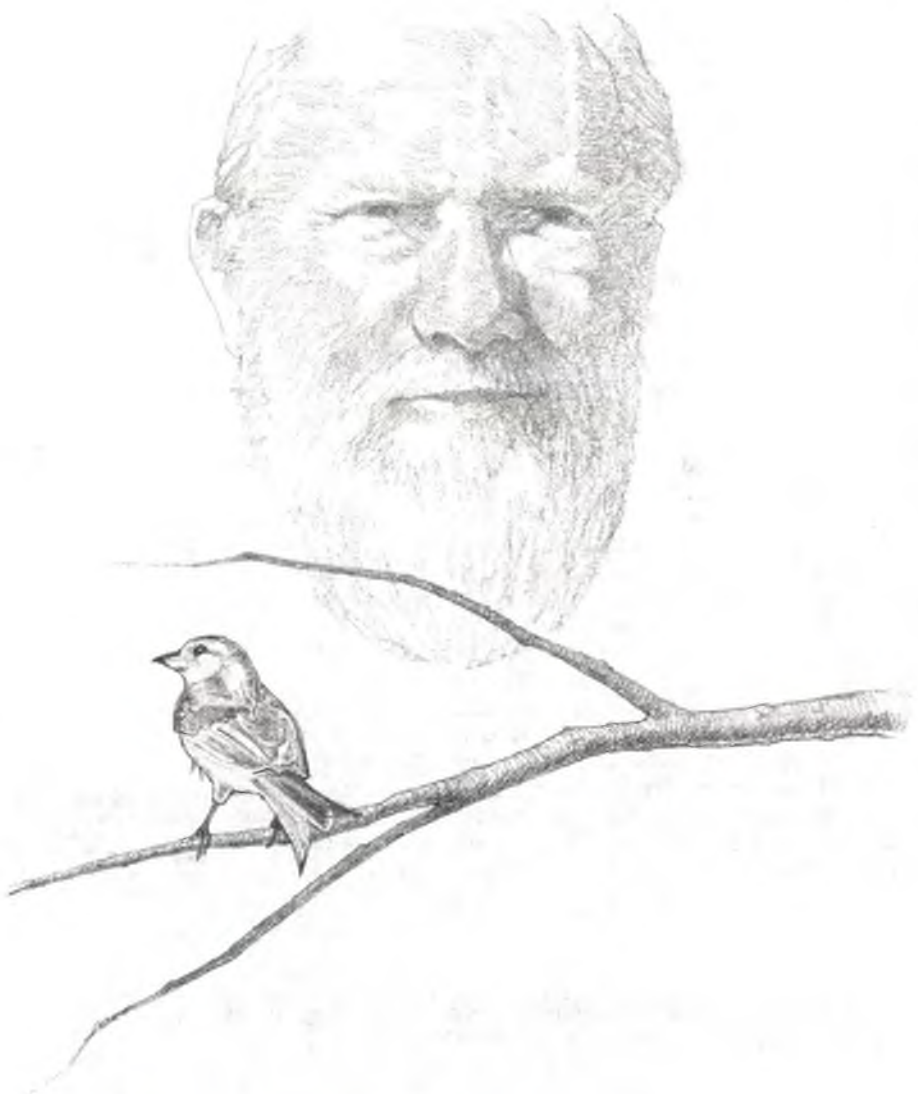
2:2

1. P. W. Schwartz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Pub. Assoc. 1979), p. 167.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 166, 167

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The Father

“ ‘If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him’ ” (John 14:7, NIV).



The Gardener

by Cynthia Jernee

A gardener placed a seedling in water. Soon it sprouted and grew long roots. The gardener carefully prepared the earth and tenderly placed the sprout in an area where there was plenty of sunshine. As it grew, he watered it, talked to it, nurtured it, always handling the little tree gently and lovingly. When it was still very young the gardener stabilized it with sticks and strings. When winter came and brought the freezing cold he covered the roots and the trunk with layers of soft cloth and sheets of plastic.

With spring came the warm sunshine, and the little tree burst forth with new green leaves and reached out higher toward the sun's warmth. The gardener was proud of the tree's progress and continued to nurture it carefully.

On a warm, clear night, though, a deer crept out of the woods nearby and ate the leaves and branches off the little tree. The tree went into shock, but the gardener rescued it and nursed it back to health. It continued to flourish, growing stronger every day.

One day, in the middle of summer, dark, voluminous clouds suddenly filled the

sky, covering the sun and its warmth and brightness. The air grew cold, and a tempestuous wind raged through the valley where the little tree grew. Hail beat down upon the tree, tearing the leaves and breaking the branches. In an effort to save it, the gardener covered it with plastic. The hail tore the plastic to shreds and started on the little tree. The gardener tried to build a tent over and around the tree as a shelter, but the wind whipped at it and yanked it away. In desperation the gardener bent over the tree and shielded it with his own body.

The tempest raged on. Clouds rolled and bubbled furiously. Hail beat down with the fury of a hurricane as the wind lashed out at the gardener, striking him violently from every direction, and howling in its anger and anguish.

Then, as suddenly as the storm came, it died. Silence filled the air. Peace came upon the valley. Slowly, painfully, the gardener stood. Tears came into his eyes for the little tree with its torn leaves and broken branches.

Then the gardener knelt in the wet grass and mended the tree.

INTRODUCTION

Scripture:
John 14:7, NIV.

What Is God Like? by Doug Lainson

LOGOS Theme: “God the Eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father.”—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 3.*

1. From the Start (read Genesis 1:1-27)

Blackness enveloped everything. As the incredible power exploded throughout the emptiness, Creation began. Light. Sky. Land. Vegetation. Stars. And living creatures sprang into existence from His fingertips.

“And God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:25, NIV).

The Creation story first reveals what and who God is: an all-powerful being who can snap atoms together at the inking of synaptic thought. But beyond the evident power of God, the act of creation allows us to see much about the character of God.

First, it shows a God who enjoys variety. Wildlife numbering in the thousands. Millions of botanical variations. Billions, all told.

Second, it reveals a God who has a sense of humor. Have you ever looked at a giraffe, or maybe a platypus, or eaten a kumquat? Funny stuff! It's good to see a God who loves all kinds of life and isn't afraid to smile.

Then there is the ultimate creation. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female” (Gen. 1:27, NIV). He also created us with the freedom of choice, the power to be individuals. And that's love.

What can we learn about God by looking at nature? Read Romans 1:20 and mention two things that are apparent in nature.

2. Along the Way

During the Old Testament period we see a God who seems to contradict this picture. Here we see a wrathful God seeking the destruction of entire nations. Fathers, mothers, children, infants, and livestock were blotted from the earth (see 1 Sam. 15:2, 3). How does this bloodshed fit with the God whom Jesus showed us in His life on earth? After all, Christ said, “If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well” (John 14:7, NIV).

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This is a difficult question to answer. But couldn't the solution go back to the issue of freedom of choice? Sodom chose to be the most evil place on earth—ever. And it was destroyed by its wickedness. But Nineveh, the bloodiest city of all (Nahum 3:1), repented, and God was merciful (Jonah 3:10).

How do the following Scriptures reveal the limits to our understanding of God? (Job 11:7; Ps. 145:3; Isa. 55:8; Rom. 11:33.)

Even though we cannot understand God fully, what thrilling aspect of our relationship with Him does He make possible when we choose to believe in Him? (see Heb. 11:1, 6).

3. Wrapping Things Up (read Revelation 15:3; 16:7; and 19:11-14)

In some ways, the book of Revelation seems to echo the events of the Old Testament. "Judge," "judgment," and "justice" resound throughout this book. But with His judgment God offers mercy, and ultimately He offers the gift of choice.

Freedom. Justice. Love. These are familiar words. They are the language of humanity given us by our Creator. God has created us with the potential to become His sons and daughters. "They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. . . . They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:4, 5, NIV).

Humans have a strong sense of freedom. But when God gives us the freedom to choose our eternal destiny, does it enhance this sense of freedom or make it a difficult responsibility?

A Lovable God

by Scott K. Griswold

TESTIMONY

Key text:
John 14:9

Typically we think of God as God the Father, yet it was Jesus who said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9, NASB). Jesus is the best picture we have of God. By looking at how Jesus treated children we can see what God is like as a father. Ellen White depicts Jesus' love for children in the following:

"The children were foremost in the rejoicing. Jesus had healed their maladies; He had clasped them in His arms, received their kisses of grateful affection, and some of them had fallen asleep upon His breast as He was teaching the people."¹

"Jesus was ever a lover of children. He accepted their childish sympathy and their open, unaffected love. The grateful praise from their pure lips was music in His ears, and refreshed His spirit when oppressed by contact with crafty and hypocritical men. Wherever the Saviour went, the benignity of His countenance, and His gentle, kindly manner won the love and confidence of children."²

"The Saviour regards with infinite tenderness the souls whom He has purchased with His own blood. They are the claim of His love. He looks upon them with unutterable longing. His heart is drawn out, not only to the best-behaved children, but to those who have by inheritance objectionable traits of character."³

Jesus continually pointed people to God. He urged them to approach God because Jesus saw God as a very loving Father.

"The infinite God, said Jesus, makes it your privilege to approach Him by the name of the Father. Understand all that this implies. No earthly parent ever pleaded so earnestly with an erring child as He who made you pleads with the transgressor. No human, loving interest ever followed the impenitent with such tender invitations. God dwells in every abode; He hears every word that is spoken, listens to every prayer that is offered, tastes the sorrows and disappointments of every soul, regards the treatment that is given to father, mother, sister, friend, and neighbor. He cares for our necessities, and His love and mercy and grace are continually flowing to satisfy our need."⁴

We should take this picture of God to heart and come daily into His presence.

"Because we are the gift of His Father, and the reward of His work, Jesus loves us. He loves us as His children. Reader, He loves you. Heaven itself can bestow nothing greater, nothing better. Therefore trust."⁵

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 592.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 511.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 517.

4. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 105.

5. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 483.

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He May Be God, by Charles Burkeen but He's Also My Father

In a society that uses no last names, it is imperative to know who one's father is. In Israel, men were named according to whose son they were. King David was David ben Jesse, that is David the son of Jesse. The apostle John was John ben Zebedee. Christ was called Jesus ben Joseph by His hometown neighbors, Jesus ben David by blind Bartimaeus, and Jesus ben Yahweh by those who knew Him to be the Son of God.

According to Christ's verbal sparring partners in John 8:31-58, He was Jesus ben who-knows-who? the man of questionable lineage. After all, everybody knew that Joseph wasn't Christ's real father. They exult in verse 41, "We are not illegitimate children,' . . . 'The only Father we have is God himself'" (NIV). The problem with their proclamation "The only Father we have is God" is that they had never met Him before, and when He stood before them they didn't recognize Him.

Jesus presented a radical view of God in His day by simply calling Him "Father." The Gospel of Mark gives us insight into the relationship between Father and Son in chapter 14:36. Mark shows Jesus addressing the God of the universe as "Abba, Father," the simple title that an adoring child calls a loving father.¹

No respectable Jew would dishonor God with such a familiar, common term as *Abba*. On the contrary, the more exalted the title, the better. "The Holy One" was one such substitute for His proper name, Yahweh. This title was surpassed by "The Holy One, blessed be He," which was later outdone by "The Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He."²

They remembered the words of the psalmist: "The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry. Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it" (Ps. 18:7, 8, NIV). But they forgot the words of the prophet Isaiah: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6, NIV). Jesus came to balance our image of God. He wants to introduce us to our mutual Father.

EVIDENCE

Key text:
John 8:31-47

1. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), pp. 5, 6.
2. R. J. Zwiwerblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds. *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1965), p. 160.

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Discovering the Father

by Dan Kaempff

HOW TO
Key text:
John 14:7

For some people, relating to God in a meaningful way is a difficult problem. Scripture gives us many portraits of the Father, and trying to establish a firm image of what He is really like can be a complicated and frustrating task. Even the Bible readily admits this. "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11, NIV).

But besides presenting the problem, Scripture also gives an answer. We have a tremendous example of the nature of God, and it is found in Christ (see John 14:9). Christ's entire mission on earth was to reveal the true nature of His Father to us. By His death, Christ revealed the full magnitude of not only His love but God's, as well.

As we explore the true depth of the Father's love for us, how do we apply it in a meaningful way to our daily experience? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Don't be afraid to approach God. God is yearning for us to make Him a vital part of our lives. He actually takes the first step in forming a relationship by offering us salvation from our sins. His love and power are just there, waiting for us to take advantage of them.

2. Explore what God has done for you. While the task of unravelling the mysteries of God is one that can never be completed, contemplating what He has done in your life can help you to realize His true nature. Many times it seems that God doesn't pay any attention to us, when actually He has a most definite plan for each one of us. By trusting in Him without question we will see the way He has in mind for us.

3. Find a way to make God personal to you. While it is vitally important to remember the degree of respect God deserves, the fact remains that He wants us to approach Him in such a way that we can be comfortable with Him. That doesn't mean casually or flippantly, but in a manner you would reserve for your own father. God is our heavenly Father. He created us and He loves each of us, no matter how we treat Him. He wants us to call on Him for any reason, without hesitation.

By looking at the ways Christ related to people while He was on earth, we can see the true nature of God.

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Using Power

by Shelley Nolan

Fragments of parental encounters surface in my memory. Five years old and being spanked—"I'm doing this for your own good." Ten years old and practicing the piano—"When you grow up you'll thank me for making you stick with this." Fifteen years old and buying clothes—"You know how I feel, but it's your money. If you buy that you'll have to wear it." Twenty years old and finalizing a decision on a college major—"I can't tell you what to do; you'll have to make your own decision about your life."

Taking the pictures of my life individually as snapshots, I see my parents often as harsh, unfair, unfeeling. When I was 5 they come across as tyrants. At 10—they appear as enforcers. At 15—they are advocates. At 20—they suddenly become uninvolved and uncaring. But running those same pictures through a movie projector, I can see my relationship with my parents progressing, slowly emerging into new stages that always improve on the ones before.

What seems to define the character of parent-child relationships is the use of authority or power. When a child is young, parents set clear-cut, comprehensible guidelines for behavior. But as the child matures and issues become more complex, the balance of power shifts from the parents to a system of sharing and finally to the young adult. Without question, the process needs wise parents to know when to restrict and when to free the child. And the child needs perception and understanding of the parents' role.

It seems to me that the "God-style" of parenting successfully handles this process of growth. God offers guidelines for my behavior, yet in the end allows me the freedom of choice. As a result, I focus on our relationship as a total experience rather than trying to map out the specifics of what I am or am not allowed to do. As I come to understand more and more of the objectives behind God's directives I become more willing and able to modify my attitude and behavior.

Like the snapshots of my parents, individual acts of God may appear arbitrary, authoritarian, unjustified. But when viewed together, they present a unified picture of God, who cares for His creations and holds out a plan for their well-being, desperately hoping that they will accept and benefit from His wisdom.

OPINION

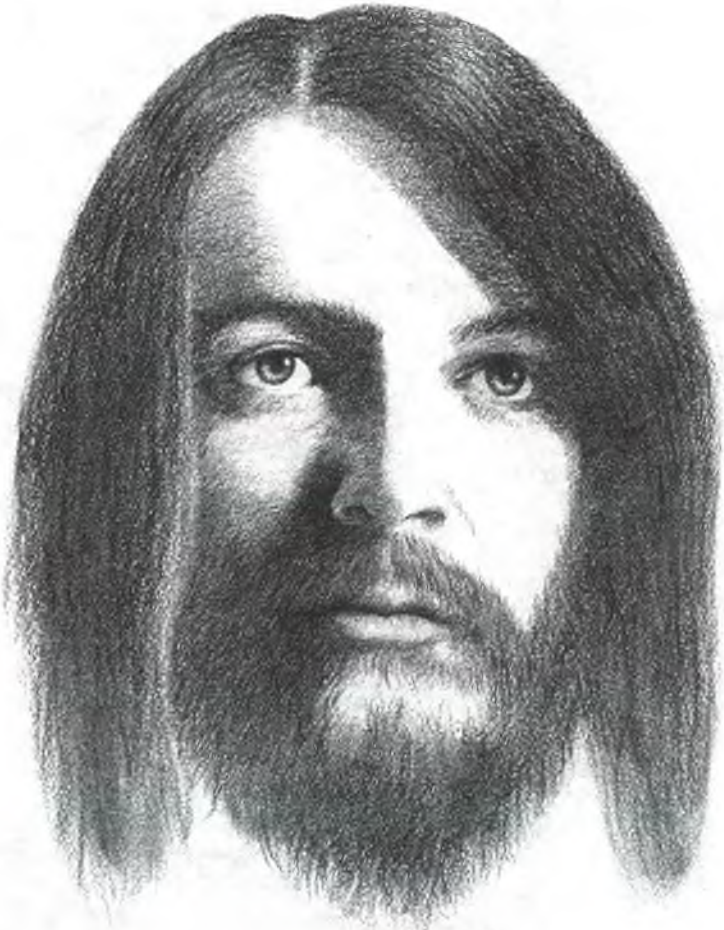
Key text:

John 1:12, 13

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Christ, the World's Redeemer

“Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself” (Heb. 7:26, 27 NIV).



The Ultimate Story

by Gartly N. Curtis

The two verses for this week's lesson study tell us a great deal about the nature of Christ. Read them. It takes only a moment. I sat down here at the keyboard and started brainstorming for an idea of how to introduce this topic with some sort of happy story or clever analogy. A few half thoughts made it to the screen, but I deleted them. I don't think there is a handy little analogy for Hebrews 7:26 and 27. Christ's life story is it.

I'm an English major, so I read a lot of stories by a lot of writers from a lot of different backgrounds. As far as stories go, the one about how and why Christ became our high priest is on the top of the stack. It has foreshadowing and suspense, believable characterization, movement and change, controlled continuity, tragic crisis, a happy denouement—and it's true. Some of the best stories are.

The life story of our High Priest explains the personal attributes that are set forth in the three concise sentences we are studying. These tell us Christ led a sinless life on earth, and so He was unique among

humanity. He is the Son of God, and so exalted above all in heaven. And only a priest such as Himself does not need to make sacrifices for His own sins, as well as for ours. These claims to a priesthood on the order of Melchisedec are established by Christ's life story.

The lesson for this week deals with more than one or two obscure Biblical ideas about the Christian philosophy of life. It is a summation of who Christ is, and it identifies the role of His sacrifice. That's why I don't think this should be read with the notion of merely moving on to another lesson next week. The ideas in these verses are fundamental in practically all of the New Testament lessons.

If the story of Jesus were written in a different order, Hebrews 7:26 and 27 might well be at the end of the book. After the whole story was told, this book could end with, "Such a high priest meets our need" (NIV).

But this story is only part I. You've got to *know* it well if you want to get part II, which, by the way, is a lot longer, and coming soon.

INTRODUCTION

Key texts:
Hebrews 7:25-27; 9:12-14

A Heavenly Priest

by Dave Kilmer

LOGOS

Key text:

Hebrews

7:26, 27

Theme: "God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 4.*

1. God Becomes Human

"Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:6-8, RSV).

