

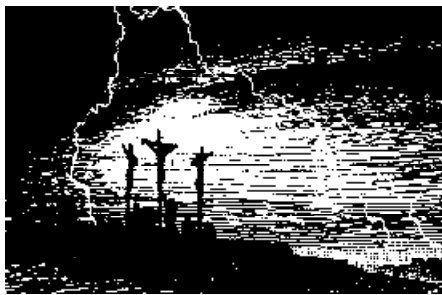


Open Face

THE MEASURE OF GOD'S LOVE

David Clayton

This article is the first part of a transcript of a taped message. The second part will follow in the next issue of Open Face.



Many sincere Christians often ask themselves the question, "why is it that I am trying so hard to be a Christian, yet seem to be failing so often?" Is there really, as the Old Testament prophet cried, "no balm in Gilead?" Is there really no way that I can live the life that I dream of, and ache for? The life that I think that God wants me to live? Is there really no way? Must it be that as long as we live in this flesh, we can never live a sinless life?

Some years ago with this thought heavy in my mind I turned to St. John chapter fourteen and found two verses that made an impact on my mind. They were verses 21 and 23. In verse 23 Jesus said, "If a man loves me, he will keep my words, and my father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Notice, that Jesus does not say, "if a man loves me, I am asking Him to keep my words." He is not giving a commandment. Here He is stating a fact. That same statement of fact is made in one of the songs we sing.

*"I love thee, I love thee
and that thou dost know,
but how much I love thee,
my actions will show."*

In other words, the degree of our love for Jesus is manifested by the degree of our obedience. Think of a man who cannot stop smoking, and drinking. He is addicted to these bad habits. All his life he tries to stop smoking but he cannot stop. Then he meets the girl of his dreams and finds that she can't stand the smell of cigarette smoke. Why does he now find the strength that he could never find all his life, to stop smoking immediately? He found the power of love.

Jesus is saying, "the degree of your obedience is the measure of the kind of love that you have for me. If you love me you will keep my words." God is saying to me, "if you can't obey me, it is because you don't love me."

A Special Privilege

In verse 21 the Lord gives us a great promise. He says,

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father ..." (John 14:21).

Now we know that God loves everybody, so what did Jesus mean when He said, "if you love me and keep my commandments, my Father **will love** you." What does He mean, "**will love**?" Didn't God love me before? Certainly Jesus is trying to tell us something here. He continued by saying, "and I will love him, and will mani-

fest myself to him." The question that came to me as I read that verse is, "what did Jesus mean by saying, *will love him*?"

The meaning of His words is explained in that last line where He says, "*...will manifest myself to him.*" To manifest yourself means to show or reveal yourself. In our homes we have needs and we pray about them but what happens? No answer! God cannot manifest himself in our homes. We have needs and we pray, and it seems as if the heavens are brass. Like God has closed glory against us. There is no answer to our prayers. We are in our homes and the gun man is passing around the district, and we are in fear, like everybody else. We don't have the manifestation of God's presence in our homes. We don't sense or feel or experience the love of God. Why? Because we have not kept His commandments, and have not loved Him or kept His words. Therefore He cannot reveal himself the way He wants to. He says, "look here! there is a promise that I give to you. A wonderful, great and true promise." He says, "There are some people who are going to have the experience that I live in their homes. This is the promise for those who obey me because they love me."

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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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The next verse has a similar promise. It says, "if a man loves me, he will keep my words and my father will love him." Again He says, "and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." To make your abode means to live there, isn't that right? is our home the dwelling place of God? does He live there? When I move through my house night or day, do I sense an invisible presence? Is He so near to me that I dare not speak a wrong word? God says, "I will give you this privilege that I will come and live in your home. That's what I will do for you if you love me and keep my words." What a privilege! What He is talking about is the revelation of His presence. The sense of a personality with you. The sense of protection, of comfort, surety and safety. The sense of one who hears and answers your prayers.

The people who have this kind of experience, are not the people who kneel down at night to pray and fall asleep or have their minds racing all over, from here to Timbuktu who can't concentrate on God. Those are not the kind of people we are talking about. We are talking about people who know God so real and close, that when they pray,

they know they are in the presence of the living One.

The reason for our sleepiness and lethargy is only because the sense of the Lord's presence is not that strong upon us.

The Greatest Commandment

Anyway these two verses set me on a little exploration. The whole Bible is about this great question: how much do we love God? The greatest commandment says,

"...thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength...(Mark 12:30)"

This is the greatest and first commandment. God knows that this is the secret. When you truly love, then everything in your whole life falls into place. So we have to ask ourselves the question, "why don't I love the Lord the way I should?" There is a reason. Is it because God is not worthy of love? Your reason says "He is worthy," but your heart does not respond. If your reason knows that God is worthy of love, why is it that your heart does not respond with the kind of love that He deserves? There is a difference between what your reason says and what your heart knows. Your reason says "He is lovable." But your heart does not know it. Why? Because your heart does not know the things God has done for you.

A Reason For Love

1 John 4 :19 says, "we love him because He first loved us." Love begets love. It is true that we ought to love Him because He first loved us, but did He really love us first? We say, "He loved us, and He sent His only begotten son to die for our sins," but that has become such a cliché, so much a part of our tradition, our culture, that I don't think there are many of us including myself, who have really understood what it means that God gave His only begotten Son, to die in our place.

