



2 Cor. 5:18

Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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God's Last Name

Part 1: Do we have to be Perfect?

David Clayton



One of the things which strikes us as we read the Bible is the fact that there are several different names which are used to refer to God, and that even God Himself uses different names in referring to Himself. Why is this so? We say that God has many different names and there are brethren who have gone to great lengths in seeking to discover exactly what is the correct pronunciation of the various names by which God is referred to, and insist that unless we pronounce these names properly, we are not referring to God in the right way.

Some of the names used by God are well known. Yahweh (or Jehovah) comes readily to mind. Most also know that the Hebrew words, Adonai, Elohim and El Shaddai are used to refer to God.

What is the significance of all these names? Many people today, especially in the western world do not give much thought to the significance of names.

Parents, in naming their children think more of how pleasing the name sounds than of what the name means. But names, originally, and especially in the Bible were intended to convey a message. Names were carefully chosen to reflect the character which it was expected, or desired that a person would manifest in his life.

Each name of God is really a representation of some aspect of His character. For example, Adonai means, "Lord," and emphasizes the fact that He is the supreme authority in the lives of His people. "El Shaddai" means "the Almighty" and emphasizes the fact that He is able to do all things and that those who worship Him need fear nothing in the world. "Jehovah" of course, indicates that He is the "I Am," the eternal, self-existent one who lives forever and depends on nothing for His existence. "Elohim" refers to His majesty and greatness.

At different times, people have added a suffix to the name of God, reflecting some aspect of His character which had special significance to them. For example, Abraham referred to God as "Jehovah-Jireh," "the Lord my provider," after God provided a ram for him to sacrifice in place of Isaac. Moses referred to Him as "Jehovah-Nissi," "the Lord is my banner," after God gave him victory over Israel's enemies.

Each name was actually a revelation of some aspect of God's character, authority, or nature.

first and last names

Most people have both a first and a last name. In many cases some have more than two names. Is there a difference between the first and last name in terms of the message which they convey? Well, usually the surname, or the family name is something which we automatically receive at birth. This is not something which we, or our parents choose, it is something which is ours just by virtue of the fact that we are born and it tells which family we belong to. When people share the same surname because they belong to the same family, then immediately we can tell that they have certain things in common. They share the same genetic heritage, they often have similar features and inborn traits. They often have similar talents, likes and dislikes and sometimes even share the same illnesses! In other words, the surname or the family name tells you about a person's genetic makeup, his inborn nature.

The given name, however, is different. The given name usually expresses the desires of the person who named the child. It usually expressed either the character which the parents hoped that the child would develop or the character which they believed he would develop later in life. For example, when Jacob was still not completely born, he

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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pushed his hand out of his mother's belly and grabbed on to the foot of his brother Esau who had just been born. His parents saw this strange act as a sign of the kind of person he would be and they concluded that this indicated that in the future he would take what belonged to his brother. So they named him "Jacob," which means, "the supplanter." Later Jacob fulfilled his name when he took his brother's birthright. However, later in life his character was changed after wrestling with God. Then God changed his name and called him, "Israel," which means, "prince of God."

When I was born, I was a Clayton. Neither my parents nor I chose that aspect of my name. However, my father and mother named me "David." I think that in giving me this name, they hoped in their hearts that somehow I would develop the kind of faith and loyalty to God which was manifested in the life of the biblical David.

It is interesting that in parts of Europe, Africa and many countries of the "old world," the order of the given name

and the surname is different from in the western world. In many cultures it is more customary to give the family name first, and to state the given name, or the personal name last. This way of stating the name seems to be more logical. Why is this so? Because we received the family name first. The family name is the one which gives the most information concerning our origins and the traits which we possess by nature. The given name only expresses what somebody hoped we would become and which in many cases speaks of a hope which is never realized. In other words, the family name indicates lineage, *nature*. The personal name signifies the peculiar *character* of the individual. The family name indicates inborn qualities, the given name indicates character traits developed subsequent to birth.

In this article we will use the old world order and will recognize the first name as the family name, the name one is born with, and the last name as the given name, the one which indicates the character developed during one's lifetime.

The names of Jesus.