The dual nature of Christ on the earth is crucial in understanding His death on the cross. Hebrews 7:27 says that Christ "offered up himself" as a sacrifice for our sins. To do this, He had to be a unique combination of the symbolic priest and the sacrificial lamb. He had to take on humanity's sinful nature and yet retain His own divinity. It was only through this paradoxical combination that He could save the world.

How could two natures as distant as those of God and humanity possibly meet and coexist in the same being? Philippians 2:7 says that Christ "emptied himself" to become a human being. To do this, Christ sacrificed being "in the form of God," as Paul puts it, and entered the world as a helpless child. Only by voluntarily emptying Himself of the form of God could Christ actually become human "in every respect." Thus, though remaining fully divine, He became fully human. He truly humbled Himself as a servant.

What do the following passages teach us about the deity of Christ? (John 1:1-3, 14; 5:18; Col. 2:9).

Did the combination of Christ's humanity with divinity

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make His sacrifice easier or harder to endure?

How would your life be different if you consistently lived with the attitude manifested by Christ in Philippians 2:5-8? How would your relationships change?

2. The Power of God

"For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18, RSV).

To the apostle Paul the cross was all-important. It was the "power of God," the good news of the New Testament.

But why the cross? Wasn't there any other way to save the world? The answer lies in the key issue of a conflict between the cosmic forces of the universe. The heavenly rebellion was sparked by Satan's accusations against God. Sin really began when the Source of all good was questioned and accused of unfairness. This doubt of God's absolute power and goodness was an attack on the order of the entire universe.

To resolve the sin problem, God could either inflict the just punishment, or He could assume its burden Himself. He chose to assume it. Through Christ's death on the cross God, "who knew no sin," made Himself to be sin for us and assumed the judgment for sin personally.

One of Satan's chief accusations against God is that He is a selfish being who is incapable of any self-denying act. Christ's death was the ultimate sacrifice that shattered this fallacy for all time. Death and self cannot coexist. No allegations of selfishness can ever be aimed at a God willing to hurl Himself into the darkness of the second and final death to save others.

But in what way did Christ face death? Can an eternal God really die, especially since He rose from the dead after three days? Here again Christ "emptied himself" of His divine form, giving everything up to the Father, and relied totally on Him. As a human He came face to face with eternal death, and only the authority of God the Father could bring Him back to life again.

Why do intelligent people often miss the significance of the cross? To what or whom does today's contemporary society look for salvation? How has society influenced your attitudes in these areas?

3. The Priestly Ministry

“He entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12, RSV).

The Old Testament sanctuary services anticipated the work of Christ. The office and work of the earthly high priest illustrates the fact that people need to depend on someone other than themselves for their salvation. It also teaches us something about Christ's role in reconciling God and humanity.

The Old Testament sacrificial system emphasizes the separation that sin creates between God and His people. Only a priest could go into the tabernacle and only a high priest, once a year, into the Most Holy Place. The priest had to offer a sacrifice for his own sins before he could do the ritual work that symbolized forgiveness and acceptance by Christ and the Father.

The book of Hebrews emphasizes the contrasts, as well as the similarities, of this comparison. The services of the Temple, as magnificent and awe-inspiring as they were, are only a shadow that points us to the better sacrifice of Christ for us. Hebrews talks about a better hope, a better ministry, better promises, and better blood. Our better High Priest, through His sacrifice, has already answered any objections that sin can throw at us.

His sacrifice is “once for all”; in other words, it has bearing for all time. The high-priestly ministry of Jesus assures us that what He did once is still cause for our acceptance with the Father if we come to Him in prayer and repentance.

“As the prayers of the sincere and contrite ones ascend to heaven Christ says to the Father, ‘I will take their sins. Let them stand before You innocent.’ As He takes their sins from them, He fills their hearts with the glorious light of truth and love.”*

How do you usually react to the sight of your own blood? To somebody else's? Why? What makes Christ's blood effective?

Would our sin problem be impossible to overcome if Christ did not represent us as high priest before God? Why?

*Ellen G. White
Comments, SDA
Bible Commentary,
vol. 7, p. 930.

Christ Our Priest by Deborah Zirakian

“Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself” (Heb. 7:27, NIV).

Hebrews 7:26, 27 is packed with meaning! What was the purpose of the ceremonial offering? What does Christ’s offering mean to us today?

First let’s take a look at the purpose of ceremonial sacrifice. Ellen White writes, “This ceremonial offering, ordained of God, was to be a perpetual reminder to Adam of his guilt, and also a penitential acknowledgment of his sin.” “When Adam, according to God’s special directions, made an offering for sin, it was to him a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which God alone could give, and make an offering for sin.”¹

Why a sacrifice of life? “This act of taking life gave Adam a deeper and more perfect sense of his transgression, which nothing less than the death of God’s dear Son could expiate.”²

Ellen White explains that Adam marveled at the “infinite goodness and matchless love” that the Lord would give to save fallen humanity.

So what does Christ’s sacrifice mean to us today?

“Christ on the cross not only draws men to repentance toward God for the transgression of His law—for whom God pardons He first makes penitent—but Christ has satisfied Justice; He has proffered Himself as an atonement. His gushing blood, His broken body, satisfy the claims of the broken law, and thus He bridges the gulf which sin has made. He suffered in the flesh, that with His bruised and broken body He might cover the defenseless sinner. The victory gained at His death on Calvary broke forever the accusing power of Satan over the universe and silenced his charges that self-denial was impossible with God and therefore not essential in the human family.”³

Christ’s sacrifice enables us to have eternal life. “Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding in man’s behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ, who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving.”⁴

TESTIMONY
Key text:
Hebrews 7:26, 27

1. *The Story of Redemption*, p. 50.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 341.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 344.

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Standing Before God

by Paul Haffner

EVIDENCE
Key text:
Hebrews 9:12-14

The book of Hebrews consists of a set of comparisons and contrasts between the Old Testament method of dealing with our sin-stained condition and Christ's ability to repair the broken bond since the cross. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews explains that while Jesus, our High Priest, replaces the Old Testament typical system, He actually goes a step beyond.¹ As a result of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, Hebrews expresses two main points: the sacrifice promises access to God, and it affords provision for blotting out all sin.

Lucid explanations concerning Christ's work as our High Priest were given as a result of the 1980 Glacier View conference, where the church's leaders and scholars published the Consensus Document concerning Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary. Among the issues addressed was the understanding that Christ gives all access to God, since He blots out sin. Christ repairs the wounded relationship and as a result allows all of us to come boldly before God.

While the importance of the Old Testament sanctuary should not be underestimated, access to God was restricted by the fact that only the high priest could enter into the most sacred compartment. If an Israelite recognized the horror of his sin and wanted to make it right with God, he could not simply march straight into the sanctuary and talk with God. Rather, he went through the process of allowing the priests to take the blood into the inner sanctuary while he waited outside.

This system sufficed, since it was understood that it would be replaced later by the "real thing." Hebrews 10:19-22 explains that "we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus," and we should therefore then "draw near [to God] with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (RSV). It is an awesome realization to know that we can come before the throne of God as a result of faith in Jesus' sacrifice. This gives every Christian a greater privilege than even the Old Testament high priest had.

The Old Testament sacrifices were incomplete. That is, they did not bring a restoration to the conscience of the sinner (see Heb. 9:9). The blood of the goats and bulls did not have the power to heal the wounded sinner (see Heb. 10:4). The significant element of Christ's sacrifice is its authenticity. Since Christ had the authority to remove the barriers to God's throne through His death and subsequent payment

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with His own blood, we now have the privilege to come before God knowing the breach has been repaired perfectly. It is because of Christ's sacrifice that we can have that "full assurance" (Heb. 10:22).²

REACT

How might an understanding of Christ's sufficient sacrifice change our attitudes toward others in our daily living?

1. *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 390.

2. *Ministry*, October, 1980, pp. 17, 18.

How Do I Know Whether I Am Saved?

Lori C. Lewis

HOW TO
Key text:
Hebrews
7:25-27

In her early twenties she became a recluse. She withdrew from her friends and family. For the next thirty years she never left her father's house and refused to see close friends. Some saw her wandering in the gardens after dusk, always dressed in white. She became a legend to neighbors and future generations.

Her name was Emily Dickinson, a great American poet. Her poetry shows vividly the emotional pain she put herself through. She continually questioned her own salvation and believed herself unworthy of God's forgiveness and love. Her self-inflicted doubt and guilt forced her to turn inward.

We may not go into seclusion, sleep on beds of nails, or fast for weeks as penance for our sins. But we often torment ourselves because we allow guilt for our sins and doubts about our salvation to stand in the way of believing we are worthwhile and good people. Guilt for what we did in the past causes anxiety for our future and robs us of the freedom and ability to live our lives in the present. We dwell on our own weaknesses and frailties and fail to reach the potential God wants us to reach.

Ellen White saw how Satan encourages us to doubt continually our own worth and impose guilt on ourselves. She writes, "We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the Source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him."^{*}

Faith and trust. Two abstract and ambiguous words, but two words that we understand. Jesus Christ says He is our advocate and mediator in the heavenly sanctuary. God promises to forgive our sins. Our part is to have faith and trust that this is true, and practice our faith and trust in Jesus Christ and God daily.

If we do what we know is wrong, yes, we should feel guilty, and that will lead us to seek God's forgiveness. But then we must free ourselves from guilt by learning to forgive ourselves. Paul says, "Forgetting what is behind, . . . I press on toward the goal" (Phil. 3:13, NIV).

Once we have faith in ourselves as persons worthy of God's forgiveness and love, we are stronger than ever to overcome sin, and doubts about ourselves and our salvation disappear.

^{*}Steps to Christ,
p. 72.

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A Love Beyond Our Comprehension

by Rosa Rodriguez

I'm afraid to admit it. But I just don't get it. This week's Testimony section asks us to think about love and the willing sacrifice Christ made in our behalf. Then, can we comprehend it? It's almost mind-boggling.

But there it is. The bottom line. Christ's sacrifice makes it possible for me to have eternal life. It means that I, one human being out of the billions that have inhabited the earth, matter enough to have the Son of God die for me. Such an unselfish love is difficult for my selfish human brain to comprehend.

In today's society the rarity of having someone sacrifice his own life to save another makes national headlines, especially if the lifesaver was a stranger. We posthumously award these exceptional human beings for their bravery. If a life-threatening rescue does not end in death for the rescuer he's often asked whether he ever thought about the danger to his own life. He will usually say, "No, there was no time to think." He only knew that if he didn't do something the person might die. Rescuers set no conditions or ask themselves whether the person deserves to live. Their high regard for human life results in the unselfishness to risk their own.

Yes, we humans value life. It is precious. It's a treasure that can't be bought. Think how much more precious it is to the giver of life—God. He gives it and has to see it taken away by the circumstances of sin. Sin has pronounced a death sentence on all human beings. But there is one thing that has a greater power than sin—God's love. He's our Rescuer, Saviour, Redeemer. Because of His sacrifice, which stemmed from His immeasurable love, He can give us life again.

REACT

What kind of knowledge of Himself and the Father did Jesus pray we might have? (See Christ's prayer in John 17.)

OPINION

Key text:
Hebrews
7:26, 27

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The Holy Spirit

“ ‘And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you’ ” (John 14:16, 17, NIV).



When You Can't Help Yourself, You Need a Friend

by Don Wood

"I'm not sure I can go on! The bills are high; I've been sick; the work is backed up; and I'm so far behind in production I'll never catch up!" Tom collapsed in depression as he groaned over the impossible condition of his small business. Since buying it from his close friend Larry, Tom had suffered countless setbacks. Now, on the threshold of a nervous breakdown, Tom confessed to Larry that the plight was overwhelming.

Tom knew that his talent in the field was unquestionable, and his zeal for the work flamed, but the pressure of difficulty had caused Tom to lose perspective. "I don't want to give up my business, but what on earth can I do?"

Larry knew this was more than a simple money problem for Tom. This was Tom's self-worth at stake. Larry realized that many people wondered why Tom hadn't just given up the business. Although Tom had received spectacular offers to work for many major companies, trying to make his own business work was the passion of his life.

Larry spoke slowly yet confidently, "Tom, I know it's rough, but I know this thing can work. I've done some

figuring, and here's how."

Larry told Tom he was willing to organize the billing for past-due accounts and help handle other messy functions while Tom concentrated on production. Soon, with Larry's enthusiastic faith in Tom's potential and Larry's quiet, effective counsel, Tom was on his feet and running. Larry worked behind the scenes to sew up the tears in Tom's confidence, allowing Tom to carry on. Larry, the counselor, will never receive public acclaim for his work, but without it Tom would have become a wreck.

Sometimes the press of life's difficulties leaves us confused. Sometimes we become so discouraged by the turn of events that we lose our spiritual grip. Just as Larry quietly turned the tide for Tom, our Counselor, the Holy Spirit, quietly puts life into perspective as He leads us to a clearer understanding of the practical nature of God's Word. Through the Word we see that the Spirit is very much a person, a caring person who understands our needs and priorities and the experiences we face.

INTRODUCTION
Scripture:
John
14:16, 17, NIV

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The Holy Spirit

by James H. Melancon

LOGOS **Theme:** "God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 5.*

1. The Person of the Holy Spirit (read 1 Corinthians 2:9-11)

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God" (1 Cor. 2:9,10, RSV). "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11, NIV).

In the above passage, it is not the intention of Paul to draw an absolute analogy between knowing what is the mind of God and what is the mind of man. The analogy is to be viewed in a typical sense.

To say that the Spirit can do something in relationship to God that no person can do in relationship to another person indexes the unique personhood of the Spirit. An individual man knows what he is personally thinking—an activity personally possible to him and him alone. The Holy Spirit knows the thinking of God. He knows the abundance of God. He knows the immensity of God. He knows the deep-laid plans of God.

In the original language of the New Testament, a parallel to what is said about the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 2:10b (i.e., He understands or knows everything that is knowable about God, including His thinking and great immensity) may be found in John 1:18. In part "b" of the latter passage, John, in effect, says the same thing in relationship to Jesus (the second person of the Godhead) that Paul says in relationship to the Holy Spirit (the third person of the Godhead). John says, "The only born God—the Son who is presently in the closest possible communion with the Father—has made Him known in every way in which He can be known." The

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Holy Spirit, as the third person of the Godhead, knows everything about God. The Son, as the second person of the Godhead, has made God known in every way in which He can be known.

The essence of John 1:18 turns on a most intimate and personal communion between the Father and the Son. The essence of 1 Corinthians 2:10 turns on a most intimate and personal communion between the Father and the Holy Spirit. God the Father and first person of the Godhead. God the Son and second person of the Godhead. God the Holy Spirit and third person of the Godhead. Three personal beings. Each a separate person. Each intimately and infinitely known to the other. Matthew 28:19 tells us that the personhood of the Spirit is as distinct as the personhood of Jesus and the personhood of the Father. Christian baptism is to be received in the name of the Holy Spirit, as well as in the name of the Father and in the name of the Son.

How is the Holy Spirit able to provide understanding of the "deep things of God"?

2. The Work of the Holy Spirit

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. . . . Darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Gen. 1:1, 2, NIV).

Something akin to Thomas Lamont's "The Spirit is the living God in action"¹ is indicated by the above reference. The word rendered "hovered" ("moved" in the KJV) occurs in two additional places in the Old Testament (or Hebrew Bible). Its use in Genesis 1:2 is best understood by the translation in Deuteronomy 32:11, where it is rendered "hovers" (NIV); in relationship to an eagle that hovers over its young: caring, protecting, and sustaining that to which it has given birth. The *SDA Bible Commentary*, commenting on Genesis 1:2, says that the Holy Spirit hovers, even as an eagle, "watchfully and protectingly" over all that God calls into being. He works together with God the Father in an "activity bringing order out of chaos."²

While there is a suggested distribution of responsibility among the persons of the Godhead, there is no subordination of authority. Whatever one of the persons does, the others are thoughtfully involved with Him in the whole process. This is evident in Genesis 1:26, which reads: "Then God said,

'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness'" (NIV). Via the pronouns *us* and *our*, the reference is to each of the divine persons.

The work of the Spirit parallels the work of both the Father and the Son in intensity, importance, and frequency. God will not do anything that affects humanity without first revealing His intentions to a prophet (see Amos 3:7). The role of the Spirit in this regard is a *sine qua non*. Second Peter 1:21 tells us that prophecy never became a matter of record on the basis of the will of man. The men who brought prophecies to the center of human life were men who spoke/wrote those prophecies while they were being carried along by the Spirit. The Spirit does much more than merely bring the word of God to the enlightened mind. He keeps the inspired individual in the spiritual presence of the God whose message he or she is to transmit.

3. The Spirit as Christ's Representative and the Spirit's Work in Us

"What is conceived in her [Mary] is from the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:20, NIV). "He saw . . . the Spirit descending on him like a dove" (Mark 1:10, NIV). "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, . . . was led by the Spirit in the desert" (Luke 4:1, NIV). "Blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. . . . Either in this age or the age to come" (Matt. 12:31, 32, NIV).

The incarnation did not blunt the relationship between the second and the third persons of the Godhead in any respect. The Holy Spirit was directly involved in the incarnation. He brought about the conditions for Mary's conception.

When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit anointed Him as Messiah. It may be concluded from John 16:12, 13, that Jesus was taught by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was full of the Spirit, filled by His teachings, and so armed, was led by the Spirit into an initial and victorious encounter with the devil. This activity of the Spirit in the life of Jesus is reminiscent of the "hovering" of the Spirit (Gen. 1:2) protectingly over all that is God's. It is a factor of great comfort to know that while on earth Jesus needed the Holy Spirit in His life just as Christians do today. To do a blasphemous act against the hovering and helping Holy Spirit, says Jesus, is unforgivable.

After Jesus returns to heaven, the work of the Holy Spirit shifts from helper of Jesus to helper of humanity (John 14:26). Jesus "became" acquainted with our weaknesses. Was

the Spirit's ministry to Jesus a necessary preparation for His ministry to humanity in the absence of Jesus? Did He become acquainted with human weaknesses as He "helped" Jesus?

The coming of the Spirit is the coming of "another Counselor." Jesus was the first. The coming of the Spirit as His representative, Jesus said, fulfills His twofold promise of not leaving us as orphans and of coming to us (John 14:16-18). The Holy Spirit is, accordingly, both our new counselor and our substitute for the presence of Jesus, who at this time can be present everywhere at once only by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit now does what Jesus formerly did and would do if He were here today. He confirms the teachings of Jesus for Christians and judges the non-Christian world by that same standard.

Jesus pledges to baptize Christians with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11). According to John 20:19-22 this pledge was met on the day of the resurrection. It was met in a fuller sense at the first post-resurrection Pentecost. The antecedent to this fulfillment is Joel 2:23, which proclaims: "Rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given you a Teacher for righteousness" (NIV, see margin). The "teacher for righteousness" is the Holy Spirit. In the teacher, promise meets fulfillment. This is implied in Galatians 5:25. In this reference Paul exhorts: "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (NIV). The promise of Jesus is concluded. The Holy Spirit is now in our lives. Let us show evidence that He is, by walking with Him. And just here the hortatory and exhortative injunction ("let us") underscores the right of the Christian to walk with—show evidence of the presence of—the Holy Spirit.

What specific things does Jesus say the Holy Spirit will do for us in John 14:15—16:15? What picture does this give us of the Spirit's work?

How does it make you feel to know you have an around-the-clock counselor (the Holy Spirit) on duty to help you? How has He helped you?

1. Thomas Lamont, "Religion of the Spirit," *Pulpit Digest* May 1965, p. 49.
2. *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 209.

We Need Your Spirit

by Keith A. Burton

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Isaiah 32:15

"But once more God will send us his spirit. The wasteland will become fertile, and fields will produce rich crops" (Isa. 32:15, TEV).

As Christians in these last days, we should have as our earnest desire to have the Spirit of God work in and through us. The following statements taken from the writings of Ellen G. White give us guidelines that outline how we, as a church and as individuals, can adequately prepare to receive the Holy Spirit in our lives.

"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."¹

"The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God."²

"The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. . . . Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain."³

"Let there be a work of reformation and repentance. Let all seek for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As with the disciples after the ascension of Christ, it may require several days of earnestly seeking God and putting away of sin."⁴

"There is no limit to the usefulness of those who put self to one side, make room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts, and live lives wholly sanctified to the service of God."⁵

"Many . . . will be seen hurrying hither and thither, constrained by the Spirit of God to bring the light to others. The truth, the Word of God, is a fire in their bones, filling them with a burning desire to enlighten those who sit in darkness. Many, even among the uneducated, now proclaim the words of the Lord. Children are impelled by the Spirit to go forth and declare the message from heaven. The Spirit is poured out upon all who will yield to its promptings, and, casting off all man's machinery, his binding rules and cautious methods, they will declare the truth with the might of the Spirit's power. Multitudes will receive the faith and join the armies of the Lord."⁶

1. *Evangelism*, p. 701.
2. *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 52.
3. *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 507.
4. *My Life Today*, p. 58.
5. *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 346.
6. *Evangelism*, p. 700.

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The Holy Spirit's Role in Redemption

by Clifford Pitt

The Holy Spirit acts for humanity's salvation. His good intentions, His kindly disposition, and His self-affirming purity would mean nothing to us if, with the rest of the Godhead, He remained immaculate but remote in His holiness, but did nothing for our salvation. But He has played and continues to play a prominent role in our salvation.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). All members of the Godhead are involved in redemption, as they were in Creation, and Christ was but the active agent. The whole Godhead donated themselves to humanity in Christ. It is in this context that we must understand the Holy Spirit's activity in salvation history, before and after the cross. His own endorsement of and participation in Christ's life and sacrifice is evidenced by His descent on Christ's head, in the form of a dove, at the baptism. In this act, He anointed the divine Messenger for His mission (Matt. 3:16, 17; John 1:32, 33). It is said of Jesus, that God put His Spirit on Him (Matt. 12:18), that He was led by the Spirit (Matt. 4:1), and that He was "full of the Holy Ghost" (Luke 4:1). Christ's life was lived under the Spirit's influence and lost at His behest.

It is after Christ's resurrection, or more precisely, after His ascension, that the Holy Spirit comes into His own. Jesus' ministry, to all appearances, had been an abject failure up to the time of His death. Three-and-a-half years of public evangelism had produced a group of followers that was large at first, but became decimated with time, so that He was reduced to asking His closest followers, "Will ye also go away?" Everyone, including His disciples, misunderstood His mission, attaching political and economic significance, where He intended one that was spiritual and eschatological. It became the task of the Holy Spirit to interpret the life, ministry, and death of Jesus to the world, after Christ's departure. In this sense, the Christian Era is, in a special sense, the era of the Holy Spirit.

His signal manifestations on the Day of Pentecost were both a response to Christ's promise and a watershed in the growth of the Christian church. What Jesus could not accomplish in His earthly or heavenly life, because of the limitations of His human body, He is able to do through the Holy Spirit. It is through the Spirit that He is present in the assemblies of His people, communicates to His ministers, and through them to His church, and through His church to the world.

EVIDENCE

Key text:

2 Corinthians 5:19

Clifford Pitt is associate professor of theology at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

Holy Spirit: Power or Personality?

by Robert Andrews

HOW TO
Key text:
John 3:8

The doorbell rang. When I opened the door two visitors smilingly asked whether they could come in and continue a discussion on the Bible, which they had begun on a previous visit. Cordially I welcomed them into my home. After a short, pleasant exchange, the subject quickly moved to the nature of the Holy Spirit. Their contemplation was that the Holy Spirit was a power from God, not a personality like the Father or Son. "The Holy Spirit came in the form of tongues to the apostles in Acts 2 and is compared to the wind in John 3," they argued, "and therefore cannot be a personality, but is a force sent from the Father."

Would you agree with their conclusion? What is the nature of the Holy Spirit? Using the given texts, compose an argument to refute the one presented by my visitors and to strengthen your faith in the work of the Holy Spirit.

Here are a few thoughts to help you as you develop your argument:

1. The Holy Spirit is called "another Comforter" sent to replace Christ's comforting presence (John 14:16). Could a nonperson power serve to comfort and encourage God's people as Christ did?

2. The Holy Spirit was sent to teach (John 14:26; 16:13). What kind of teaching experience could we have with a nonperson power?

3. The Holy Spirit can be grieved (Eph. 4:30). Can you grieve or discourage a nonperson, which has no feelings of its own? (Discriminating feelings are qualities of a person.)

4. Baptize in the name of the Trinity. Why would the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—be mentioned by Christ in a benediction for baptism (Matt. 28:19) if the third party mentioned were merely a force and not a personality like the Father and the Son?

5. Use of metaphors does not imply a nonperson. Does the fact that Jesus used the wind to illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion mean that the Holy Spirit must be a nonpersonality like the wind? What about Jesus' being spoken of as "the way," "the truth," "the light," "the door," the "bread of life," and "water"?

Could the misunderstanding some have about the Holy Spirit be a result of a failure to apply properly a simple principle of analogy—things compared may be similar in some respects and yet not similar in *all* respects?

Robert Andrews is professor of communication at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

The Holy Spirit

by S. Haywood Cox

What a powerful combination—the Holy Spirit in you!

The Holy Spirit in you gives you an edge that enables you to demonstrate His presence in many practical ways.

1. The Holy Spirit engages you in prayer. “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Eph. 6:18, NIV).

2. The Holy Spirit enables you to speak messages for God. This does not mean every word you say will be a sermon. It does mean, however, that the Spirit will use your knowledge and words to speak words of encouragement, instruction, and warning to others. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8, NIV).

“Without the presence of the Spirit of God, no heart will be touched, no sinner won to Christ.”¹

3. The Holy Spirit makes you productive and useful. In Galatians, Paul gives the well-known listing of the fruit of the Spirit. In one of his letters, the apostle Peter restated the fruits of the Spirit in a little different fashion and promised: “If you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive” (2 Peter 1:8, NIV).

“There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.”²

4. The Holy Spirit helps you discern your world. “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgment about all things” (1 Cor. 2:14, 15, NIV).

5. The Holy Spirit empowers you to resist the temptation to sin. “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law” (Gal. 5:16-18, NIV).

A Spirit-filled life keeps you growing. It makes you more productive and much happier. It makes you a living testimony of what it means to walk in the Spirit.

OPINION

Key texts:
1 Cor. 6:19;
John 14:16

1. *Testimonies*,
vol. 8, p. 21.
2. *My Life Today*,
p. 37.

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Creation

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.” “For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm” (Psalm 33:6, 9, NIV).



Creation

by Pat Wick

Do you ever wonder just how things began? I usually take them for granted. When my girls were small and they would ask questions—you know all the whys: Why is blue for boys and not for girls, Mom? Why do we drive on the right side of the street, huh, huh, huh? Why do people call you Mrs. Mom? What are you missing?—stuff like that. And most of the time I would say, “I dunno, Honey, just is.”

Aha! Until today. And today we are going to discover how things begin. Blue for boys—have you been curious? The color scheme of blue for boys and pink for girls has been adopted all over the world, but who would ever guess it came from superstitious parents who were deeply concerned about baby’s future?

From the days of antiquity it was believed that evil hovered menacingly over the nursery, and it was believed that evil was allergic to certain colors. The most potent was blue. It was considered a good color because of its association with the heavenly sky. Even in our time some countries in the Middle East paint

their doors blue to ward off evil. So you can see that the blue display on the little boy child was considered a necessary precaution. Girl babies were considered vastly inferior, so no precautions were necessary. Generations later, someone not realizing how all this began, but seeing that little girls were being neglected, introduced the pink look for girls. In England, the legend goes, blue was used for boys because they were found under cabbage leaves that had a bluish tinge—and girls wore pink because they were found in rosebuds—reverse discrimination, it sounds like to me.

This week in your lesson you will be looking at “how it all began.” Whether you lean toward big-bang theories or rest your case on seven literal days of Creation, there was a beginning. There always is! I choose to believe that, rather than an evolutionary happenstance, Creation was a mighty miracle designed and executed by God. I’m filled with wonderment, not only at the creative occurrence but that this same Benefactor wished to include us in the continuing process.

**INTRO-
DUCTION**
Scripture:
Hebrews 11:3

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Creation

by Jim Gibson

LOGO **Theme:** "God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made 'the heaven and the earth' and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was 'very good,' declaring the glory of God."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 6.*

1. God as Creator (read Ps. 33:6-9; Col. 1:15-17)

The creatorship of God is emphasized throughout Scripture. The first two chapters of the Bible describe the original creation of the world; the last two chapters describe its re-creation and restoration. As the Creator of all, God is supreme in the universe, the source of all life (John 1:3, 4) and the possessor of all knowledge (Ps. 147:5; John 17:17).

Fortunately for us, God is not only omnipotent, He is also a God of love. The Biblical story of Creation reveals much about His nature and is intimately tied in with our understanding of many aspects of salvation. A correct understanding of Creation is important in establishing a relationship with God based on confidence in His power and goodness.

How does our understanding of God depend on the fact that the Creator is a person, not a force?

2. The Bible Teaches Special Creation (read Ps. 104)

The Bible portrays Creation as the work of a supremely powerful Being, calmly and deliberately carrying out His purpose. Imagine the scene: the earth "formless and desolate" (Gen. 1:2, TEV), the Creator "moving over the water" (Gen. 1:2, TEV), speaking "and it was done" (Ps. 33:9). Surely the angels and other unfallen beings must have watched with intense interest, wondering just how God would organize the new world. Man has always been curious about origins, but science has not been able to explain the creation process. "It is by faith that we understand that the universe was created by God's word" (Heb. 11:3, TEV).

The One who spoke the world into existence was none

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other than Christ Himself (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17). This fact ties together the story of man's origin, his nature, and his destiny. All are related through the creative power of Christ. While here on earth, Christ demonstrated the power of God over nature (Matt. 8:23-27), over the devil (Matt. 8:28-34), and over death (John 11). God is a God of power. His method of creation gives us confidence that He is able to re-create both the world and us.

How would your understanding of the second advent and eternal life be affected if God's method of exercising power over nature is to use gradual evolutionary change?

3. Creation in Six Days (read Gen. 1:1 through 2:4)

The Genesis record of the creation of the world in six days reveals a God in absolute control of matter and energy. The fact that God spoke the world into existence, systematically preparing the world for man's happiness, gives us confidence in God's power to plan, to direct events, and to intervene in our lives. This confidence in God's power and goodness is basic to our faith in His ability and willingness to save us.

Some have claimed that science shows Creation to have taken place over long ages. But God's creative activity is not subject to scientific inquiry. It cannot be experimented with or tested. Science, as now generally practiced, is a secular pursuit. It operates on the premise that all phenomena can be explained by natural laws known to humans. The only possible way to know how Creation took place is for God to reveal it. This He has done in the Scriptures. The fact that He did so indicates that it is important for us to know the truth about our origin.

What Bible doctrines are based on the Creation's taking place in six days? What role in last-day events do these doctrines play? (see 2 Peter 3:3-7; Rev. 14:6-12).

4. In the Image of God (read Psalm 8)

Kneeling in the dust, God fashions a man's body. This lifeless body represents the culmination of God's plan—to make a living being in the image of God. What care God must have taken in designing the man! What feelings must have welled up in God's heart as He prepared to bring life to the body! Here would be a creature, alone of those on the

earth, who could understand God's care for him, who could respond to that love, and who could choose whether to love in return.

Man is the special object of God's plan of salvation. No other species has this unique relationship with the Creator. Consider the importance of this special relationship to our understanding of the fall and redemption of man. Some would have us believe that man is a remodeled ape, somehow selected from a population of hominoid ancestors and converted into Adam and Eve. If man were given such a genetic background, one could hardly blame him for misunderstanding God. Rejection of the inspired account of man's origin is leading many to spiritual disaster. The Creation story explains the reason for man's search for salvation, as well as pointing the way to the source of salvation.

What does it mean to be created in the image of God? In what ways are we like God?

5. Creation and Adventism (read Rev. 21:1-5)

The most obvious relationship of Creation to other Biblical doctrines is the Sabbath. On Mt. Siani God Himself stated the basis for Sabbath observance to be the truth of the six-day Creation (Ex. 20:8-12). No doubt there are many benefits to observing a day of rest, regardless of which day it is. The reason for keeping specifically the seventh day is God's own word that He created in six days and rested on the seventh. Anything that undermines confidence in the Genesis record of Creation will also result in undermining the basis for Sabbath observance. This is the very point upon which the church can expect criticism, since the character of God and the need for Sabbath observance are to be special points of contention in the closing events of earth's history (see Rev. 14:6-12).

The Sabbath and the nature of man are not the only doctrines to be affected by one's view of Creation. Our faith is based on the Scriptures as reliable because they are inspired by God (see 2 Tim. 3:14-17). If the Biblical Creation account is to be tested and corrected by science, then the rest of Scripture is also subject to the same test.

What does science have to say about the reality of miracles, the effects of prayer, the existence of angels, the resurrection?

Creation

by Ted Wick

"The physical organism of man is under the supervision of God; but it is not like a clock, which is set in operation, and must go of itself. The heart beats, pulse succeeds pulse, breath succeeds breath, but the entire being is under the supervision of God. 'Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.' In God we live and move and have our being. *Each heartbeat, each breath, is the inspiration [breath] of Him who breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life—the inspiration of the ever-present God, the great I AM.*" (Italics supplied.)¹

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Acts 17:28

This statement indicates that every breath of every person is a gift of God. With that thought in mind, answer the following questions:

1. *Who sustained your life when you were doing the best deed you ever did in your whole life?*
2. *Who sustained your life when you did the very worst deed you ever did in your whole life?*
3. *Who sustained the life of the men who nailed Jesus to the cross at the very moments of their cruel deed?*

"The Lord has given *His life to the trees and vines of His creation*. His word can increase or decrease the fruit of the land. If men would open their understanding to discern the relation between nature and nature's God, faithful acknowledgements of the Creator's power would be heard. *Without the life of God, nature would die*. His creative works are dependent on Him. He bestows life-giving properties on all that nature produces. We are to regard the trees laden with fruit as the gift of God, just as much as though He placed the fruit in our hands." (Italics supplied.)²

Does this statement say that living things, plant and animal, have God's life, or that God bestows life separate from His own?

1. Ellen G. White
Comments, SDA
Bible Commentary,
vol. 1, p. 1081.
2. *Ibid.*

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Creation

by Ted Wick

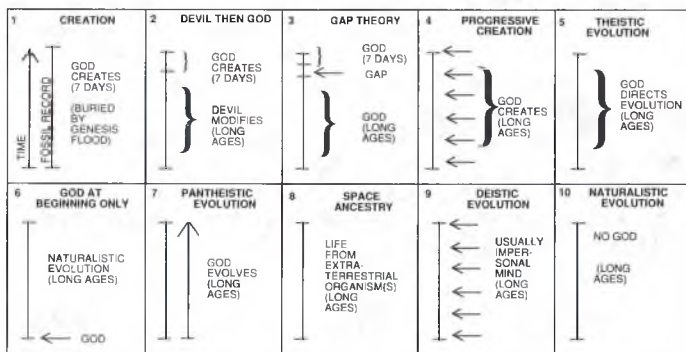
EVIDENCE

Key text:
Genesis 1:1

There are more than two ideas about the origin of our world, Creation and evolution. As a discussion starter and to create greater awareness of these issues, the following excerpts are offered.

One area of interest to creationists and evolutionists alike is the fossil record. Fossils, which are evidence of past life, are found almost exclusively in the sedimentary rocks of the earth's crust. The sequence of these strata forms the **geologic column**. The fact that the lower layers were usually deposited before the upper ones, and are hence older, is self-evident. How much older, is an important part of the question we want to consider. Some interpretations postulate a very rapid rate of buildup, while others propose a very slow rate.

We have provided a chart to help you understand the variety of different interpretations of the fossil record, beginning with *Creation* and ending with *naturalistic evolution*. At the left of each interpretation is a vertical line representing the geologic column with comments on the way the column fits the various interpretations. The bottom of the line repre-



sents the lowest, or oldest, layers of the column.

The opposite interpretations of the fossil record are *Creation* and *naturalistic evolution*. The former is the idea that the fossils represent remains of life created by God during the Creation week and buried during the flood recorded in Genesis; the latter views them to be the product of purely naturalistic processes resulting from gradual evolution over millions of years.

Excerpts from article
by Ariel A. Roth,
Origins, 1980, vol.
7, pp. 71-86.

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Creator of the Creative

by Thomas Seibold

Imagine a television studio, packed with cameras, lights, and a complex master control room—and no people in sight. Picture a drafting table stacked with pens, inks, markers, rulers, paper—and no architect to use them. Listen to the silence of a programmable music synthesizer, capable of making an infinite variety of sounds, but never touched by a musician's hands. What a tragedy! Without human imagination, the tools of creativity are wasted. And without the creative inspiration of God, human creativity cannot blossom.

In my relatively short life, I have been fortunate to play with some of the creative tools I mentioned above. And as I have worked in the environments that stimulate creativity I have come to believe that humans are not truly creative in the same way God is. When God created the earth He made the elements of nature itself—the hydrogen, the oxygen, the silicon—and transformed them into something meaningful.

Human beings do not create as God creates. We do not synthesize *something* out of *nothing*. Rather, we take the elements of components that ultimately God Himself conceived and made—words, notes, color, even bricks—and assemble them in new ways that we designate “creative.” Even some contemporary individuals I consider highly creative—such as Jim Henson, Garrison Keillor, and Steven Jobs—have done nothing more than artfully combine existing elements, whether fabrics, words, or computer chips.

Not all humans are blessed with such exceptional ability. But all, including *you*, can be touched by the creative God who made mankind in His own image. Here's how:

1. *Recognize the Source of all creativity through worship.* The Sabbath was instituted by the Creator Himself perpetually to remind us, the created, of where we came from—the hand of God (Gen. 2:1-3). Don't miss this weekly opportunity for God to affirm and renew His creative power in your life.