When we consider this, it is interesting to consider what the Bible says concerning the names of Jesus. In Hebrews 1:4 we read,

Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (Heb 1:4)

Here we see that Jesus received a certain name "by inheritance." If it was by inheritance, then this would have to be His family name, the name He received at birth. Verse 8 tells us what this name is:

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. (Heb 1:8)

This name which Jesus received by inheritance was the name, "God." This is His family name, or His first name

and indicates that He is of the family of God. His nature is the nature of God and His inborn qualities are those of God. However, He also received the name, "Jesus" when He became a human being. This refers to the personal characteristic of the work which He came to do and the personal character which He developed when He was on earth. As the angel stated to Mary when he announced the birth of Jesus,

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Mat 1:21)

He was to be named, "Jesus," which signifies "Saviour." What was the reason for Him being given this name? "He shall save His people from their sins." Therefore, the name referred to His personal character, the work which He personally and He alone could accomplish.

A name in the forehead

In Revelation chapters 7 and 14, we are given a view of a group called the 144,000. Revelation 14:1-5 gives a detailed description of the characteristics of these people and reveals them to be a unique group of Christians, who are different in several ways from any other Christians who have ever lived on this earth. One of the striking marks of these Christians is that they have "the Father's name," written in their foreheads. What does this signify? What are we being told about these people? What name of God is this which is written on their foreheads, does this refer to God's first (family) name, or does it refer to one of His other names (referring to His personal character)?

A little thought will make it clear that this name refers to God's character (His personal name) rather than to His nature or His intrinsic qualities (His family name). Notice that this fact, that they have the Father's name in their foreheads is stated as one of the peculiar marks of these Christians which sets them apart from all Christians.

This name of the Father written in their foreheads is not something which all Christians possess or else there would be no special significance in mentioning it as one of the characteristics of these special people.

Yet, all Christians do have the Father's nature which would be signified by God's family name or His first name. As the apostle Peter tells us,

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Pet 1:4)



All Christians do have the Father's nature. The moment a person truly believes the exceeding great and precious promises in the word of God, then he truly becomes a partaker of the divine nature of God, and so becomes a member of the family of God. He receives God's family name and as a recipient of the divine nature he truly has received salvation. At the very moment when a person receives this name of God, this nature of God, he has the assurance that he is a child of God and has received eternal life.

But let us consider something: Every new-born baby is a member of his family. From the moment he is born he receives the family name. The family has

certain unique characteristics which are his, he has no choice about them, they are his, just by virtue of the fact that he was born. Nothing can change this reality, nothing can make him not a family member, as long as he is born into the family. However, no new-born baby is qualified to represent the family. In fact, many persons who are in their teens and even older are not qualified to represent their family and the father or mother would not choose such a person to represent them. Why not? Because in order to represent the family, a person needs to have a proper understanding of what the family stands for. He needs to understand the principles which characterize the family.

In the same way, every new-born Christian is assured of salvation. He has received the nature of divinity which is a perfect **nature**. His instinct is to do good and only to do good and in this sense, he has a perfect nature. This must be, because he has partaken of the divine nature and the divine nature is a perfect nature. There is no imperfection in God. Let us note, however, that a perfect nature does not necessarily mean a perfect **character**. Nature and character are two different things. Nature is what we are born with, character is what we develop as we pass through the experiences of life. Although every Christian has the divine nature of God (God's first name), not every Christian has the perfect character of God (God's last name).

Not required for salvation

Yet it is important for us to know that perfection of character is not a requirement for salvation. Perfection of character is a process and requires time. If perfection of character was the requirement for salvation, the thief on the cross could never have been saved, Rahab could not have been saved, they, and many others would have fallen short of the mark and been lost. Yet all of these are represented in the Scriptures as being people who will be in heaven. On what basis have they been saved? They have been saved because they all, through faith, became partak-

ers of the divine nature. They were born again through faith and truly became the children of God. They never learned enough about God and His ways to perfectly represent Him, but they were truly His children nevertheless and on this basis they will be saved. They did not develop perfect characters, few men ever did, but they had the perfect nature of God. When they surrendered to God, they gave Him their lives in all things which they knew to be His will and in this sense, they were perfect. This is the only kind of perfection which is required for salvation and they had it.

Character of the 144,000

The state of the 144,000 is different, however. It is clear that in describing these people God is focusing on perfection of character, rather than perfection of nature. These are not simply born-again Christians, qualified for salvation and no more. These are people who are fit to represent God in the world. These are mature members of the divine family, fully aware of the will and the ways of God and well able to reveal His character to the world. They have the Father's name in their foreheads and it is clear that this represents His last name. The focus is on His character as opposed to His nature. Revelation 14 is talking about **character development**, not the new birth.