2. *Dedicate your creative gifts to God.* Composers, sculptors, engineers—of course! But mothers, teachers, physical therapists, everyone whose work will never be jammed into a gallery for a public display of creativity also need to dedicate their creative gifts to God. For God is glorified not only by artistic expressions of praise, but also by the devoted, consistent efforts of all who have dedicated their labor to the service of His children.

3. *Allow God to create a new heart in you.* (See Ps. 51:10).

HOW TO
Key text:
Psalm 51:10

Thomas Seibold is the news coordinator at Pacific Union College, and former associate editor of the *Collegiate Quarterly*.

The Worm That Turned Me Around

by Wanda M. Trawick

OPINION
Key text:
Genesis 2:18

He had to be the great granddaddy of all the fishing worms I'd ever seen. And very dead, lying there in the dissecting pan, reeking of Formalin.

The classroom buzzed with excited comments from the wild-eyed "mad scientist" types, all eager to wield their scalpels. I tried not to show my reluctance as I trudged slowly back to the lab table with my pan full of worm.

With a sigh of resignation, I opened the lab manual and began pinning my specimen in place. And to think I had looked forward to this course with great anticipation! I sniffed dejectedly as the Formalin stung my nose. Actually, it wasn't the sights and smells that were getting me down. It was the direction in which the whole course was leading me.

I'd grown up appreciating anything living—plant or animal—from buttercups and fireflies to the dogs, cats, chickens, and ducks that populated our two-acre lot.

Sporadic attendance at Sabbath School and VBS as a child had taught me that God had made these creatures, and it was appreciation for nature that first drew me to appreciate God. Somehow the warmth and attraction I felt for living things translated itself into love for the Creator. They were a tangible evidence to me of Him even before I committed myself to His Son as my Lord and Saviour.

But now I wasn't so sure. My mind was whirling with all the new concepts I was learning—organic evolution, natural selection, comparative morphology.

The trouble was: they sounded reasonable to me. The naturalistic theory of the origin of life had begun to seem more logical than the Genesis account. Where did that leave me in my faith?

I tried to quiet my restless thoughts and concentrate on the instructions in the manual. I wasn't too good with scalpel or scissors, but I managed to get the big fellow opened up and his body well spread outward and pinned. I was surprised when I actually was able to find the structures pictured in the manual. He was mostly digestive tract, but I felt a twinge of excitement when I isolated his five "hearts" and finally the ganglia that represented his "brain."

When I had located everything, I dutifully recited all the parts to the lab instructor. But after he left I just sat there staring at the worm with a funny feeling in the pit of my stomach. And it wasn't from the smell of Formalin.

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How many worms had I turned over with the shovel in our garden? How many had I affixed to fishing hooks? Yet I'd never had any idea how fantastic they really were—burrowing in the soil with their photoreceptor cells acting as eyes, their moist “skins” serving as a respiratory system, mating even as higher animals do, yet producing both eggs and sperm in each individual, excreting their wastes through many little “kidneys,” and taking in soil and removing the organic material for food. My discovery was like finding that an old broken piece of glass was actually a diamond.

I was still staring at my worm when the bell rang. Then hastily—and regretfully—I consigned him to the waste can. Somehow it didn't seem a fitting end for the simple creature that had just had a critical impact on my life.

Not that he had given me any pat answers. Though I wanted to, I had been unable to accept *all* the arguments based on “science and logic” I'd heard for creationism against evolution. Maybe I didn't know enough about interpreting either the Bible or the available scientific data to make up my mind definitely about it all.

But I didn't need any more data to decide one thing: there was just no way that worm could have come about by some accident of mutation. How could anyone be so naive as to believe that this complex “simple” organism with all those efficient little systems going for him could have evolved with no directing force behind him? I knew I could never believe that.

And if he couldn't have come about by accident, certainly the very complex, crazy, mixed-up creature that I was couldn't have either. Whatever the answer to how we all came to be, I knew now that the God of my faith stood behind it all.

I walked out of the lab that day with a silly grin on my face, pausing at the waste can. I felt a ridiculous urge to give a final salute to the worm that turned me around.*

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The Nature of Man

“What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor” (Ps. 8:4, 5, NIV).



Two Views

by Ted Wick

The following parallel collection of statements reflect views on the nature of man that were understood and taught by two nineteenth-century personalities. Joseph Smith is the "inspired spokesperson" for the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints. Ellen G. White is the "inspired spokesperson" for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Their understandings of the nature of man are very different.

Nature of Man— Joseph Smith

"I want to reason more on the spirit of man for I am dwelling on the immutability of the spirit and on the body of man—the subject of the dead. Is it logical to say that a spirit is immortal and yet have a beginning? Because if the spirit of man had a beginning, it will have an end, but it does not have a beginning or an end. . . . God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all. God Himself could not create Himself. Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle.

"The greatest responsibility that God has laid upon us in this world is to seek after our dead.

"God has made provision that the spirits of our friends and every spirit in that eternal world can be ferreted out and saved. . . . Every man who has got a friend in the eternal world can save him. . . . You can save any man who has not committed the unpardonable sin. So you see how far you can be a savior."¹

Nature of Man—Ellen G. White

"In order to possess an endless existence, man must continue to partake of the tree of life. Deprived of this, his vitality would gradually diminish until life should become extinct. It was Satan's plan that Adam and Eve should by disobedience incur God's displeasure; and then, if they failed to obtain forgiveness, he hoped that they would eat of the tree of life, and thus perpetuate an existence of sin and misery. But after man's fall, holy angels were immediately commissioned to guard the tree of life. Around these angels flashed beams of light having the appearance of a glittering sword. None of the family of Adam were permitted to pass that barrier to partake of the life-giving fruit; hence there is not an immortal sinner."²

**INTRO-
DUCTION**
Scripture:
Psalm 8:4, 5

1. Joseph Smith Excerpts From King Follett Funeral Discourse, 7 April 1844.
2. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 60.

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The Nature of Man

by John S. McIntosh

LOGOS **Theme:** "Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position under God. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 7.*

1. Human Nature Defined

Before the fall of humanity into the captivity of sin, Scripture tells us, men and women were made a little lower than the angels and they were made in God's image. Then they were given dominion over the world and everything in it (Ps. 8:4, 5; Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7).

Before Adam and Eve sinned they had perfect bodies, perfect minds, perfect characters, and perfect motives. They lived to please God; and living to please God brought them absolute fulfillment and happiness.

They were created with, and given the privilege of exercising, complete freedom of choice. The possibility of violating the grand and wonderful intentions of God for them was limited to a little-but-specific test. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16, 17). We today may not be able to determine why with all the prior information and instruction God had given them they still yielded to Satan's deceiving sophistries. But the Bible record is that they did.

2. What Happened to Human Nature After the Fall?

They still had nearly perfect bodies, minds, and characters, but had lost their spiritual oneness with God. They were no longer at peace with God. Their conduct was controlled by fear, misapprehension, and distrust of God. They

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were unfulfilled and anxious. Their perfect bodies, powerful minds, and pure characters began to weaken and grow perverse as the result of this new way of life wherein they no longer had the freedom of choice, but were led captive at the will of Satan (see Luke 4:18, 19).

They were: (1) Dead in trespasses and sin, (2) naturally inclined to sin, (3) out of control, (4) separated from God, (5) foreigners, (6) without hope and without God, and (7) cherish sin in their hearts (see Eph. 2:1-5,12; Rom. 5:12-19; Eph. 2:13).

When is God able to deal with these seven problems in the Christian? Now? In heaven? Some now and some then?

3. What Happens to Human Nature When People Make The Choice to Allow God Through Christ to Take Over Their Sinful Lives?

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

The wonderful bodies and the clear, sharp minds God created, though greatly limited by the ravages of sin, are still marvelous organs. But because they are the housing for our inclinations and inherited tendencies, and our perverted tastes and habits, our bodies are to be kept under subjection (1 Cor. 9:27).

"What the law could never do, because our lower nature robbed it [the law] of all potency, God has done: by sending his own Son in a form like that of our own sinful nature, and as a sacrifice for sin, he has passed judgment against sin within that very nature, so that the commandment of the law may find fulfillment in us, whose conduct, no longer under the control of our lower nature, is directed by the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3, 4, NEB).

The consequences of the indwelling Spirit of God are that the Christian's "lower nature has no claim" on him or her. They are "not obliged to live on that level," because "by the Spirit you put to death all the base pursuits of the body" (Rom. 8:12, 13, NEB).

How practical is it to expect God really to do something to help Christians control their human nature? Could this possibly become a reality every day?

4. Not Until Jesus' Second Advent Will Christians Be

Completely Free From Dealing With the Lower Nature and the "Base Pursuits of the Body."

At that time the human nature of the redeemed will be "fashioned like unto" Christ's "glorious body" (Phil. 3:21). Then, too, there will be an end to sickness, tears, dying, and pain (see Isa. 33:24; Rev. 21:3-5).

What does the study this week tell the Christian about the need to surrender to Jesus so that he or she might be a fit temple for the indwelling Spirit?

What Giving Means to Me

If I give nothing,

I cast a vote in favor of closing my church.

If I give grudgingly,

I shall neither find joy nor receive God's blessing.

If I give systematically,

I make it possible for my church to plan to advance, and I make it easier for myself.

If I give sacrificially,

I testify to the high value I place upon Christ and the ministry of His church to the physical and spiritual needs of suffering humanity.

—Thorvald Kristensen.

The Only Way Up

by Ted Wick

"The angels warned them [Adam and Eve] to be on their guard against the devices of Satan, for his efforts to ensnare them would be unwearied. While they were obedient to God the evil one could not harm them; for, if need be, every angel in heaven would be sent to their help. If they steadfastly repelled his first insinuations, they would be *as secure as the heavenly messengers*. But should they once yield to temptation, *their nature would become so depraved that in themselves they would have no power and no disposition to resist Satan.*" (Italics supplied.)¹

"Christ is the 'Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world' (John 1:9). As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, *a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart*. But against these principles there is struggling an antagonistic power. The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience. *There is in his nature a bent to evil*, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. That power is Christ. Cooperation with that power is man's greatest need." (Italics supplied.)²

REACT

1. What did Adam and Eve lose by yielding to Satan's temptations?
2. If they had been willing and able to resist this first of Satan's temptations, how secure would they be?
3. What are two opposing forces operating in the heart of every fallen human being?

TESTIMONY

Key text:

John 1:9

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 53.

2. *Education*, p. 29.

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What Is Man?

by Adugnaw Worku

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Psalm 8:4, 5

What is man? As old as this question is, there has been no consensus among humanist scholars and philosophers past and present in providing an answer. Man, his nature, his origin, remains largely an enigma. Simply saying that man is an animal with a well-developed brain and nervous system shaped by evolutionary, environmental, and social forces does not fully explain his transcendent will and his incredible consciousness. There has been no consensus on whether or not man is basically good or evil or both. Instead, all three opinions have existed side by side as competing schools of thought on human nature.

Those who believe that man is basically good point to his kindly, generous, considerate, loving, noble, civilized, and moral characteristics. And those who see man as basically evil have their own list of indictments. They see him as cruel, selfish, ungrateful, unjust, egotistical, mean, and savage. The truth of the matter, of course, is that man is indeed capable of manifesting both good and evil tendencies. And those who hold the view that man is both good and evil still disagree on the origin and development of human nature and the forces that shape it. Genetic inheritance, environmental factors, and social forces have been emphasized in various degrees at various times in human history.

What is man? And why does he think and behave as he does? Secular scholarship has not answered these questions sufficiently, and the jury is still out. The main problem here is that philosophical and scientific approaches have sought to answer the question in simply human and physical terms. But human nature has defied human endeavor to explain it in terms of biochemical, neurological, environmental, and social factors. And with all his empirical observations and his logical reasoning power, man has so far failed to be his own interpreter. No amount of empirical observation and logical reasoning alone can explain man's consciousness, his moral sense and immortal longings, his achievements and dreams.

The Bible provides an alternative view of human nature and human behavior. The Biblical account is neither primarily philosophical nor scientific. Rather, it is a testimony on Creation, fellowship, alienation, and restoration in practical terms. What is man? Genesis 1:26 states that he is a being created in the image of God. Psalm 8:5 adds that God made man "a little lower than the heavenly beings" (NIV). The Bible thus teaches that man was created by God with Godlike characteristics. A transcendent and infinitely

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intelligent God created in turn intelligent human beings capable of demonstrating such Godlike characteristics as consciousness, love, compassion, faithfulness, and communion. Intelligence by definition also means that man was created with the ability to choose between alternative thoughts and courses of action, a risk that God took in order to make fellowship free and meaningful. God's ideal for man was for man to love and obey Him freely and to live in harmony with his fellow beings. God communicated to man, and man understood that responsibility was prerequisite to his freedom, and that wrong choice would have grave consequences.

As it turns out, man chose to disregard the conditions for fellowship and thereby alienated himself from his Creator. Disobedience and alienation from God added another dimension to our nature, a fatal flaw and a propensity to evil thoughts and actions against God, against ourselves, and against our own kind. The story that unfolds from Genesis 3 onward is therefore the struggle between our dual nature, one created by God, and the other by the wrong exercising of free choice. The consequences of disobedience and alienation have been unpleasant and painful, resulting in much suffering and death.

Fortunately, God took the initiative again to save humanity from sin, suffering, and death through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on their behalf "that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV).

In this life human beings live with the consequences of sin. But God has provided hope and peace of mind. And He has promised that after the drama of evil has run its course those who accept His offer of salvation will be fully restored and will live eternally with Him.

Back to "God's" Image

by Jeannie Schnaible

HOW TO
Key text:
2 Corinthians
5:17

A young man named Reggie had the dream of becoming a famous rock music associate. As the months passed he went up the ladder of success to fame and fortune, working with several known groups. With several gold records to his credit, Reggie had reached the top. He saw his dreams coming true, yet there still remained an unexplainable emptiness in his life. There was no genuine peace, no joy, and no love.

Surrounding this successful writer of music were all the things he had always dreamed about: fame, money, travel, women, popularity, excitement. But something was drastically wrong. Reggie saw many of his so-called "successful" friends dying from drug overdoses. Some were committing suicide. Others were turning to homosexuality and other forms of sexual debasement in order to experience some strange "kicks." What was wrong?

Disillusioned with life, unfulfilled by success, running away from reality, Reggie turned on the television set in his hotel room one night after returning from a concert, and there was Billy Graham!

"You've run far enough," Billy's voice rang out. "You've come to the end of the road. It's time to turn your life over to Jesus Christ— completely and wholeheartedly!"

Tears welled up in Reggie's eyes as he experienced God's call to his heart. He knelt there by the television and prayed, "Oh, God, please hear me. I'm sorry for all the wrong I have done and the mess I have made of my life. Please come into my heart, Jesus, and change me around."

That night Reggie became a new creation. Now instead of having selfish desires, carnal dreams and plans, HE WANTED to give all his dreams and plans to Jesus Christ. In return, the Lord gave Reggie a new dream, a new vision, a new desire, and a new life!

Now Reggie travels the country telling people about Jesus. He has written a book, made gospel music albums, and has been giving his testimony of how Jesus changed his life and made him brand new!

You see, Reggie made the decision to follow Jesus 100 percent, and Jesus gave him new desires. Now the desire to sin is gone. Oh, yes, there are still temptations, but the root desire to sin is gone. Today Reggie has real peace, real joy, real love, real fulfillment.

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Of Worms and Royalty

by Joel Lutes

The Christian's view of human nature, at first glance, could appear very degrading. To say that all have become worthless and that no one is good (Rom. 3:10-12) is not very conducive to a positive self-concept. Neither is it very encouraging to be called a worm (Isa. 41:14). Fortunately, this is only a portion of God's opinion of humanity.

God places a very high value on human beings. So high a value that He sacrificed His Son's life to preserve humanity, while it was still defective, not when it was perfect (Rom. 5:8). The Bible writers have used various terms to express the importance that God places on people who respond to His calling. Peter calls them "chosen people, a royal priesthood." John calls them prospective "children of God" (see 1 Peter 2:9 and John 1:12, NIV). God is a realist; He does not deny that we are sinful, but at the same time He sees what we can become through His power.

Christ often saw good where religious people only saw evil. It was this difference in vision that led the Pharisees to complain that He welcomed sinners and even ate with them (Luke 15:2). While He accepted people as they were, He was consistently opposed to anything that hindered people from reaching their fullest potential, whether it was sin, disease, or hunger.

If we are willing to accept God's view of us and of others our lives can be radically transformed. Our feelings of low self-worth will be seen as invalid, and we will be freed to love others as God has loved us. Our love will be demonstrated by action, whether it be through preaching or sheltering the homeless or assisting the medically or mentally disabled or meeting the needs of friendship and loyalty that exist in everyone.

As we see the value God has placed on human beings, demonstrated by the death of His Son, then we can begin to act on that vision, through the enabling of His Spirit, and cooperate with Him in developing the potential that lies in every person, to become sons and daughters of God in the fullest sense.

REACT

1. Can you think of some reasons why many Christians suffer from low self-esteem?
2. Do Christians generally treat other Christians better than they treat people who are not Christians? Why?

OPINION

Key text:

Romans 3:9-24

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The Great Controversy

“And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him” (Rev. 12:7-9, NIV).



The "Giveaway"

by Dick Duerksen

A tall Being shimmers in the afternoon light. He is leaning against a tree that seems to reach almost beyond all the clouds. Its leaves are every shade of green mixed together with the oranges, reds, fuchsias, and yellow of an outlandish variety of fruits.

Next to Him are a man and a woman. The man is wonderfully bronzed and stands almost shoulder high to the Being, reflecting His shimmering light. The woman is indescribable! Her eyes seem like deep emerald pools filled with the finest faceted diamonds. The hair that flows from above her flawless forehead courses in cascades of bronze toward the grass below. Her face, turned up toward the Being, is filled with humor, wonder, and love.

As the Being speaks, His fingers lightly stroke the gray-and-white rabbit that the woman is holding in her arms. "Eve, do you like the rabbit? That's what Adam chose to call it, and I really like the name. Have you seen the elephants yet? They are so enormous! And you have to see the giraffes. We made them almost as

tall as mountains, with necks that stretch up just like tree trunks. You'll love them!"

A glittering snake shimmers by and lands on the Being's shoulder. He reaches up and with a loving embrace launches the snake again into the skies around the trees.

"Adam. Eve. I hope you'll be happy here. We have designed everything from the flying serpent down to the smallest blade of grass to meet your needs and to keep you smiling. The foods are the best in the universe, and the animals are friendly and gentle."

As He looks into their eager eyes His face is glowing with the pleasure of accomplishment. God's greatest goal has been met. The garden and its earth are complete and exquisite.

But there seems to be an even greater joy now as he leans toward them. "It's all yours. Everything. Yours to enjoy!"

The Being's face seems to reflect the intense pleasure of the humans. It is a familiar look that fills His face. The look of godly ecstasy that comes as He gives away His very best.

**INTRO-
DUCTION**
Key text:
Hebrews 1:2

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Cosmic Controversy

by Norman Gulley

LOGOS Theme: "All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the worldwide Flood. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation."—*Fundamental Beliefs*, number 8.

1. The Origin of the Controversy in the Universe

The angels and God co-inhabited heaven for some time before the creation of this earth. All went well until war erupted in heaven. Various Scripture passages (such as the woes on the Kings of Tyre and Babylon) provide us with insights into the beginning of this cosmic controversy and the true source of sin itself.

"Lucifer, son of the morning," was the anointed covering cherub who resided in the very presence of God (Isa. 14:12; Eze. 28:14). Scripture says, "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." "You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you" (Eze. 28:12, 15, NKJV).

Little is said about the reason for sin except for the scriptural remark that it was caused by Lucifer's pride. "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor" (Eze. 28:17, NKJV). Pride refused to be content with the honored position given by his Creator. He strove for the top—equality with God himself. "You have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High'" (Isa. 14:12-14, NKJV). This rebellion against God's government was the first step in the degradation of Lucifer. Satan, the very adversary of God, was in the making.

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He did not keep His malicious thoughts to himself, either. Soon Lucifer's murmurings had tarnished other lofty angels' loving picture of God as he subtly introduced feelings of discontentment against God's government among them. The questionings and doubtings spread until the rebellion ultimately caused one third of the angelic host to join his anarchy (Rev. 12:4). The peace and tranquility of God's kingdom was shattered and "war broke out in heaven" (Rev. 12:7, NKJV). In this celestial war, Satan, depicted as the great dragon, the ancient serpent, and devil, was eventually "cast out to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:9, NKJV).

2. How Human Beings Became Involved

Unfortunately, Satan's expulsion from heaven did not quench the rebellion. It then spread to earth. The third chapter of the Bible pictures God's adversary, Satan, disguised as a speaking serpent again out on his mission of dissent. As he had effectively devastated the trust of one third of the experienced angels and brought them into his slavery, he now set out to lay his snare of doubt in the hearts of the new pair, thereby undermining God's instructions, His law—God Himself. He set up his word against God's word. He tempted Eve to disobey God's law that forbade her to eat of the tree of good and evil.

The wily serpent used the same arguments that had led to his own downfall (Gen. 3:5). Satan led Eve to doubt the trustworthiness of God's word by creating a spirit of discontent regarding her position assigned by the Creator. Infatuated by the prospect of equality with God, she believed the tempter's word. Confirming her new faith, she disobeyed God's law and took and ate the fruit and influenced her husband to do the same.

So Eve severed her trust relationship with God by trusting the serpent's word over that of her Creator. The controversy that had started in heaven had spread to planet earth.

The Great Controversy

by Ted Wick

TESTIMONY

Key text:
1 John 4:17

"It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. *Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given.*"¹

"God desires from all His creatures the service of love—*homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character.* He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service."²

"In His dealing with sin, God could employ only righteousness and truth. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit."³

"In the contest between Christ and Satan, during the Saviour's earthly ministry, the character of the great deceiver was unmasked. Nothing could so effectually have uprooted Satan from the affections of the heavenly angels and the whole loyal universe as did his cruel warfare upon the world's Redeemer. The daring blasphemy of his demand that Christ should pay him homage, his presumptuous boldness in bearing Him to the mountain summit and the pinnacle of the temple, the malicious intent betrayed in urging Him to cast Himself down from the dizzy height, the unsleeping malice that hunted Him from place to place, inspiring the hearts of the priests and people to reject His love, and at the last cry, 'Crucify Him! crucify Him!'—all this excited the amazement and indignation of the universe."⁴

"The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. . . . A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom."⁵

1. *The Great Controversy*, pp. 492-493. (Italics supplied.)

2. *Ibid.*, p. 493. (Italics supplied.)

3. *Ibid.*, p. 498.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 501.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 504.

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The Great Controversy

by Ted Wick

The most direct and personal portrayal of the great controversy is found in Satan's temptations of Christ in the wilderness (see Matt. 4:1-11). The temptations were threefold:

1. "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread" (Matt. 4:3, NIV).

2. "Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down . . .'" (Matt. 4:5, 6, NIV).

3. "Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me'" (Matt. 4:8, 9, NIV).

Obviously these temptations were tailored to Jesus and His situation. He was hungry and had not eaten for more than a month. He also had the power to turn stones into bread. I do not. The point of the second temptation is hardly that Jesus Himself in His humanity had no acrophobia (fear of height). The truth is that He had within Himself the power to jump and not be hurt.

Jesus did not buy into the "if" part of Satan's first two temptations. He was confident of His own identity. Furthermore, evidence shows that He often hid rather than demonstrate His divine power for the masses of people, until "His time had come." He repeatedly admonished those He healed, "See thou tell no man."

Whether Jesus' near collapse following the conflict came about because of the temptations' strong appeal, or simply because He recoiled from the presence of such malignant and powerful evil, is speculation. I doubt that He was trembling with "desire" to do what Satan suggested.

If Jesus for a moment believed Satan, it might have presented an overpowering temptation to accomplish the reclaiming of this earth by simply bowing to Satan as compared to being crushed by the cross. But Jesus came not only to save this world but also to save His Father's reputation. For that there are no "quicky" solutions or shortcuts. "All the way" takes on dramatic meaning here, for unless Jesus went all the way to Calvary the universe would never know to what lengths God would go to save humanity and to save His own reputation. Now we know!

EVIDENCE

Key text:

1 Peter 5:8

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The Great Contrast

by Shelli Hickerson

HOW TO

Key text:
John 12:32

Imagine for a moment that you are a heavenly angel observing the horrible scenes of the crucifixion. Throughout this event you are able to see what humans cannot. You see Satan, once a trusted friend, there with his angels. You see them inspiring the priests and soldiers to heap insults and abuses upon Christ. Never before have you seen Satan so determined to make a life miserable, and never before have you seen anyone bear a burden as heavy as Christ's and with such patience and willingness—even to the point of asking the Father to forgive those abusing Him and giving assurance to the repentant thief. What a contrast between the character of Christ and the character of Satan!

As you continue to watch from your heavenly perspective, you try to understand the motive of Christ and that of Satan. Christ loves sinful humans enough to give the infinite gift of His life so they will have the opportunity to live an abundant life forever. On the other hand, Satan shows his hatred of both God and humanity by doing everything possible to make Christ abort His mission to save the world. In thinking of Christ, you recall His words, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). In seeing this contrast of motives, you lose all sympathy for Satan. But what about the rest of the universe? The time for decision has come.

The heavenly angels, of course, chose God's side, but what about us humans? There are three steps for us to take:

1. Study closely what is really involved in the great controversy between Christ and Satan, especially the scenes of the cross, where both of their characters are clearly portrayed.
2. Make a decision. Whose side do you choose?
3. Support the side you have chosen and build a relationship with your leader.

When you really understand the great controversy and have a relationship with Jesus, do you think you will even want to do anything that may hurt Him? How about others—how will we treat them? With Christ's love in our hearts we can demonstrate His characteristics of patience, forgiveness, concern, and selflessness to others.

REACT

Do you think that just before Christ's second coming there will be a similar contrast of characters between those who have chosen God's side and those who have chosen Satan's?

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May the Real God Win!

by Dick Duerksen

I used to believe that the "great controversy" was a struggle between Satan and God, something I could watch and maybe participate in as a part of the cheering section. But since those days of simple innocence, the picture has grown considerably more complex. I have learned that my participation is much more as combatant than as onlooker. Even worse, I have learned that the distinctions between the two sides have grayed much over the years. It is harder and harder to tell God and Satan apart.

No, that is not because God has changed, but it is because Satan has blurred his image of the "pitch-forked demon" so totally that often, to superficial observation, he looks very much like the way we expect God to look. Somehow it seems that it should be illegal for Satan to wear the uniform of God's team! Legal or illegal, he has used it successfully to muddy up our pictures of God.

I've wondered sometimes, is it possible that the entire great controversy can be won or lost depending on how we answer the one question: What is God the commander really like?

Unfortunately, over the years many of us believe we have discovered just the right answer to that question. We are certain that we know what is right and what is wrong. We believe we can accurately identify enemies and friends anywhere from in church pews to on movie marquees. We especially KNOW what our Commander looks like.

I say this is unfortunate because we are often so wrong in our identification of friends, enemies, and God. Especially God.

Over the years we have pictured Him in many un-Godlike ways: As a chauvinist who requires women to come to church, and then shouts at them to sit down, submit, and shut up. As one who plays favorites by giving one denomination a bonded franchise on salvation and then flinches if He has to bestow a little love on a Catholic. As a commander who roars with anger when I run the other way and then pounces on me with gleeful punishment.

I wonder whether, for many of us, the great controversy shouldn't simply become the process of repudiating the unreal images of God that we have learned and replacing those images with the pictures Jesus has given us of His Father.

OPINION

Key texts:
Luke 15:11-32;
Matthew
20:1-19

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The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21, NIV).



“What Can I Do in Return?”

by Ruth E. Francis

When I think of Christ's sacrifice for me, my immediate question is, "But what can I do in return?" I am left with an empty feeling, for I know there is no way I can repay Him. However, the story of Eric comes to my mind.

Eric was a 17-year-old who was diagnosed as having leukemia. At the time he had everything going for him. He was intelligent, athletic, vibrant, and loved by everyone. But his illness did not deter him. He faithfully put his body through a strict training program so that he could enter college and be a member of the soccer team. Never doubting for a moment, he succeeded. When his body finally failed him and he was

compelled to stay in a hospital, he became the life and soul of all the patients in his wing by his constant encouragement and humor amid the pain and suffering experienced there. Eric's life, although brief, was not a loss, for through him others realized, in a small way, what true life was all about.

The purpose of Christ's coming to earth was to be a sacrifice. A completely selfless mission. Yet this did not deter Him, for He knew that through His death all mankind could have the opportunity to live.

So what can I do in return? Nothing except introduce others to the One who knows about true life.

**INTRO-
DUCTION**
Scripture:
2 Corinthians
5:21, NIV

*Doris Lund, *Eric*
(New York: Dell
Publishing House,
New York, 1974).

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The Life, Death, by Bertram L. Melbourne and Resurrection of Jesus

LOGOS **Theme:** "In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 9.*

1. Jesus' Exemplary Life

Jesus, the unique Son of God, led an exemplary life during His human existence. He rendered perfect obedience to the Father. His uncompromising response to temptation (Matt. 4:1-11 and parallels), His total rejection of sin (Heb. 4:15), His decisive defeat of the tempter, and His willingness to die for the cause He believed in deserve our serious contemplation and emulation. The New Testament writers consistently held up His character to their readers (see 1 Peter 2:22, 23; John 8:45, 46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15, among others). This is not without significance, especially when one considers Paul's call for adoption of the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5-8) and the writer of Hebrews' call for Jesus to be the object of the Christian's gaze (Heb. 12:1, 2).

How should the Christian react to the exemplary life of Christ? Is it a model for him or her?

2. His Sacrificial Death

Now, if Christ led such an exemplary life, why did He die? First, His death was a sacrifice. The tempter promised humanity Godlike attributes, but delivered instead a pitiable state in which humanity was godless, helpless, hopeless, self-directed, and lost. The seeking God found them, however, and sent His Son to die to rescue them. Christ knew no sin,

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but died for the sin of the world. The just died for the unjust, the guiltless for the guilty. Paul asserts that while we were still in sin Christ died for us and that His death effected our reconciliation and salvation (Rom. 5:7-10). He died to reclaim man. His perfect sacrifice extends to all who accept Him as the atonement for their sins.

Second, He died because His life confronted and condemned His contemporaries. At the devil's instigation they therefore attempted to kill Him. But, in killing Him, they secured their own death, for on the cross He triumphed over them, and His death sealed their doom (Col. 2:15).

Third, Christ's death demonstrates sin's true nature. It separates. It not only separated humanity from God but it separated Christ from His Father. He knew no sin, but bore our sin and in thus effecting our reconciliation He experienced the ultimate separation as His cry of anguish, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" demonstrated. Sin separated Him from His Father and secured His death. He was made to be sin for us. He became a curse on our behalf, to deliver us from the curse of sin (Gal. 3:13).

Fourth, it was necessary for Christ to die because His death is God's answer to the sin problem. It is God's judgment on sin. On the cross Christ bore our sins and paid the penalty for sin (1 John 4:10). He was offered up to bear our sins (Heb. 9:14, 28) so that through His stripes we could be healed (Isa. 53:5). God designated Jesus' sacrificial death to be the means of expiating sin and demonstrating His justice (see Rom. 3:25, 26, NEB).

Fifth, His death effected atonement and reconciliation. Sin separated us from God. Christ bridged the gap through His death and thus has brought us back to God (1 Peter 3:18). His sacrificial death has been the means of reconciling humanity with God (Eph. 2:12-14). His death has therefore "satisfied justice" by satisfying the claims of the law, and bridged the gulf sin had created between humanity and their Maker (see *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 341).

Why did he die? He died for others to live. He died to secure eternal salvation for us, as well as eternal peace, harmony, and happiness for the universe. Paul says His death reconciled all things both in heaven and earth to Himself, for He made peace through the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20). He died to demonstrate what the Father's love is like and the extent to which the Father would go to secure humanity

from the clutch of the enemy.

3. His Resurrection

While the cross is the focal point of history, and while the death of Jesus is atoning, if His death had been the end, if He had only died, there would be no hope. Paul says faith would have been a futile thing, and Christians would be miserable if Christ had not been raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:12-19). George Eldon Ladd is certainly correct in asserting:

“If Christ is not risen from the dead, the long course of God’s redemptive acts to save His people ends in a dead-end street, in a tomb. If the resurrection of Christ is not a reality, then we have no assurance that God is the living God, for death has the last word. Faith is futile because the object of that faith has not vindicated Himself as the Lord of life. Christian faith is then incarcerated in the tomb along with the final and highest self-revelation of God in Christ—if Christ is indeed dead.”*

The resurrection created the church. Encounters with their resurrected Lord transformed disbelieving, disillusioned, hopeless, frustrated, and discouraged followers into believers. Belief in the resurrection transformed them, motivated them, and emboldened them. They proclaimed it and transformed the world. The resurrection demonstrated that Christ is victor, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Christ’s triumph over death guarantees that those who died in faith will also be resurrected one day (1 Cor. 15:20). The resurrection therefore gives Christians a hope to live by.

What are your feelings about the witness of the disciples concerning the life of Christ? Is their witness reliable? Why?

*G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1974), p. 318.

“Let Him Who Is Without Sin”

by Joy Cassano-Coleman

In Christianity, Christ and Satan have long been viewed as antonyms in character and purpose, but perhaps in this one respect more than in any other, Christ's opposition to and supremacy over Satan stand out in stark relief: Both Christ and Satan can condemn, but only Christ can pardon.

“Our heavenly Father was presented before my mind,” Ellen White recalls her early experience, “as a tyrant, who delighted in the agonies of the condemned; not as the tender, pitying Friend of sinners, who loves His creatures with a love past all understanding, and desires them to be saved in His kingdom. . . . If the love of God had been dwelt upon more, and His stern justice less, the beauty and glory of His character would have inspired me with a deep and earnest love for my Creator.”¹

From the very beginning, Ellen White tells us, “God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other.”²

For as long as sin had existed, “Love no less than justice demanded that for this sin judgment should be inflicted.” But “while He [God] maintained His law, He granted freedom of choice and opportunity for repentance to all”³ through the sacrifice of Christ.

“Christ on the cross was the medium whereby mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other.”⁴

REACT

1. In the context of our knowledge that God's character combines perfectly the attributes of justice and mercy, discuss a situation in which destruction would be an act of love and salvation an act of hatred or selfishness.

2. How should the church or individual today relate to issues such as capital punishment in light of the balance between mercy and justice?

TESTIMONY

Key texts:
Isa. 53:10;
Psalm 85:10

1. *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, pp. 30, 31.

2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.

3. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 325.

4. *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 243.

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Jesus the Saviour: by Roy A. Benton God, Man, or Both?

EVIDENCE

Key texts:
Hebrews
4:15; 7:26

I was once at a Sabbath School discussion where one participant argued that Jesus could have won a footrace with any of his contemporaries. Given his way of looking at Jesus, which focused on Jesus' advantages of lineage and upbringing as well as a perfect adherence to spiritual and healthful principles, it seemed inevitable that He must have been superior in every way. While his speculation struck the rest of us as absurd, we grudgingly came to agree with its motivation up to a point. In those dark moments when we are insecure about how we fit into the larger scheme of things, we all need Jesus to be God enough for us to have confidence in His power to deliver on His promises, to resurrect, and to save. At such times we are assured by Jesus' divine ancestry, His ability to live perfectly, and by His access to miraculous powers.

But there are times when His divinity can be truly intimidating. For purposes of empathy we need Him to be a realistic role model. He must be human enough to be tempted, to struggle, to hunger, to experience hurt and disappointment. Certainly we are comforted by the images of His anger at injustice, His dirty feet that needed washing, His spirit that yearned for companionship, and the nail holes in His hands.

So we need Jesus to be both divine and human. But how could Jesus, who grew and learned and changed and suffered as we do, also be God, who is often viewed as all-powerful, all-knowing, and unchanging? And if Jesus was really fully human, why, of all the billions of people who have ever lived, was He alone able to defy probability and live a fully exemplary life in the face of temptation greater than that faced by the rest of us?

These questions are difficult, and they are not new. The biblical passages from this week's lesson attest both to Jesus' humanity and to his perfect oneness with God, and are not preoccupied by the philosophical puzzles connected with the incarnation. But by the second century A.D., the Christian community was filled with speculation on the problems relating to Jesus' nature, and it often went to extremes. The Ebionites viewed Christ as a merely human messiah, while the Docetists and Gnostics believed that all matter and human bodies are evil, so that Jesus had appeared as a divine spirit but not actually "in the flesh."

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In the more refined debates of the fourth and fifth centuries, the Arians thought that Jesus' suffering, changing nature precluded His being divine, while Appolonius the Younger and his followers taught that Jesus' mind (Logos) was a pure divine implant in a human body; Nestorius of Antioch debated Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril accusing the "Antioch School" of holding a sort of oil-and-water conception of the relation between Jesus' human and divine natures while himself holding to a fused version ("from two natures, one"). Eventually, the council at Chalcedon (A.D. 451) produced a statement that still expresses the position of Christian churches the world over, affirming that Jesus was both fully divine and fully human, yet somehow unified:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; . . . consubstantial with us according to the manhood, in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and . . . born of the Virgin Mary, according to the manhood; . . . in two natures . . . the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union."¹

Though many early Adventists held Arianlike views—for example, James White, Joseph Bates, and Uriah Smith each argued for many years that Christ was a created being—eventually the good sense of Ellen White put Adventists squarely within the mainstream of balanced Christian thinking. She always insisted that Jesus' is one with God, but that a Jesus without full humanity is a Jesus impossible for sinners to identify with.²

There remains the problem of how it is possible for two equal natures to cohabit and interrelate. Critics of Christianity say that we cannot logically have it both ways: for example, if Jesus is fully God, then He cannot be fully human since He had a head start in resisting temptation. Most Christians take the view that the matter is a mystery or, as the 19th century Christian philosopher Kierkegaard put it, a "paradox" to be embraced and understood through faith.³ Fortunately we do not have to settle the question of Jesus' advantage in order to claim His help. For, as C. S. Lewis has pointed out, a drowning person does not complain if the man offering a hand has one foot on the bank.⁴

1. For the early Christian material, see *A History of the Christian Church*, esp. pp. 131-139.

2. See "Christology" (pp. 286-288) in the *SDA Encyclopedia*.

3. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 38, 189, 513.