The difference between these and other Christians is apparent. It is clear that in focusing on these people, God is not pointing to the qualifications necessary for salvation, but rather to the character which will be developed in those who will finally represent Him on earth in the final moments of time. **It is qualification for a job, not qualification for salvation.**

The fact is, many Christians will be saved who were defiled with women, that is, who were involved with false religious systems. But the 144,000 are entirely free from such defilement. Many will be saved who did not follow the Lamb perfectly, but the 144,000 will

follow Him without deviation. Many will be saved who had character faults even up to the moment of death, but there will be no such blemish on the 144,000.

It is clear that God has a special purpose for the 144,000 and that this purpose makes it necessary for them to have perfect characters. They must be people who perfectly express the principles of God's character in the world, but we must not make the mistake of thinking that this is a necessity for *salvation*. Many persons have become very discouraged and confused because they misunderstood this fact.

false ideas

It is good that every Christian should desire character perfection. This is the natural concern of a person who is born again and possesses the life of Christ. His desire is to more perfectly represent God in this world, to be more like Christ in every way. However, when this concern about character perfection has been perverted into the thinking that character perfection is necessary for salvation, then it becomes a bad thing, and unfortunately, this has been the misconception which many professing Christians have embraced. What have been the consequences of this false idea?

Firstly, every Christian is aware of the fact that he is not perfect. In fact, the closer we come to Christ, the more aware we become of our own imperfections. If we believe that character perfection is necessary for us to be saved, then of course, we can never

ever come to the place where we are ever assured that we have salvation. We are doomed to a life of perpetual uneasiness while we strive and struggle to become perfect, with no real hope of ever being ready for death, or for the coming of Christ. We can only be certain when we are perfect and yet we are always aware that we are not perfect, so, effectively, we have no hope of salvation. This is what this misconception does to us and unfortunately, there are many of us who hold to this wrong idea.

Secondly, this misconception leads inevitably to a focus on what man must do, rather than on what God has done. Many of us still labour under the false idea that there are some aspects of the Christian life which God leaves up to us and which depend upon our own hard work. Unfortunately, we see this as the road which embraces the rest of our lives. We think that although God gives us the new birth, it is we who must perfect the character. The consequence is that the pressure is on us and we spend our days in a state of uneasiness, focusing on what we must do, rather than on what God has done for us in Christ. But if we focus on ourselves, how can we ever overcome sin? What good is there in us, where will we find enabling power if our eyes are on ourselves?

Thirdly, this wrong idea leads to an emphasis on the law above the spirit. Perfection is seen as relating to our behaviour as measured by the law. It is only natural then that the attention is constantly focused on the law and our

relationship to it rather than on Christ and our relationship to Him. The result is legalism, or, religion which is focused on the demands of the law rather than on the enabling of the spirit.

Fourthly, this misunderstanding results in a downplaying of the new birth experience. If man is saved only when his character has been perfected rather than when he is born again, then of course, the really important issue is character perfection. In fact, the new birth hardly seems to be significant and is something which is only of secondary importance.

We are preserved from these false perspectives when we understand that man is saved by being born again, but that he is prepared to represent God properly in the world by the process of character development, leading ultimately to character perfection in the final generation of Christians who live on this earth.



Quotes to Consider

What, shall I live and be silent? Never, let the blow fall, I will await its coming. - (Wycliffe)

Our union with Christ and His righteousness, must be and should be, just as close as that our union has been with sin. - (A.T. Jones)

..unless we live Christ's life of obedience, our profession is worthless. - {RH, August 2, 1906 par. 3}

To talk of Christ without the Word leads to **sentimentalism**. And to receive the theory of the Word without accepting and appreciating the Author makes men **legal formalists**. - {20MR 307.5}

He who has not sufficient faith in Christ to believe that He can **keep him from sinning**, has not the faith that will give him an entrance into the kingdom of God. - (Manuscript 161, 1897).

Available Materials



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God's Last Name

Part 2: The Way of Perfection

Jesus' experience?