4. *Mere Christianity*, p. 61.

Are You Saved?

by Ed Keyes

HOW TO

Key text:
1 Peter 2:21

In Christ's life, death, and resurrection we see three specific ways Christ saves us, and each one parallels Christ's experiences.

First, in Christ's life we find a life given to service for humanity. The Scripture shows us that Christ came to serve both people and His Father in heaven. He points us the same way by showing us what it is to serve Him and humanity. But the question is, "What does this have to do with being saved?" The answer is found in what we are being saved from. If you answer as I would, that we are being saved from sin, then in the life of Christ we find the way to be saved from the *power of sin*.

Second, Christ's death saves us from the *penalty of sin*. We are all sinners and we should all die, but Christ died for us so that we might be saved. The only way to enter into the experience of Christ's death is by faith, accepting it and living accordingly.

One way to make this substitutionary death practical for our lives is to take 1 John 3:16 and live it. Christ laid down His life for us, for our salvation; therefore, we should be willing to give our lives to lead others to Him, for their salvation.

Finally, the third way that Christ saves us is found in the resurrection. This is another dimension of salvation. If you look at Romans 10:9 it says that if we truly believe God raised Jesus from the dead we will be saved. That certainly demonstrates that the resurrection was indeed important.

Without the resurrection of Christ, Christianity would have no foundation, because it was the belief in the "living Lord" that made the martyrs willing to die for their faith. But what about the resurrection of which we will be a part? I would like to suggest that the third and final way that Jesus saves is found in our resurrection at His second coming, and that is, that He saves from the *presence of sin* in the world. At Christ's coming, we will be taken out of this sinful world, and we will no longer have to deal with its ugly presence.

When it all comes down to it, Christ's life, death, and resurrection were all done for our salvation. So let us continue to look at Jesus, for "by beholding we become changed."

REACT

What would you say if someone were to ask you, "Are you saved?"

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A Carbon Copy

by Marvin and Joan Adams

"Where's mine?" the two year-old queried. He was seeking a present even though it wasn't his birthday. After all, his brother was getting presents. Why shouldn't he? He saw himself as a "copy" of his older brother.

O to be more childlike! Children have a way of accepting gifts without hesitancy and without need for a "reason." They have a genuinely simple, yet profound way of experiencing the emotional joy of receiving with no *strings* attached.

When we are young we hunger for gifts—yet we have been given the greatest gift and continue to reject it. Our characters could become "carbon copies" of Christ's if we would just receive Him into our lives. As we grow older we grow more suspicious, competitive, and unaccepting. Even the gift of forgiveness granted by God is not readily accepted. Christ gave His life as an atonement for our sins. Yet it seems so hard to get to the point of acceptance.

Transforming our lives is the first step we must take. We can experience the joy of forgiveness, and if it seems difficult, it is up to us to change that. The when, where, and how of our acceptance is an individual process.

Let's look at the other side of the issue, the giving of gifts. Few of us find it hard to give gifts. Dr. Paul Tournier, noted physician, feels that people give gifts for various reasons. Among them: Their own self-interest, to assuage their conscience or to bring another person into their bondage. Christ wasn't so motivated.

He gave His life freely to save us from sin. He lived the perfect life, gave it for our atonement, and carried out the resurrection so all could be released from sin. He wants nothing more in return—than our love and the acknowledgement of our sins. What is holding us back? Our part is simple—accept what we do not deserve. This is a true sign of humility. Second, meditate on His perfect life, death, and resurrection. Thoughtful reflection on His life of obedience could change your total nature. His perfect life is awaiting a "carbon copy." That "carbon copy" could be you! Maybe it is time each of us begins the process of accepting and making the reasons for Christ's life of sacrifice more meaningful in our lives.

OPINION

Key text:

1 Peter
2:24, NIV

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The Experience of Salvation

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17, NIV).



“But I Can’t See Any Changes, Lord”

by Maxine Newell

Dear God,

I’m having such a hard time coping with this Christianity business. It’s not that I’m not a Christian. You know that. But it’s just so hard to understand some of the concepts, and even more difficult for me to accept the fact that I haven’t, as far as I can tell, changed much since I was baptized three years ago. Each day I find myself making the same mistakes I did back then. One classic example happened just this morning when Jan came to me complaining about her roommate. I could have quietly listened to her and then given some advice about getting along with people that you live with (I ought to know about those kinds of things, with a degree in counseling psychology), but you saw what I did. I just jumped on the bandwagon and dragged up all the latest gossip about that poor girl. Lord, I don’t want to be this way. How can I change?

Gossiping is not the only problem that I have. There are those “white lies” that I tell the boss to cover for my workmates. Like everyone else, I try to convince myself that I am not hurting any-

one, but I always feel so guilty. Lord, please help me.

I do enjoy being a Christian. I like to share Your love with the people I meet. You know the song “Brighten the Corner Where You Are”? That’s my motto, and I strongly believe that it is every Christian’s first duty to let their lives be “a city that is set on a hill.” But this brings me back to my main problem—my life. It’s not what I want it to be, and I am sure it’s not what You want, either. Deep down in my heart I want to be a real Christian, but I don’t seem to be making it.

My child, all I have to say to you is written in My Word. Read carefully, and you will realize that just because you are willing you have won half the battle. You have taken on the name of My Son—Christian—and I no longer see you, but Him in your place. Just let go and let My Son fight the battle for you, because in your human strength alone you will never defeat the devil. First John 1:7 says that “the blood of Jesus Christ . . . [My] Son cleanseth . . . [you] from all sin.”

INTRODUCTION
Scripture:
Romans
8:1, NIV

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The Experience by Bertram L. Melbourne of Salvation

LOGOS **Theme:** "In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example. This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 10.*

1. Steps to Salvation

Paul states that if we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead we will be saved (Rom. 10:9). He advises that it is with the heart (mind) that we believe and with our mouth that we confess and are saved (10:10). Recognizing that the process is more involved than this, Paul points out further that faith comes from listening to the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). The implication here is that individuals must choose to be involved, but there are human instruments whom God employs to assist in the process.

It appears, then, that we who are estranged from God must be confronted with the claims of Christ on our lives. We must be made to see that sin pays a wage that is death, while God gives a gift that is eternal life (Rom. 6:23). When, through the Holy Spirit, individuals recognize their sinfulness and depravity and inability to help right themselves, they are led to recognize their need of a Saviour. People must be confronted with the help available in Jesus, who has provided a way of escape. When they see the love of God, who loved them when they were enemies, when they see their own true state, they can confess their guilt (Prov. 28:13; Acts 3:19) and by faith accept Jesus as Saviour. God then accepts them, freely forgives them by His grace (Rom.

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3:24), and gives them new standing before Him—reconciliation has taken place. This new-birth experience is essential. Apart from it humanity is enslaved to sin, separated from the Father, and reliant on itself. When Christ is accepted, however, a new creation takes place. Life takes on new meaning and new directions. The individual now has a new focus, renewed vision, and a new hope.

2. The Results of Salvation

The experience of salvation redounds beneficially in the here, as well as in the hereafter. In the present it grants access to God and results in peace, joy, hope, and a new attitude toward suffering. Besides, the Holy Spirit comes as a gift and assists in directing the life (Rom. 5:1-5). That the peace being spoken of here is not the mere absence of strife is demonstrable through its association with suffering and character development. The peace spoken of is soul peace—peace that has vertical and horizontal dimensions. This peace comes from knowing we are right with God and right with other people. It is possible that Christians may suffer for their Christian commitment, but they will recognize it as a developmental task.

Christians whose lives are directed by the Spirit become adopted into the family of God as a joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:12-17). This new status has benefits in this life.

There is no condemnation—verse 1.

There is no accusation—verses 31-33.

There is no separation—verses 35, 38, 39.

There is no defeat—verses 36, 37.

There are also future dividends of the experience of salvation, as well. In Romans 8:18-25 Paul speaks of the hope for the glory to be revealed. Jesus promised His disciples that those who accept and follow Him are given eternal life and shall never perish (John 10:27,28). Speaking of the future joys of salvation, Peter says that the new birth launches us into a living hope of an imperishable inheritance made possible through Jesus' resurrection from the dead. This hope, he says, ought to tide us through any sufferings of the present (1 Peter 1:3-9). When this ultimate experience of salvation is achieved, the Christian will be delivered, not just from the power of sin, but, more important, from its presence. While the Christian lives in the present, his hopes are fixed on the hereafter that he eagerly anticipates (1 Peter 1:13).

“Hope for the Hopeless”

by Kenneth L. Coleman

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Romans 5:6

Countless times we fall victim to the discouraging realization of our own sinfulness. Time and time again we feel ourselves unacceptable to God and removed from His favor. Too few times do we realize that this is the tool of Satan, gauged to cause us to take our eyes off Christ, our only hope. Of this dilemma and how we can understand its dangers, Ellen White writes:

“We must learn in the school of Christ. Nothing but His righteousness can entitle us to one of the blessings of the covenant of grace. We have long desired and tried to obtain these blessings, but have not received them because we have cherished the idea that we could do something to make ourselves worthy of them. We have not looked away from ourselves, believing that Jesus is a living Saviour. We must not think that our own grace and merits will save us; the grace of Christ is our only hope of salvation. . . . We must believe the naked promise, and not accept feeling for faith. When we trust God fully, when we rely upon the merits of Jesus as a sin-pardoning Saviour, we shall receive all the help we can desire.”¹

“No man can of himself work out his own salvation, and God cannot do this work for him without his cooperation. But when man works earnestly, God works with him, giving him power to become a son of God.”²

“Every manifestation of God’s power for His people arouses the enmity of Satan. Every time God works in their behalf, Satan with his angels works with renewed vigor to compass their ruin. He is jealous of all who make Christ their strength. . . . He endeavors to affright their souls with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement can never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield fully to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God.”³

“Sad indeed is the condition of those who, becoming weary of the way, allow the enemy of souls to rob them of the Christian graces that have been developing in their hearts and lives.”⁴

“The Lord’s people cannot of themselves answer the charges of Satan. As they look to themselves they are ready to despair. But they appeal to the divine Advocate. . . . With confidence the Lord’s children cry unto Him to silence the accusations of Satan, and bring to naught his devices.”⁵

1. *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 351.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 372.

3. *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 168.

4. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 533.

5. *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 168, 169.

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Feeling Forgiveness and Forgiving Others

by John Fritz

For someone who's been reared in the Christian church, it may be difficult sometimes to relate to Paul's discussion of the old and new creation mentioned in 2 Corinthians 5:17. He makes it clear that by living for Christ instead of ourselves (verse 15), something old passes away and something new takes its place. But if your life's journey started with *The Desire of Ages*—at least parents, teachers, and pastor hope so—then where do you go? What is the old creation that you're leaving behind? What is the new one that you've gained? How can we—indeed is it possible to—avoid a prodigal-son odyssey yet experience and remain sensitive to the need of every human being to be freely forgiven and accepted at some point in life?

Paul's answer, in verse 18, is that Christ has given us the ministry of reconciliation, not just as a personal gift to wipe our slate clean but to share with others, as human ambassadors, Christ's style of loving. Not only are we new creations but other people are, as well, when we see and treat them the way He did. When this dynamic occurs between a person in need and a person who meets the need, a new state of existence is created by and for both individuals.

This same creative forgiveness is illustrated by Albert Nolan in his book *Jesus Before Christianity*. Nolan shows us how Christ implicitly forgave sinners and created a new quality of humanity through His social interaction with them, such as attending a meal or festival. "It would be impossible to overestimate the impact these meals must have had upon the poor and the sinners. By accepting them as friends and equals Jesus had taken away their shame, humiliation, and guilt. By showing them that they mattered to Him as people He gave them a sense of dignity and released them from their captivity."*

We realize that at the heart of reconciliation is the act of forgiveness. But for Jesus, it seems this had as much to do with the social acceptance of an individual as it did with pardoning that person's indebtedness to God. In Jesus, God took on human form and showed us what it means to be fully human and, in the process, redeemed us by showing us how to redeem each other.

EVIDENCE

Key text:
2 Corinthians
5:17, NIV

* Albert Nolan,
Jesus Before Christianity. (New York:
Orbis Books, 1978),
p. 39.

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“The Greatest Choice”

by Randal Wisbey

HOW TO

As I read through the Bible, I am amazed by how much of what I read concerns our search, as humans, for God. Men and women, boys and girls—we all want to know Him. Beginning with Adam and Eve and ending with John and the Apocalypse, the characters of the Holy Scriptures were seldom satisfied until they had come face to face with the God of all time.

Today, I still find this desire to be prevalent—both in my own life and in the lives of the people with whom I work. We want to know God. We hope He will reveal Himself, and that, in the process, we will be changed.

Yet at times we feel only distance when it comes to knowing God. We want to be saved, and philosophically, we believe we indeed have been. Yet no matter how hard we try, at times we have difficulty truly believing that we indeed know God, and that we are living in a saving relationship with Him.

For this reason, I believe it is time that we:

1. Begin to live like it! If you want to be a basketball star, you've got to make the basketball court a priority. If you want to be a Christian, you've got to make Jesus Christ a priority. Think about Him. Spend time getting to know Him in the Bible. Talk to Him—whether you're kneeling in prayer by your bed or caught in rush hour after work.

2. Tell others what Jesus means to us. We often kid ourselves into believing that all we have to do as Christians is to “live the life.” Yet how many Christians do you know who decided to follow Jesus just because they saw another Christian? Open up! Share what it means to follow Jesus. A remarkable thing about our Christian faith is the way it grows when we are willing to talk about it with others.

3. Get excited about Jesus! There is nothing like being a committed Christian. Remember: When you are following Jesus you are following the God of all time—the God who loves and cares for you—the God who has taken your sin and exchanged it with His life—the God who has all the time in the world for you! By dying for us, God shouted to the world that we are of incredible value, and that He has adopted us as His sons and daughters. That's indeed something to get excited about!

Randal Wisbey is the chaplain at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Canceling the Cross

by Wayne Judd

OPINION

Key text:
Romans 5:10

"Soteriological anthropocentrism," I said.

"What?" the pollster from the school paper responded.

"Soteriological anthropocentrism," I repeated. "You asked me what's wrong with the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

I wrote it on the board.

"What does it mean?"

"It's not as tough as it appears. All you have to do is unpack a little Greek and it makes great sense."

Back to the board. "Soteriological refers to salvation, or being saved."

"So why not say 'salvation'?"

"It's not the way theologians talk. Besides, it wouldn't be the same. Mind if I continue?"

"No problem."

"*Anthropos* is the Greek word for man—as in anthropology. So the phrase literally refers to 'man-centered salvation,' O.K.?"

"And that's the problem with the church? I don't have a box for that; I guess I should write in it 'other.'"

If she did record my concern as "other," she didn't include it along with standards, poor leadership, hypocrisy, and lukewarmness in her article. So now I have to write it myself: What's wrong with the church, in part at least, is that many of us are too busy saving ourselves. How do we do that, and what are the consequences?

1. We do it by always trying to get ourselves ready for Jesus to come. The consequence is self-centeredness, the worst enemy of the gospel!

2. We do it by focusing on what we give up, instead of what we give the world. Again, the result is that we concentrate on making ourselves better rather than trying to make the world better. Which means both are worse.

3. We do it by application of human standards, rather than the divine standard. In consequence we compare our "progress" with that of other people. Then we feel guilty for not being as good as the righteous, and we feel smug and judgmental about being better than the wicked—not the worldly wicked, mind you, but the churchly wicked. Our "brothers" and "sisters." Another consequence is that we never, ever measure up to God's high standard of righteousness, which is a righteousness that refuses to judge or compare others, however great the difference may seem.

Wayne Judd is vice-president for college advancement at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

The Church

"But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect" (Heb. 12:22, 23 NIV).



Is It a Waste of Time?

by Derrick Welch

There was a time not so long ago when I wondered just what it was I was doing every Saturday morning. It seemed like a waste of time to devote an entire morning to church when I would much rather sleep, go to the beach, or head down the slopes. I could even work that morning, which would increase my tithe. Church seemed formal, cold, and rigid with all the sit down, stand up, sing, pray, and listen routine. God was not locked in like that; I could approach Him any time, on my own. I did not need church.

So I stopped going. It made a whole lot more sense. My time was, after all, my own, and I could use it in the way I felt best. The extra rest was great. My ski weekend was not interrupted, and I had all morning to get to the beach. Church was not that important. I bet most of those old Bible-punchers forgot why they went in the first place. Besides, nobody showed any reverence or love there; they just paraded the latest fashions.

But for some reason it did not work as planned. Weeks ran into one another with no clear beginning nor end. Something I could not put my finger on was not right. Inner tensions grew, and I felt harassed, for no reason. The extra rest did not do a bit of good, and the tithe went to pay for the ski holidays. There was no time for God, no quiet communion by a stream or in my room as I had thought.

It took a while, but I finally realized that church was more than just a building or a weekly gathering of people. Hebrews tells us that when we gather we are actually gathering with the angels and God Himself. The small worship service here stretches to include all of God's creation. This association with holy beings gives us a boost without which we bob listlessly through confused days.

Today, church is an integral part of my week. It provides the anchor and revitalizing rest I really need. And it has not hurt my skiing one bit.

**INTRO-
DUCTION**
Scripture:
Hebrews
12:22, 23, NIV

Derrick Welch is a secondary education major and the editor of *Campus Comments* at Canadian Union College, College Heights, Alberta.

The Church: by Keith J. Leavitt the Focus of God's Love

LOGOS Theme: "The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish."—*Fundamental Beliefs*, number 11.

1. The Scope of the Church

Some people have a truncated view of God's church. To them it is synonymous with the Christian church, which then limits it both in time and space, since the Christian church dates from apostolic times and exists as an entity only on this earth. Upon closer examination, however, one discovers that the word *church* is a term used to characterize God's people, both in Old Testament and in New Testament times. The Greek word *ekklēsia*, which in the New Testament is generally rendered "church," is also found in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, where it is translated "assembly" (see Deut. 18:16, NIV; 2 Chron. 30:23, NIV) or "congregation" (see Ps. 22:22, NIV) or "council" (see Ps. 89:7, NIV). This would suggest that throughout history God has had a church—a community of believers that enjoys His special blessings. Furthermore, God's church is not limited in space to earthly created beings alone. Rather, unfallen angels identify closely with the body of believers on earth. "The church of God below is one with the church of God above. Believers on the earth and the beings in heaven who have never fallen constitute one church."*

Is it possible that we have a truncated view of who constitutes God's "true" church, or God's "remnant" church?

Keith J. Leavitt is assistant professor of education at Canadian Union College, College Heights, Alberta.