In Hebrews 5:8,9 we find a startling passage concerning Jesus. It says,

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; (9) And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; (Heb 5:8-9)

Notice, it says that Jesus "learned obedience," and that He was "made perfect." In other words, although Jesus was perfect from the very beginning, born with the divine nature, never committing a sin by thought word or deed in all His life, yet there was still room for His character to be perfected. No one would say that there was a time in the life of Christ when He was not saved. No one would say that there was a point in His experience when He was not ready for the association of His Father and the heavenly angels. His fitness for heaven was never an issue, and yet, He was not perfect in a certain sense. In this sense, He had to be perfected before He could fulfill the mission for which He came to the earth.

He was already perfect in that His nature was perfect. He was perfect in that at every stage of His development



He walked in harmony with His Father's will. But He was not perfect in that He had never faced the acid test of separation from His Father. He had never been faced with the reality of what it means to be alone in the universe, crushed under the weight of the sin of the world. What would be the result when He was placed in that fiery place? How would His perfect nature and character respond to such a crisis? Only when He had faced and conquered this greatest of all trials could it be truly said that He was perfect in the ultimate sense.

In a similar way, Christians who are already perfect in Christ when they are born again, are still to pass through experiences in life during which their submissiveness to God is to be perfected. Their characters are to be refined and to grow mature as they pass through conflicts and trials.

What is involved?

But what is really involved in character perfection? When we speak of obtaining character perfection, what is it that we are seeking to do? Well, of course, character perfection means getting rid of sin, it means coming to the place where we no longer commit sin and where we are fully in harmony with God's will for mankind, in every way. After all, the 144,000 are said to be "*without fault before the throne of God (Rev. 14:5).*" But how can we understand this if we do not have a proper understanding of what the cause of sin really is? How can we even begin to approach the task of getting rid of sin if we don't even know what we are dealing with?

Sin is not something which can be picked up and put in a box, it is not a collection of actions which can be removed one at a time. Sin has its source in a mind which is separated from God by either rebellion or a failure to abide in Christ. In the case of the uncon-

verted person, it is the mind which is in rebellion against God, in the case of the converted person, sin still finds a foothold because of a failure to abide in Christ. The Bible tells us that the person who abides in Christ does not commit sin (1John 3:6), therefore it is plain that the reason why sin still continues to be manifested in the life of any person is the fact that he does not abide in Christ.

Perfection of character then, is really coming to the place where a person abides in Christ so consistently that there is never any moment when he is not abiding. It is learning to cling to Christ in such an unshakable way that the link between us and Him cannot be broken for even a moment. Perfection of character is not to be viewed as our behaviour in relation to the law, or a certain moral standard. It is more to be viewed as our relationship to Christ and must be approached from this angle if it is ever to become a reality. Of course it involves reshaping the habits of flesh and mind, the strengthening of commitment, discernment, submissiveness and faith, but all of these are to be seen as means of binding us more closely and permanently to Christ. They must be viewed in terms of our relationship to a Person, and not to a standard of behaviour.

Character perfection also involves education to some extent. The more we understand of the ways of God, the more faithfully we can represent Him in the world. This is where a proper understanding of the law has its place. Here it serves as an educator to make us aware of the ways of God. However, if we are honest with ourselves we will have to admit that our failure in spiritual things is not because we do not know what is right. Our problem is not a lack of education and if this was the problem, this would not be an issue with God, for the Bible tells us that God "winks" at our ignorance, or in other

words, He does not consider us to be accountable or blamable for those wrong actions which we sincerely did not know to be wrong. Lack of knowledge of right and wrong really has very little to do with the fact that we still commit sin. If we would live in perfect harmony only with what we know to be right and wrong, we would be very close to perfect living. But the truth is that our real problem is our failure to consistently do what we know to be right. This is not caused by a lack of knowledge, but by a failure to surrender, or to abide in Christ. It is not to do with us and the law, it is to do with us and Christ.

made white by washing?

In Revelation 7:13,14, we find a very interesting statement concerning the 144,000. It says,

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? (14) And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev 7:13,14)

All Christians are clothed in the spotless righteousness of Christ, represented by a white robe, the moment they are converted. Isaiah 61:10, Rev. 3:18 and Matt. 22:11,12 all make this fact clear. These robes are received as a gift from Christ and have nothing to do with anything which we can do or have done. However, the description of these robes worn by the 144,000 seems to be suggesting something unique. It says that they have washed their robes in the Lamb's blood and made them white. This is a description of the 144,000 as opposed to all others who have been saved. The suggestion is that they have an experience in relation to their robes being made white which is different from the experience of other Christians. While all Christians receive a white robe, as a gift, these have an experience in which the robes

are made white, while they are wearing them! In fact, notice that these robes have been made white by the experience of these Christians as they passed through the "Great Tribulation." This is not just any tribulation, it is not just representative of the difficulties which Christians face in their walk day by day. In the Greek text of the book of Revelation it says they have come out of "**THE**" great tribulation! This is the experience of the last great crisis, an experience more terrible than any that Christians have ever experienced.

Why the most perfect?

God has a washing machine in which He will purify characters and it is the great tribulation. However, it is one thing to have my clothes thrown into a washing machine, but it is another thing altogether to have them thrown in while I am still wearing them! If this should happen, then I would know that I had been through great tribulation! God's purpose for the 144,000 is that their characters are to be purified during their lifetimes. They are to become perfect while they are still alive on this earth. They are to have an experience such as no other Christian group has ever gone through in the history of the world. When it is over, they will possess not just God's first name, but they will have God's last name written in their foreheads.

Christians have always had difficulties to face. The Bible tells us that this is inevitable:

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (2 Tim 3:12)

... we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22)

The history of Christians throughout the ages testifies to the truthfulness of these words. Millions have been burned alive, thrown to wild beasts, hunted and persecuted like animals, were torn from their families, suffered hunger, pain, deprivation, terrible tortures, yet, no generation ever attained

to the perfection of character development which is seen in the 144,000. What can we conclude from this? If chastisement and trial is God's way of perfecting character, then clearly, these Christians go through trials which are greater than any that Christians have previously experienced. The mind cannot imagine this, but it is the truth. Something beyond imagination is just ahead of us. May God help us to be prepared by learning to abide in Christ. But we have the assurance that when we are tried we shall come forth as gold. We may anticipate that this great trial will produce in us the "*peaceable fruit of righteousness.*" (Heb. 12:11) God will work in it to perfect the character of His people, to ensure that they have His last name and are capable of rightly representing Him in the world, for the first time, at last.

What is character?

While God gives us His perfect nature in a moment when we are converted, character is different. Character cannot be instantly imparted, or it would not be character. Character involves, patience, trust, hope, loyalty, dependence, integrity, tact, wisdom, purpose, determination. Character is something which is the accumulation of attitudes, perspectives and qualities gained over a period of time. Attitudes learned through the conflicts the defeats the victories of life. Yet, character is not behaviour – it is only *revealed* by behaviour.

How is character perfected?

As I was studying this subject, something came home to my mind forcefully. There is no other way that God can perfect our characters but by means of trials.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (Heb 12:7)

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of

righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. (Heb 12: 11)

When God chastises us, it produces the “fruit of righteousness.” God’s aim for us is that we should be righteous not only in nature, but also in character, that we should possess both His first and last name. Therefore, chastisement is the lot of the Christian, but especially for the 144,000 who are to represent God perfectly in the world, during the last generation.

The harder and the more enduring the trial, the more permanent the change in character. Just think about your own experience: What have been the lessons which stuck most forcefully in your mind and which made the most lasting change in your character? For me, the most striking changes and those which lasted were those which brought some kind of pain, which produced stress, which compelled me to give long and hard consideration to my behaviour. Many times when I was a boy, my parents encouraged me not to do wrong. Over and over I disobeyed them. However, whenever I learned a lesson through hardship or difficulty, or even by getting a spanking from my father, I tended to remember that lesson.

The truth is that trials drive us to deep soul-searching, earnest analysis and life-changing decisions. When we make commitments in terrible adversity they are not easily forgotten or discarded.

The vital quality

The most essential element of character development which the Christian needs is the element of perseverance in abiding in Christ. Since the person who abides in Christ does not sin, then obviously, our greatest problem is that we fail to abide in Him. Our characters are fickle, we fluctuate in our experience and God’s purpose is to teach us lessons of perseverance, of patience. This is certainly implied in Revelation 14:12, which speaks of the 144,000 when it says,

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

One of the outstanding qualities of these Christians is that they have patience, perseverance. Another is that they have the faith of Jesus. Of course, they also keep the commandments of God, but this is only because they have the other two qualities. They keep the faith of Jesus. They possess the life of Christ, received by faith, and they persevere in this relationship with Christ. Therefore, it is the most natural thing in the world that they keep the commandments of God, for Christ in them works to will and to do of His good pleasure. In other words, the perfection of the 144,000 is manifested simply because they have learned to abide in Christ without letting go for even one moment.