2. The Foundation of the Christian Church

The Christian church is God's church, constructed upon a foundation as strong and everlasting as God Himself. One day, while discoursing with His disciples, Jesus asked, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" The disciples gave various answers, but Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it" (see Matt. 16:13-18, RSV). Who is "this rock" that provides the foundation of the Christian church?

The Hebrew people often used this descriptive term to designate God. In the Old Testament He is "the rock of our salvation" (Ps. 95:1, RSV); He is "the Rock of Israel" (2 Sam. 23:3, RSV); He is "the Rock eternal" (Isa. 26:4, NIV). Further, we are told that in all their wanderings the Israelites "remembered that God was their Rock" (Ps. 78:35, NIV).

Turning now to the New Testament, to the believers in Corinth, Paul, in relating some of the history of the Hebrew people, declares, "and the Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4, RSV). When Jesus stated that the foundation of His church would be "this rock," His contemporaries immediately recognized that He was referring to Himself. "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11, NIV).

What, if anything, is needed, other than a sound foundation, to ensure that the building will stand?

3. Metaphors of the Church

a. As a bride.

"I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown" (Jer. 2:2, NIV).

Some of the most colorful representations of the church are carried over from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The first of three that we will consider is that of a bride. Perhaps no image better portrays an attitude of care and fondness than that of the marriage relationship. God of old declares, "I was a husband to" (Jer. 31:32, NIV) "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38), and like a faithful husband, He loved and provided for His bride even during those times when she prostituted herself or entered into

adulterous relationships with other lovers. Christ, in the New Testament, is also portrayed as a bridegroom to illustrate better His loving, self-sacrificial conduct toward the church (see Eph. 5:22-28).

b. As a vineyard (Ps. 80:8-19)

"You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land" (Ps. 80:8, 9, NIV).

Many people experience a great deal of pleasure by planting a garden in the springtime of the year and then reaping the results of their efforts in the fall. For His vineyard, God Himself chose the vine, transported it to a "fertile hillside" (Isa. 5:1, NIV), established it, nourished it, built a watchtower from which to guard it (verse 2), and "cut out a winepress" (verse 2) in anticipation of "a crop of good grapes" (verse 2). Unfortunately, "it yielded only bad fruit" (verse 2), and, as a consequence, God determined to allow the vineyard to become "a wasteland" (verse 6). Jesus reiterated this metaphor in His parable of the wicked husbandmen (Mark 12:1-9), but He also extended it by claiming to be the vine itself. The church, as represented by the branches, produces fruit only if it will "remain in the vine" (John 15:4, NIV) and permit the gardener to trim it (verse 2).

c. As a flock

"He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (Isa. 40:11, NIV).

Finally, God is depicted as shepherding Israel, tenderly caring for the individual needs of each sheep. Jesus too declares Himself to be "the good shepherd" (John 10:11, NIV), loving His flock (the church) to the extent that He even "lays down his life for the sheep" (verse 11).

In each of these three metaphors one can see how, with determination and purpose, God has patiently directed His church. Israel was selected from amongst many maidens to be His bride; He alone planted and dressed His vineyard; He tended His flock. Then, in making application of these same metaphors to Himself, Christ demonstrated even more emphatically the personal relationship that each implied.

How do these metaphors and others like them illuminate the relationship that should exist between church members?

*Testimonies, vol. 6,
p. 366.

Church Member- ship Responsibility: Privilege or Problem?

by Bernice J. Leavitt

Consider for a moment what is involved in being a church member. Do we have any responsibilities—any moral obligations? John suggests, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God” (1 John 4:7).¹ Is that it? Is our only responsibility to love one another? If so, what does that involve?

Perhaps the Apostolic church can teach us about love, as Mrs. White points out: “Those among the believers who had money and possessions cheerfully sacrificed them to meet the emergency. . . . ‘And distribution was made unto every man according as he had need’”² The “emergency” was brought on by persecution.

“Many of these early believers were immediately cut off from family and friends by the zealous bigotry of the Jews, and it was necessary to provide them with food and shelter.”³

Is persecution going on today? In some lands, becoming a Christian is a dangerous game. It can mean going into hiding, fleeing from angry relatives, being hunted, persecuted, cut off from family and inheritance, even killed. In other places of the world, the harassment is emotional, psychological, or financial.

As church members, what is our responsibility in regard to the “emergencies” we see around us?

“The world is full of sickness, suffering, distress, and sin. It is full of those who need to be ministered unto—the weak, the helpless, the ignorant, the degraded.”⁴

“In lowly, miserable places, surrounded with poverty, disease, and guilt, many are patiently bearing their own burden of suffering. . . . For these the Lord has a special care, and He calls upon His people to be His helping hand in relieving their wants. Wherever there is a church, special attention should be given to searching out this class and ministering to them.”⁵

John says, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:10, 11).

TESTIMONY

Key text:

1 John 4:7

1. All texts are quoted from the New American Standard Bible.
2. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 70.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 254.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 255.

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How Can True Religion Lead to a False Church?

by Bruce Buttler

EVIDENCE

Key text:
1 John 2:10

Northrop Frye, in his intriguing book *The Great Code*, mentions that there is a difference between the search for a true church and the search for a true religion. What could be the difference?

The Greek word, *ekklesia* can be translated as “church” or as “assembly” (see Acts 19:32, 39, 41). Either translation indicates that a social institution is being discussed. As such, it is subject to the principles that govern group behavior. For example, Jerry Rose, discussing churches, notes that “as the emotional furor that generated the new sect subsides, churches find it increasingly necessary to routinize their activities and make some compromises with the world.”¹ He observes that “this routinization may so diminish the church’s ability to satisfy. . . that a fundamentalist reaction sets in and new sect-like churches are established in separatist movements.”² This descriptive principle of aging would apply to all churches unless other social principles come into play. In my estimation, it appears that a true church could be defined as that institution which would satisfy the social needs of Christians. These needs may include certain modes of service, supportive fellowship, similarity in interpretation of the Bible (or Ellen White), and meaningful rituals.

Religion is harder to define, but, as a first approximation, it can be seen as a set of beliefs, usually about a supernatural entity. Whether such beliefs match reality is ultimately a subjective personal decision. However, we can agree to accept a standard (e.g., a particular biblical understanding) to test those beliefs.

Is it possible or desirable to combine the two searches? As we share the accepting or testing of beliefs we are necessarily engaged in a social process. More important, healthy social relationships should facilitate the search for truth. What is the role of the individual believer in creating a healthy assembly? The following are some questions that can be asked in this respect.³

Do you as a church member enhance or destroy interpersonal relationships? Are you dependable? Do you emphasize guilt/fear or forgiveness/love? In your discussions with others, do you present principles for making decisions about what is correct, or do you focus on ethical trivia? Are you

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concerned about behavior or for the underlying personality?

An example of this may be substance abuse. Are you concerned about the abuse of a particular chemical or about the needs of the person that are being only partially met by the chemical? Are you ready to challenge societal patterns when they lead to mental sickness? Do you encourage the growth of freedom, personal responsibility, self-esteem, and the enjoyment of life? Do you help others to invest in themselves in order to improve the quality of their lives?

It seems to me that our goal should be the pursuit of truth within a fellowship of caring individuals. These two principles should characterize the remnant.

1. J. D. Rose, *Introduction to Sociology*, second edition (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974), p. 331.

2. *Ibid.*

3. I want to thank David Conklin for providing the ancestors of some of these questions.

Anxiety Structure or Living Temple?

by John Hoyt

HOW TO

Key text:
1 Peter 2:5

Jesus was often asked, "Why parables?" Yet poets have long known that the unseen can best, and perhaps *only*, be described through metaphor. This series of lessons on the church has brought to our attention many Biblical metaphors: body, temple, flock, and so on. The use of metaphor, as it calls for our active participation in pondering nuances of meaning, becomes a living word as literal prose could not.

It is particularly interesting to note the dichotomous nature of many Biblical metaphors. A woman, for instance, is used as a positive metaphor (representing the pure, true church) and as a negative metaphor (as a symbol of Babylon).

In practical terms, many of us will find a similar dichotomy in our schizophrenic "love-hate" relationships with parents, close friends, and yes, at times, even with the church. Our church, which at its best embodies for us heaven on earth, the body of Christ with communion and love for all, may at times be perceived as a paternalistic guardian standing watch anxiously over traditional systems of belief. To return to one of the metaphors used earlier, each believer must decide individually whether his or her church will be a living temple (1 Peter 2:5) or, in the words of Canadian author Northrop Frye, an "anxiety structure." As he puts it, "Man is constantly building anxiety structures, like geodesic domes, around his social and religious institutions."¹ "There comes a point," he says, "at which a structure of faith seems to become a part of the Tower of Babel, one of a number of competing and mutually unintelligible assertions with a vague factual basis."² "The Bible," however, "as a manifesto of human freedom" is "written in a language that would smash these structures beyond repair, and let some genuine air and light in."³

E. G. White makes a similar point when she writes, "Many have come presenting other objects for the faith of the world; ceremonies and systems have been devised by which men hope to receive justification and peace with God, and thus find entrance to His fold. But the only door is Christ."⁴

How should we then live, as Christians whom the Bible has set free from man-made anxiety structures? We should speak a language of love and tolerance (rather than the gabble of Babel), that our church may be a place of light and life, where all who enter may truly say, "Better one day in thy courts than a thousand days at home" (Ps. 84:10, NEB).

1. Northrop Frye, *The Great Code* (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1982), p. 232.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 232.
4. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 477.

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Make God Look Good

by Barry Bussey

During my senior year in academy I worked for the public-relations office at Kingsway College. It was my job to write articles for the two local newspapers every week, and once a month for the *Messenger*, the Canadian Union's newsletter. My articles concerned the events that were happening on campus—letting the constituency and community know that Kingsway was a great place to be. I was advertising for the school—in short, making Kingsway look good.

Our church is the public-relations vehicle to ensure that God looks good. Every member of the church is part of an overall public-relations campaign to the world. Read carefully these words of Ellen White:

“Christ has given to the church a sacred charge. Every member should be a channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that the Saviour desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and His character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love.”

We are to “represent to the world His Spirit and His character.” The only way the church is capable of doing this is by KNOWING Christ's Spirit and His character.

Many in the world are looking to the church for guidance and answers to their problems. The church is to be a model for the world to follow. If we had the Spirit and character of God there would be no hunger, no poor in our church. Paul gave us an example to follow. While he was traveling among the rich members in Corinth he collected money for the poor members of the church in Jerusalem (see 1 Cor. 16:1-3). If there are any members who are struggling financially, we have a responsibility to help as much as possible. The world will then see that life is not merely a survival of the fittest, but survival because of the love of God.

As members of the church we are to represent God's character. We need to maintain a close tie with Him in order to fulfill this obligation. Men such as Paul, John, and the other apostles were public relations men making God look good. Let's follow their leading, taking a hold of the torch of truth and carrying it forward to the world, making God look good.

OPINION

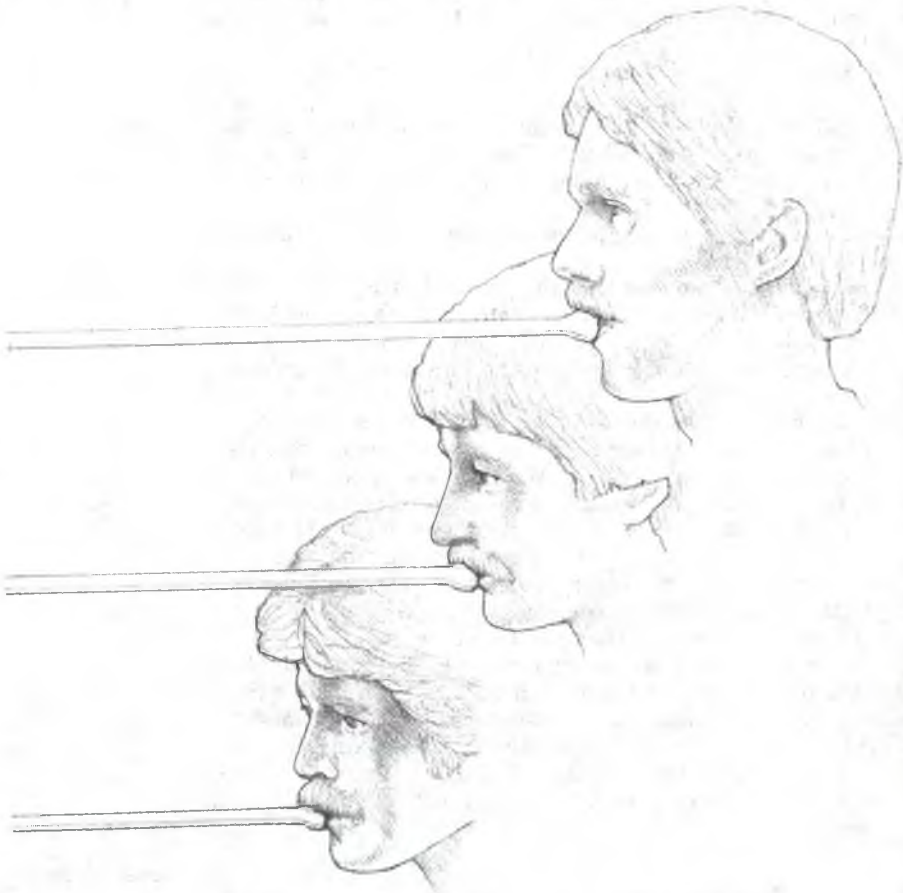
Key text:
2 Corinthians
5:20

* *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 600.

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The Remnant and Its Mission

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12).



A Roman Remnant

by Steven Durost

OPHELIA: The stars are quiet tonight. I wonder whether they will ever speak to me again. They just sit there so quietly, twinkling—shining a little light here, a little light there, but never coming themselves, never helping, ever any—

MATTHEW: Can someone keep her quiet? Doesn't she realize that her aimless talking makes it harder on all of us?

HELEN: Patience, patience! She's just taking it differently.

MICHAEL: Patience! I'm tired of that word. I'm tired of just waiting for the Romans to find us and use us for lion food.

JEREMY: Mommy, are they really going to feed us to lions?

HELEN: No, honey. We are safe here. The Romans can't find us here. Now go back to sleep.

MICHAEL: Oh, yes they can. They can smell Christians miles away. We're cat food as long as we stay in this cave.

MATTHEW: Stop that! You're scaring the boy. Besides, Jesus promised us protection. He won't let us down.

JEREMY: Mommy, tell

me again what Jesus said.

HELEN: He told His friends that He was going to make them homes in heaven, and He would come back to take them there.

OPHELIA: Yes—yes—He said that, didn't He? He promised that He was coming back. He said He will take my hand and we will dance through the stars—forever.

MICHAEL: But how can we be sure He'll take us?

MATTHEW: John the revelator said Jesus will take those people who keep the commandments and have faith in Jesus, right?

HELEN: Yes. He said they would be a remnant of God's people. That group will announce to the world that He is alive and willing to save all from the judgment of God.

MATTHEW: Do you suppose we are the remnant? Do you think that's why the Romans are trying to stop us?

HELEN: It's possible.

MICHAEL: Then—He could be coming soon, couldn't He?

HELEN: He could be coming right now. Does that scare you?

MICHAEL: Yes.

HELEN: It shouldn't.

INTRODUCTION

Scripture:
Revelation
14:12

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The Remnant

by R. Dean Davis

LOGOS **Theme:** "The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 12.*

1. Need for a Remnant

"Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12, RSV).

The fact that the saints are called to endure indicates that there is pressure and conflict present as the righteous witness. The pressure and conflict is not mild or localized, but cosmic and fierce. The issues are life and death, and who will have authority and rule on earth. The conflict began in heaven and then came to earth. The first antagonist is the dragon who exercises his demonic power. The second is the beast from the sea who uses political power with the dragon's help. The third is the beast from the earth with his religious power that is shored up by the dragon and the beast from the sea. Jointly they form an evil trinity (false counterpart of the true Trinity). Together they make a cosmic attack against God and His people. The three angels' messages are the divine response through His remnant people. We are the ones who are entrusted with this message.

The concept of the remnant is cast in the setting of judgment and rewards. God had made covenant promises that are to be fulfilled. We can choose to accept them and receive the blessings of salvation, or reject them and reap the covenant curses of eternal death. In Revelation these covenant promises are offered to both the righteous and the wicked. But to dispense the final rewards, a judgment must occur to determine the appropriate covenant recompense. Thus far in Revelation, the righteous have been given the covenant promises (Revelation 2, 3), and evidence continually mounts that their covenant reward will be blessings.

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The wicked, however, must also have an opportunity to receive the covenant promises, and the three angels' messages are the provision for the righteous as God's witnesses to provide them with this opportunity.

2. Announcement of Judgment (read Rev. 14:6, 7)

The time has come for the covenant promises to be completely fulfilled. The wicked must receive the announcement that judgment precedes covenant fulfillment so that they may turn from their wicked ways, enter into the plan of salvation, and receive the covenant blessings.

The call to fear God and give Him glory is in direct response to the challenge of the dragon to fear him (Revelation 12). The issue is authority and allegiance to Him versus the dragon's authority and allegiance to him. When allegiance is rendered to God, recognition is also given of His glory (attributes of His character and person).

Chief among God's personal attributes is His creatorship. It is He who continually gives life to each one of the wicked inhabitants of the earth. For us who receive life daily from our God, it is a privilege to be personal witnesses to this fact. The continued recognition of this fact, together with its accompanied relationship, results in continued life from the Creator for eternity.

3. Announcement of Salvation (read Rev. 14:8)

The second announcement to be made to the wicked by the righteous remnant is that if you turn to God, mercy and grace in the plan of salvation (covenant) are made available. The call is to come out or leave the coalition of the evil trinity (dragon, beast from the sea, beast from the land) which is termed Babylon. This call of mercy and liberation is a direct response to the political and civil power and domination of the beast from the sea that is like ancient Babylon that had taken God's people into captivity and exile. Liberation from this bondage is like the liberation from Egypt of the Exodus. It is a great privilege for the righteous remnant to be heralds of liberation and freedom.

4. Call to Righteousness (read Rev. 14:9-11)

The third angel's message is closely tied to the theme of salvation already expressed by the first two angels. Once the wicked have turned to God and responded to His mercy, they

are to produce righteousness through divine power working in their lives. This call for righteousness is in direct response to the evil religious influence of the beast from the earth (which makes an image to the political power of the beast from the sea) that results in the mark of the beast to those who give him their allegiance.

When the righteous remnant bring to the wicked the invitation of the final call of mercy, they do so on the cosmic front of the great controversy. The dragon came from heaven—so the call is to fear God. The beast from the sea produces Babylon that is located on the waters—so the call is to come out of Babylon. The beast from the earth causes people to give it full allegiance, which results in the evil mark of loyalty—so the call is to produce righteousness on earth. If we are the remnant, then we have the cosmic message to deliver that will resolve the sin problem for eternity. What an exciting and wonderful challenge.

Give the World a Hug This Quarter



Jesus said, “Love one another as I have loved you.” His love reached everyone. So does He expect you to love like that? The gospel commission implies that your loving isn’t done until it encompasses the world. And you best express that kind of love by giving.*

Remember the Weekly Mission Offering

* Your weekly Sabbath School Offerings support the World Mission Budget of the church.