Christ monitors the flame

Mal. 3:1-3 has a striking description of this final trial which God’s people endure. It presents the crisis from an unusual and comforting perspective.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. (2) But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: (3) And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. (Mal 3:1-3)

Here we see a description of the final work of Christ in His sanctuary. He is represented as coming suddenly to His temple, or to His church. This represents the final work of the great antitypical day of atonement. What is

the purpose of His coming? He comes to do the work of a silversmith, one who purifies precious metal. In this coming, the nature of His work is similar to that of “fuller’s soap,” a kind of soap which was well known for its whitening qualities.

The question, “who shall abide (or endure) the day of his coming,” suggests that this process of purification will be a fearsome experience. Understandably so, for this purification process will involve the great tribulation. How does one purify silver or gold? I have never seen the process, but I understand that it involves bringing the metal to extremes of heat until the metal melts and runs like water. When the metal reaches this stage, the metalworker will skim the impurities from the metal as they rise to the top of the molten mass. In order to purify metal it is necessary to pass it through great heat. Notice that although the metal must melt and run like water, it does not change its nature, it only comes to a place where the imperfections can be dealt with. The metal remains unchanged.

It is different with trash, however. If wood or leaves or paper or any material which cannot withstand the heat is put in such extremes of heat, not only will it undergo a permanent change, but it will ultimately be destroyed, burned to ashes.

God does not enjoy seeing His people suffer pain and hardship, but as long as we are to remain free creatures, there are some lessons which can only be learned in this way. If a person abides in Christ, then he will not sin, but how easily we are distracted from Christ! How often we determine not to take our eyes off Him only to become aware of how far we drifted, when we find ourselves behaving in an unchristlike manner and recognizing that we have left Him behind without even realizing it!

Yet when a person is placed in a situation of stress, then he tends to keep his mind focused on what is important. For example, if my child is very ill and fac-

ing death, when will I ever forget? When will I stop praying? How often will my mind be distracted by something else? The truth is, even if I must deal with other matters for a moment, I cannot forget. There is a constant weight resting on me which affects my behaviour, my outlook, my approach to every circumstance of life. If I am usually a jovial person who likes to joke and to tease, this will change. Unimportant matters will be put aside and I will give all the attention possible to this child and to the task of finding some way to help him. Prayer will become my way of life. If a person is compelled to remain in such a situation for an extended period of time, then there is the probability that there will be permanent changes made in his character. Perhaps he will never again be as jovial and ready to indulge in idle jokes as before.

In Romania, I met a man whose infant child of two years died a terrible death. This child fell into a pan of boiling water and was scalded to death. The child did not die immediately, but suffered before he died. The person who told me the story said, "for two years the father never smiled." Even when I met him several years afterwards, the father was a serious man who did not smile easily. That terrible experience changed his life forever.

God knows that in order to bring us to the place where we will never let go of Christ for even one moment, He has to take us through a terrible experience. One which we can survive, only by clinging to Him steadfastly, one in which our survival will depend upon how persistently we remain bound to Christ. During this terrible tribulation we will learn to hold on, and to hold on more. All earthly support will be cut off, jobs, homes, food supplies, friends, all will be gone. What will be our support? It will be Christ, and Christ alone. How then can we ever afford to let Him go for even one moment? God will allow this purging process to continue over a period of time. It will not be merely a matter of days, but for many months. The change of character will

be thoroughly accomplished. The dross will be perfectly taken away from us. At the end of this process, there will be a people who will never again let go of Christ, not for a single moment, and therefore, they will never sin again.

Nothing new

There is an important fact which needs to be understood because it allows us to focus on the important element in character perfection. Many of us believe that character perfection consists of the receiving of more knowledge or of learning to discipline and bring our bodies under control. Such persons are constantly making efforts to improve themselves, they are in a constant fight with themselves in an effort to purge sin from their lives.

However, sin is not something which can be taken up and put aside. It is not something physical or tangible. The reason why a person commits sin is because he is controlled by his own carnal mind rather than the mind of Christ. Even today, as we are told in 1 John 3:6, the person who abides in Christ does not commit sin. Therefore victory over sin is a simple matter. If we can get to the point where we abide in Christ constantly, then it is evident that we will then be at the place where we will have overcome sin permanently. Therefore the apostle Paul tells us that "*he that is dead is freed from sin.*" (Rom. 6:7). In other words, the person who puts self aside and allows Christ to live, is free from sin.

So when total victory over sin is finally experienced by the 144,000, it is important to recognize that in reaching to this place, nothing new is received. God has not given them a different gift than He has given to all other Christians, but in actual fact what we already have is made permanent. This is the great difference. Through the great tribulation, we will learn lessons of abiding, we will learn perseverance in maintaining our hold on Christ. It is the character of Christ that becomes permanently integrated into

us, it is not man's character. It is not man developing, but Christ living more consistently. It is becoming what we already are.

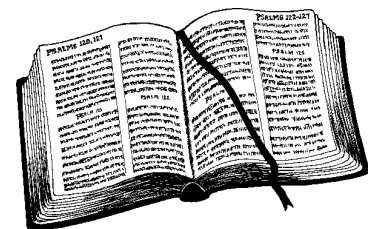
So, to put it another way, the relationship with Christ becomes *unbreakable* while the relationship with self is *permanently broken*. Self-will, self-government is purged from the soul.

Why a "new" song?

Beloved, the experience of the 144,000 will be a terrible one, but it is an experience to be coveted. What a privilege to be chosen to represent God before a world which has chosen to defy Him! What a privilege to manifest Christ in a time when Satan has set out to prove that it is impossible for man to be entirely free of the principle of self-government. If we truly love God and His Son, the painful process by which we are purified will not seem to be too high a price to pay for the privilege of showing the universe that salvation is real and complete. All who are included among the 144,000 will be people who are willing to suffer the pain, that God may be glorified in them.

Therefore we are told that this 144,000 sing a new song. It is new, because *nobody has ever sung it before*. Why not? Because nobody in the history of the planet has ever had their experience. Nobody has ever been so fully integrated into Christ and so, these, "follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

Something in me cries out, "Lord, I want to be one of them." May all of us who love Him find an echo of this desire in our hearts.





Jeanique and Brother Ken show that age is not a barrier to communication.



Heavy reasoning during the break



Peter makes a new friend



Ayon sings of "Beulah Land."



The choir sings, "Everybody will be happy over there"

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Our plans for campmeeting this year started out with the problem of locating a new campsite. The place where we had met for the past four years was not available as hurricane Dean had removed sections of the roof of the dormitories and the restrooms. Repairs would not be completed in time for our meetings and so we started searching for a new place.

This was easier said than done. Each year we have our campmeetings over the Easter week-end. Since there is a public holiday on "Good" Friday and one on Easter Monday, in Jamaica, there is a very very long week-end and this is a convenient time for campmeeting. The trouble is that most people have the same idea and this is a time of year when every available camping spot is usually booked, long in advance. Finding a place proved to be a challenge.

But finally Brother Neville and Sister Heather found a place in the hills of St. Ann, near the town of Moneague. It was a former school which had been converted into a campsite and consequently, it had ample dormitory and bathroom facilities. There was also an auditorium/dining room which had the capacity for seating a few hundred people. The grounds were not as spacious and open as the YWAM grounds where we normally have our campmeetings, but the surroundings were pleasant and peaceful. Although it cost a bit more than we would normally have to pay, we decided to grab this spot.

Getting there

The campsite is situated on the Northern side of the island and none of our people (those who are members of the various groups) live on that side. Because of this, it presented a bit of a challenge for everyone to get to the campsite. However, those who had vehicles helped those who did not and brother Neville's truck and van were of great help. We started out late as we all had to wait on some who were tardy before we set off for the camp. Because of this, combined with a breakdown of one of the vehicles, we arrived so late on the first night (midnight) that the scheduled first meeting, had to be abandoned.

Nevertheless, by God's grace we got there safe and sound,



Greg Forde
Georgia, USA



Ken Corklin
Pennsylvania, USA



Peter Barnz
Kingston, Jamaica



Glington Gordon
St. James, Jamaica

THE SPEAKERS

Most of the campmeeting speakers were from Jamaica, but three came from the USA. These were, Ken Corklin, the main speaker, Greg Forde and Don Cox. Don and Greg were not scheduled to speak but were happy to share with us when they arrived.