Our Calling

by Michael A. Cruz

God's remnant people of today have been called by Him to proclaim three very special messages (the three angels' messages). These messages have the power to transform lives, and they uplift Jesus Christ, as our Savior, Judge, Advocate, and Friend.

Before we focus on all three messages from the pen of inspiration, let us quickly focus on the first angel's message. John (the revelator) sees an everlasting gospel that must go to all the world. Even though all three messages are intertwined, there is something special about the everlasting gospel (which is good news, John 3:16), which has the power to change the lives of those who hear the message, as well as those who present the message.

"Today the remnant people of God are to glorify His name by proclaiming the last message of warning, the last invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The only way in which they can fulfill God's expectations is by being representatives of the truth for this time."¹

"The Lord is testing His people to see who will be loyal to the principles of His truth. Our work is to proclaim to the world the first, second, and third angels' messages. In the discharge of our duties we are neither to despise nor fear our enemies. To bind ourselves up by contracts with those not of our faith is not in the order of God. We are to treat with kindness and courtesy those who refuse to be loyal to God, but we are never, never to unite with them in counsel regarding the vital interests of His work. Putting our trust in God, we are to move steadily forward, doing His work with unselfishness, in humble dependence upon Him, committing to His providence ourselves and all that concerns our present and future, holding the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end, remembering that we receive the blessings of heaven, not because of our worthiness, but because of Christ's worthiness and our acceptance, through faith in Him, of God's abounding grace."²

"In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention."³

TESTIMONY

Key text:

Revelation 14:6-12

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 153.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 107, 108.

3. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 19.

Michael A. Cruz is a sophomore theology major at Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Need of a Remnant

by Robert S. Wright

EVIDENCE
Key text
Proverbs 27:11

As the conflict that we know as the great controversy comes to a climax, greater and greater wickedness will be seen in this earth. Through Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy we know that one reason that this will be allowed is to reveal the true nature of sin and the character of Satan. This will be demonstrated to the entire universe. But what about the justifying of God's character? Will there be a people who, through faithful loving service to God will show that God is just? That His law of love is fair and can be fulfilled? Yes!!

The text to which we Seventh-day Adventists most often turn to as we study the remnant describes the group as those who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17).

In the Morning Watch book *Our High Calling* (June 11 entry) Ellen White writes this related paragraph:

"Let all remember that . . . angels are recording in the book of remembrance every word that vindicates the character and mission of Christ. Of those who testify of the love of God, the Lord says, 'They shall be mine, . . . in the day when I make up my jewels.' Mal. 3:17."

In these last days God is working to produce a people who, like Job, have a sanctifying faith and an active testimony of God's love (cf. Job 1:22 and 42:7). This is an identifying mark of the remnant people (see Rev. 12:17) that we often overlook while affirming the presence of the Spirit of Prophecy. Ellen White writes:

"As witnesses for Christ, we are to tell what we know, what we ourselves have seen and heard and felt. If we have been following Jesus step by step, we shall have something right to the point to tell concerning the way in which He has led us. . . . This is the witness for which our Lord calls, and for want of which the world is perishing."

REACT

1. Am I allowing the Lord to work fully in my life so that I am a living testimony of His loving mercy and grace?

2. By the grace of God are my actions and words such that I am vindicating the character of Christ?

**The Desire of Ages*, p. 340.

Robert S. Wright is a student at Atlantic Union College and is assistant community-service director at the Halifax Seventh-day Adventist church.

Lights Shining in Darkness

by Jamie Edwards III

The remnant people of God have a tremendous responsibility to preach the everlasting gospel "to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (Rev. 14:6, NASB), and to proclaim the imminent return of Jesus. Our warning message is threefold. First, we are to proclaim to the world that "the hour of His [God's] judgment has come" and call all to worship God as the Creator. Second, we are to announce the fall of Babylon. Third, we are to warn people of the consequences of worshipping the beast and his image.

The remnant church is called to be a bright light dispelling the moral darkness that surrounds it. Isaiah tells us to arise and shine amidst the darkness that will cover the earth (Isa. 60:1, 2). Jesus tells us to let our lights shine to the people around us. The result is that when they see our good works they will glorify our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). We are called upon to be a "royal priesthood, a holy nation," denying ungodliness, worldly desires, and to "live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age" (1 Peter 2:9; Titus 2:12, NASB).

The first angel calls the remnant church to "fear God, and give Him glory." What does it mean to "give Him glory?" God's glory is the attributes of His character: goodness, mercy, truth, patience, and love. The first angel calls us to reverence and respect God as our Creator and to give Him glory by exemplifying in our lives the attributes of His character, thus vindicating Him before the world and proving that it is possible for sinful humanity, when strengthened by divine power, to obey God's law.

We are completely incapable of accomplishing this important mission while relying upon our own strength. How then can we fulfill our mission as the remnant people? We must develop a relationship of complete dependency upon God, in which we surrender our wills to Him so that He can work through us to accomplish it. Edward Heppenstall writes: "We give glory to Him by yielding ourselves to Christ that He may perfect His work in us. . . . We achieve nothing simply on our own."¹

Ellen White tells us that John the Baptist was "a representative of those who are to prepare a people for our Lord's second coming,"² and his preparation for the mission of preparing the way for Christ's first advent must be ours as

HOW TO

Key text:

Matthew 5:16

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we prepare the way for Christ's second coming. John chose to seek a quiet time away from the bustle of daily life to contemplate his mission, to study nature, and to search the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. Ellen White writes, "It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. . . . [Then] our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit."³ Only in this way can we hope to obtain the faith and strength necessary to fulfill our mission to a sin-sick world.

REACT

1. Do I really believe that I am living in the last days?
2. How can I prepare for the coming crisis?
3. Am I willing to set aside time each day to prepare myself to fulfill my mission as part of the remnant church?

1. Edward Heppenstall, *The Man Who Is God* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1977), p. 149.

2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 101.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Who Are the Remnant?

by Evert McDowell

OPINION

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12). It is unfortunate that many seem to interpret this text to mean those who have the correct doctrines must be the remnant. It is into this trap that most fundamentalists fall. Believing that they hold the infallibility of Scripture, and righteously protest abortion, their claims of membership to this group are rightly justified. But perhaps none claim the title of remnant more tenaciously than ourselves. Our attitude seems to be: "We are Seventh-day Adventists. We have Biblically based doctrines. We continue to attest to the validity of all the Ten Commandments, we have the 'faith of Jesus; therefore we are the remnant. Our pride is intense. We are God's chosen."

To accept this unquestionably is to forget the lessons of history and to fall captive to the same sin of presumption as the children of Israel. It is also to forget the intent of the commandments and ignore the "faith of Jesus." I would not want to argue that we are not the remnant, but it needs to be remembered that Adventists have not cornered the "remnant" market. A baptismal vow does not constitute a membership fee. So what does? And who are the remnant? The text helps to provide an answer, "Here are they that keep the commandments." But keep in mind the Ten Commandments are not doctrines. They are guidelines for two things: (1) how you relate to God and (2) how you relate to others. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matt. 22:37-40, NIV). This is what God is interested in. A correct belief system, while it is important, is not as important as open and selfless love for Him and others. In fact, the doctrines cannot be truly believed, understood, and practiced without this love. This is the lesson of ancient Israel.

As much as modern trends might argue against it, perhaps being a part of the remnant is determined in part by what you do. "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8, NIV).

Evert McDowell is a news writer for ADRA International.

Unity in the Body of Christ

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!”
(Ps. 133:1, NIV).



Texaco and My Best Friend

by Todd Sanders

Whenever I think about unity, two situations come to mind. A few summers ago I managed a Texaco station in Concord, Massachusetts. It was a small station, with only four employees, and two sets of pumps. However, it was very busy, since it served a major highway leading to Boston.

My three co-workers at the station had entirely different personalities. Arty was very popular. He drove a beautiful car, was extremely funny, and always had a different date. Unfortunately, he was also very lazy. About the only thing he did with all his energy was party. Chuck was a computer whiz with absolutely no social etiquette. He was very shy, sensitive, and was working hard to get enough money to go back to school in the fall. Jason was the typical nice guy—humble, kind, friendly, and always willing to help. If anything was ever wrong with one of our cars, we could count on him to fix it.

Despite our differences, the station ran smoothly. Scheduling hours could have been a nightmare, since no one wanted to work nights, but they were willing to give and take. Whenever one of

the guys needed time off, invariably someone was glad to cover for him. Everyone respected each other's differences, and there was never a problem with getting along. Arty respected Chuck's sensitivity and never teased him, no matter how much he wanted to. Jason and Chuck, in turn, tolerated Arty's laziness and never got angry with him. As a result, it was an enjoyable and productive summer for all of us.

Another situation is my relationship with my best friend, Shawn. We have been friends for more than fifteen years. We lived in the same town, went to the same schools, played in the same orchestra, and had many of the same friends. Naturally, we have both changed over the years, but it has always been along similar lines. We still have similar outlooks on life, different yet similar goals, and believe similarly about God. As a result of our similarities, we get along excellently, agreeing with each other much more than we disagree.

As I reflect on these two situations, I have to ask myself, What is unity? Cooperation? Or similarity?

**INTRO-
DUCTION**
Scripture:
Psalm 133:1,
NIV

Todd Sanders is a junior majoring in history and minoring in Biblical languages at Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Unity, Not Uniformity

by James Valentine

LOGOS Theme: "The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 13.*

1. Unity as Jesus Saw It

"That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21, RSV).

The unity of the church is essentially a spiritual unity, which depends entirely on the unity of the Godhead, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:1-16). As soon as we look for the basis of unity in any other direction, we shall inevitably fall and experience disappointment.

When we come to the cross of Christ, we come not as Seventh-day Adventists, Methodists, Anglicans, Jews, or as Catholics; we come not as Americans, Germans, Colombians, Australians, or as Lebanese; we come not as females, males, drug addicts, senior citizens, or as yuppies. We come as *sinner*s who urgently need the mercy, forgiveness, and recreative power of God. And at the cross of Calvary there is no distinction whatsoever. By surrender and by faith we are all daughters and sons of God, and are all members of His body, the true church.

This unity, as envisioned by Christ in John 17, is not merely a unity of purpose and a unity of means and organizations employed to effect this purpose. It is, rather, a vital, organic union similar to the union of the Father and the Son. The unity of our church is not that of an organization, but of an *organism*. The life of Jesus ought to permeate every aspect of, and relationship in, our church.

James Valentine is professor of theology at Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

What experience is necessary to bring about the unity among us that Jesus prayed for?

2. Unity in Diversity

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all." (Eph. 4:4-6, RSV).

We often take for granted that the apostolic church was united in matters of faith and doctrine. But this was not the case.*

Biblical unity is not synonymous with uniformity. Two Biblical metaphors, the body and the vine, demonstrate that unity in the church is to be a unity in diversity.

a. The body of Christ.

The body has many organs, such as the stomach, the heart, the liver, the brain, which each fulfill a vital but uniquely different task. All organs contribute to the optimal performance of the body, and none are vestigial. God created each to do a certain function no other organ can do.

So it is in the church. God distributes His gifts "to each one individually as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:11, NKJV), causing a diversity that is for the good of the body. All members do not think the same, nor have they been assigned to the same work. In His providence some have been created to work in one kind of service and others in other lines. All, however, function under the direction of the same Spirit, performing according to the best of their God-given abilities to build up the body.

b. The vine.

The metaphor of the vine is another illustration of unity in diversity. The branches, the believers, are the extension of the True Vine—Christ. There is a life-sustaining union of the believer and Christ. But natural plant growth is not necessarily uniform in everything.

So it is in the church. There are many different lines of work and different temperaments, but they work under one Head. There are many gifts, but one Spirit.

Which kinds of difference are you willing to accept? Which are not acceptable?

* For a full discussion of this issue I recommend J. D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977)

Building Unity

by Theodore Lopez

TESTIMONY 1. The Blueprint

Key text: "The Lord desires His chosen servants to learn how to unite together in harmonious effort" so that "their talents, however diverse, may all be under the control of the same Spirit. . . . As each worker fills his appointed place faithfully, the prayer of Christ for the unity of His followers will be answered, and the world will know that these are His disciples."¹

Matthew 23:8,
"All ye are
brethren."

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be one in us: . . . that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:21, 23).

2. How to Follow the Blueprint

"It is not the Lord's plan for His people to separate themselves into . . . companies, because of differences in nationality and language. Did they do this, their ideas would become narrow, and their influence would be greatly lessened."

"Those who would build up national separation, would do a work for which the Lord . . . has given no encouragement."²

"Let no contentions be brought in. . . . In unity there is strength."³

"Wrangling and dissension in the church, the encouragement of suspicion and unbelief, are dishonoring to Christ. God desires His servants to cultivate Christian affection for one another."⁴

3. Are We Following the Blueprint?

"The world is looking with gratification at the disunion amongst Christians. . . . God calls for a change among His people. Union with Christ and with one another is our only safety in these last days. Let us not make it possible for Satan to point to our church members, saying: 'Behold how these people, standing under the banner of Christ, hate one another.'"⁵

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 145.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

3. *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 168.

4. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 145.

5. *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 240.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

7. *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 183.

4. Why Should We Strive to Follow the Blueprint?

"Harmony and union existing among men of varied dispositions is the strongest witness that can be borne that God has sent His Son into the world to save sinners."⁶

"Labor for unity, labor for love, and you will become a power in the world."⁷

Theodore Lopez is a junior theology student at Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Significance of Church Unity

by Norman Gulley

The unity of the church is one of the most important characteristics of the church. Without unity the church fails to accomplish its sacred mission. Note the following significant features of church unity.

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Psalm 133:1

1. It Makes the Mission of the Church Effective

The most powerful witness to a world torn apart by war, terrorism, conflict, and dissent is the love and unity among church members of different character, temperament, and disposition. It is the evidence of their connection with Heaven and their divine credentials as disciples of the Son of God (John 13:35). It proves the power of the truth of God's Word. Because the divine relationship within the Godhead is the model of unity (John 17:11), unity is the divine characteristic of the church and its mission.

Disunity among professed Christians has been one of the greatest obstacles to the acceptance of the Christian faith by unbelievers, filling them with disgust and confirming them in their unbelief. True unity among believers therefore provides them with an evidence they cannot brush off. This is the sign for the world, Christ said, that they may know that I am their Saviour (John 17:23).

2. It Reveals the Reality of God's Kingdom

A truly united church on earth reveals that its members are serious in their expectation of living together in the same heaven. It will be their aim to demonstrate among themselves that God's kingdom is real. To them the Scripture will be fulfilled, "How wonderful it is, how pleasant, for God's people to live together in harmony!" (Ps. 133:1, TEV). Truly they have entered into an experience that can continue throughout eternity and provide the clearest evidence to the world of the truth of Christianity.

3. It Shows the Strength of the Church

The effectiveness of the mission of the church is proportional to its unity. Unity brings strength, disunity weakness. A church is truly prosperous and strong when its members are united with Christ and one another, working in harmony for the salvation of the world. Then and only then they are in the truest sense "God's fellow workers" (1 Cor. 3:9, NKJV).

Norman Gulley is professor of religion at Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.

How to Have Unity

by Evert McDowell

HOW TO
Key Text:
Rom. 12:3, 4,

I really don't know much about unity. Having grown up in several different countries, I hold no staunch patriotism for any particular flag or realm. I see the good in the countries where I have lived, and the bad, and I fondly remember each place.

I feel I see the world as few others do. I view it as one from a small country in Africa, I see it as a Canadian, as an American, and even a little as a European. I feel this has helped a little in understanding the viewpoints of others, to see the needs, to feel the pains, and to share the joys.

When thinking of a close family circle, mine would not first come to mind. Each member was born and has grown up in a different country, if not a different continent. My older brother went off to school when I was very young, and after that I don't remember his being at home very often. My sister was at home a little more than he, but she, too, went off to school, on three different continents, I might add. As a result, we've all grown up differently. My brother is the "weird" one in the family; that's because he writes poetry. Actually we all do, it's just that he gets his poems published in journals, and none of the rest of us can understand them. My sister is the fitness guru. She can outperform the rest of us in swimming, jogging, biking, climbing, sailing, tennis, squash, and racquet ball and thinks that entering three triathalons a year might not quite be enough. And as for me, well, I'm the baby of the family and always will be.

My mother died when I was 15. Several years later we had the privilege of welcoming another family to our own when Dad remarried. A new mother, two new brothers, and a new sister who had children with which we could play the role of aunt and uncle.

Each of us is so different. Even today, much like our past, we are spread apart by thousands of miles. Our writing and telephone calling is not what it could be, and yet we're still family. Each time another incomprehensible poem of my brother's gets published we feel the pride and say: "That's my brother!" Every time my sister places in or wins a race we share the joy and say: "That's my sister!" We didn't always get along. At times I wondered whether we ever would, but we do, and we're a family. Through the years we've learned to forgive, to adjust, and to expand. Maybe we all know a little something of unity after all.

Evert McDowell is a news writer for ADRA International.

Anatomy of the Church

by David Greenlaw

OPINION

Key text:
1 Corinthians
12:14-27

When the word *unity* is used by some Seventh-day Adventists, they convey the idea that everyone should, somehow, look, act, think, and function in the same way. However, in 1 Corinthians 12:14-27, Paul makes it very clear that the body of Christ is made up of many different members. He, in fact, tells us that we must expect members of the body to be different if the body is to fulfill its function and role. Ellen White explains:

"The perfection of the church depends not on each member being fashioned exactly alike. God calls for each one to take his proper place, to stand in his lot to do his appointed work according to the ability which has been given him."¹

We can see throughout sacred history different men and women whom God used powerfully to further His cause. In observing the apostolic church we can see the differences among Paul, Timothy, Peter, Silas, and John, but under the direction and leadership of the Holy Spirit these various members of the body made a powerful impact on humanity. The church grew dramatically under their leadership.

Unity does not mean uniformity that can squeeze and destroy many creative people. Rather, unity means that within a diverse people there is singleness of purpose that all work toward. Ellen White understood this when she wrote:

"The vine has many branches, but though all the branches are different, they do not quarrel. In diversity there is unity. All the branches obtain their nourishment from one source. This is an illustration of the unity that is to exist among Christ's followers."²

We are like the branches of the vine. We are individually separate and distinct, yet we draw our nourishment from the same vine, which is Jesus Christ. So while we are truly individuals, we are all bound together in a common purpose, through Christ to further the kingdom of God.

1. Ellen G. White
Comments, *SDA
Bible Commentary*,
vol. 6, p. 1090.
2. *Ibid.*

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Next Quarter's Lessons

Faith's Foundations—Part II

For readers who have not yet received a copy of COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY for fourth quarter, 1988, here is a summary of the first two lessons.

Lesson 1: Baptism

Scripture: Romans 6:3, 4

Theme: "By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 14.*

Lesson 2: The Lord's Supper

Scripture: 1 Cor. 10:16, 17

Theme: "The Lord's Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. In this experience of communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christ-like humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The communion service is open to all believing Christians."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 15.*

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