From Jamaica there were the usual speakers, Howard Williams, Neville Morris, David Clayton, Peter Barnz, along with Don Clayton, Colin Gyles and Glington Gordon.

As has been the case for the past three years, the predominating subject presented at the campmeeting was Christ and His righteousness and this was reflected in the theme, "*The Power of His Resurrection.*"



David Clayton
Manchester, Jamaica



Neville Morris
Manchester, Jamaica



Don Cox
Ohio, USA



Donald Clayton
Spanish Town, Jamaica



Colin Gyles
Kingston, Jamaica



Howard Williams
Manchester, Jamaica

although admittedly, more than a little tired.

The campgrounds are set in peaceful surroundings up in the hills. Moneague is noted for being a cool area and in the mornings at daybreak the nearby landscape, hills and valleys were blanketed with fog. This however, dissipated as soon as the sun started to rise and did not prevent what was usually a wonderful view of the sun rising above the low-lying hills. The grounds

were small but well kept. On the left there was a pasture where a very-friendly donkey was kept. He became great friends with the children (and adults too) who constantly brought him little treats and petted him.

Those who Came

Most of the brethren represented by the five groups in the island were present at the



Youth Corner: Joel, Alanda, Justine, Satnarine & Jean



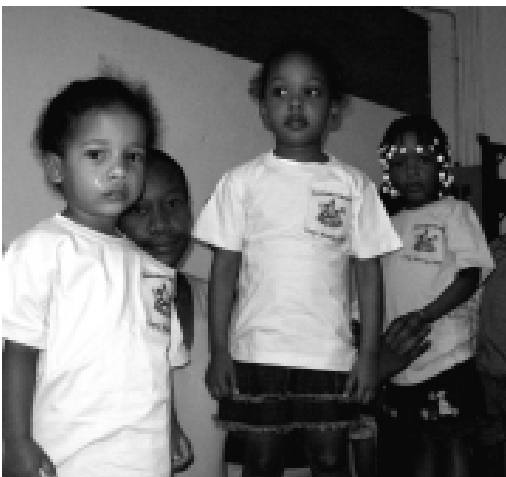
Martina & Theola



Lukie (Howard Jr.) pays close attention



Satnarine & Josiah get acquainted



These little ones pose in their T shirts



**Thoughtful young faces
Roger, Onika, Alanda & Justine**

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campmeeting. They mostly came from Kingston, Spanish Town, Clarendon, Manchester, St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland, St. James, but there were a few also present from other places. On the Sabbath there were even about six brethren from an SDA church who visited with us and seemed to be blessed by what they heard.

One notable absentee from this year's campmeeting was sister Jen Clayton. This was the first time that she had ever missed a campmeeting, but very sad circumstances prevented her from attending this year. Shortly before the time for the campmeeting, her grandmother died at the age of 101. The funeral and its arrangements, unfortunately, clashed with the campmeeting and so she had to be absent.

The program

Each day started with worship at 6.30 a.m. and although it proved to be a

challenge for some to get up at that time in the cool foggy morning atmosphere, a good proportion of the brethren braved the chill to make sure that they did not miss the morning "manna."

There were six meetings during the three days, ending with the 7.30 meeting each evening. One highlight of the meetings was two question and answer sessions where difficult questions and vague points were addressed.

This year a special effort was made to meet the needs of the children. This was a voluntary effort undertaken by some of the young adults, guided by sister Naomi Morris. Most of us were unaware of their plans until the camp began. This was a pleasant surprise and one which was very much appreciated, not least of all by the children! They were profitably occupied for the entire duration of the meetings.

At the end of the campmeeting each

child was presented with a T shirt printed with the words, "Restoration Ministries Campmeeting 2008."

The Fellowship

Ask anyone and they will tell you that one of the best things about campmeeting is the fellowship. The messages were wonderful. The reminders recharged us all and fixed our eyes more fully on Christ as the mark to be attained. But one of the greatest joys was being able to live with and to eat with and to have little chats and discussions with brethren that we had not seen for some time. When it all came to a close on the morning of the fourth day, we all were a little reluctant to leave. When we finally dragged ourselves away and started for home, it was with the feeling that next year is just too far away.



Open Face

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