I want to challenge you with a statement from Ellen White. It says,

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it. Yet as we study the Bible and meditate upon the life of Christ and the plan of redemption, these great themes will open to our understanding more and more. (Testimonies For The Church, Vol. 5, p. 740)

When you compare the ocean with those billions of gallons of water to a little brook, maybe as thick as my hand just trickling down the hillside, that's what all the human love from Adam to the end of time is like. All the human love put together is like that little stream compared to the ocean when matched against the love of God. I can see the theory of that in my mind, but I have not fully appreciated it.

There is a particular subject that I am going to study for **billions** of years, and yet I can never learn **all** about it. That subject is God's love for me. I really cannot grasp that. I really can't under-

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WHO IS IN APOSTASY?

Nearly twenty years ago when I was first exposed to the independent movement within Adventism, one prominent name among the independents was that of Willard Santee. Santee had made a set of tapes entitled, "Circle of Apostasy," which documented a damning departure from biblical and Spirit of Prophecy principles in several facets of Seventh-day Adventism. For several years Willard Santee made the rounds of the camp meetings as a popular speaker who relentlessly exposed this "apostasy" within Adventism.

I was as surprised as anybody else when the news came that brother Santee had done an abrupt about face, recanted of all he had been teaching, and had penitently returned to the fold of the mainstream Adventist Church, thus completing his circle. It was evident that at some point brother Santee had been in apostasy. The only question was, was it when he had originally left the SDA church, or was it now that he had returned to it?

Over the years there have been several other turnabouts similar to Santee's. Most noteworthy in fairly recent times have been those of David Mould and John Osborne. John Osborne arrived on the scene like Jehu, and almost overnight became the biggest name and ministry within independent Seventh-day Adventism. His charges of apostasy against the church were unsparing and a high percentage of his ministry's time and finances went into documenting the fact that the SDA Church was in deep apostasy.

When Osborne's financial misdealings brought his ministry to a crisis, things took a dramatic and unexpected turn. Osborne's loyal supporters watched in disbelief one day as on live satellite broadcast, Osborne's invited guest speaker, Willard Santee, preached on the importance of remaining within God's "true church," the organized SDA church. What followed the sermon was almost an anticlimax and those who had the stomach for soap

operas watched as a "weeping" John Osborne asked Willard Santee to help to guide him back to "God's true church" (which he had unsparingly denounced as Babylon a few months earlier).

David Mould also spent much of his time exposing "apostasy" within Adventism. That is, until indiscretions in his personal life became public knowledge which brought his ministry to its knees. Mould was subsequently rebaptized into the SDA church, and ever since then his voice has been mute on the subject of denominational apostasy.

All of these cases bring one thing strikingly home: These men either did not believe the charges of apostasy which they made, or else they later revised their opinion of what apostasy really means. This is the only way one can account for the fact that they now find themselves comfortable in an organization which they previously denounced as being guilty of the greatest apostasy.

Defining Apostasy

The *Webster's New World Dictionary*, defines apostasy as being, "an abandoning of what one has believed in, as a faith, cause, or principles." This definition bears thinking about. All those who charge the SDA church with "Apostasy" should carefully consider this definition before making such a charge. Has the SDA church denied what it once believed?

The failings of Santee, Osborne and Mould compelled them all to recognize something. They were forced to the realization that you can't charge a whole church with apostasy merely on the basis of the failings of individual church members, even if those members are prominent leaders. Men, and even groups of people will do wrong things, and even people in high places, but this is not a valid reason for making the charge that the church, as a system, is in apostasy.

In order to determine if the church is in apostasy we must have access to two bits of information. One is, a definitive statement of what the church now holds as its religious faith, and the other, a definitive statement of what the church held as its religious faith in the past. Comparison of both these things will help us to determine whether or not there has been a change and whether or not this has been significant. This is the factor which we must examine in concluding whether or not there has been apostasy.

Is there any place where the SDA church has plainly declared what its teachings are? Is there any place where these teachings have been clearly defined in such a way that it can be plainly understood what the church believes and teaches as a body?

There is such a place. In its statement of fundamental beliefs the SDA church has declared the doctrines which it considers fundamental to its existence. The doctrines which identify and set it apart as a unique entity and which give it a reason for a separate identity from all other denominations. It is by this document and this document alone that we can fairly judge whether or not the SDA church on the whole has gone into corporate apostasy.

A Startling Change

As early as 1872 Seventh-day Adventists published a statement outlining carefully the doctrines which were held by them "with great unanimity." This statement was re-published without any significant alterations in 1889 1905, and 1907-1914.. However by 1931 when the statement was once again published, a sudden and dramatic change had taken place in the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists. The statement dealing with the doctrine of God had undergone a "most startling change."

The original Statement, published in 1872, 1889, 1905, and 1907-1914 (while Ellen White was still alive), read as follows:

The Godhead

1. *That there is one God, a personal, spiritual Being, the Creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by His representative, the Holy Spirit. Psalm 139:7*

2. *That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, and Son of the Eternal Father, the One by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist....*

The 1931 revised statement was much different. It now referred to God as a Trinity, rather than as an individual. It stated:

“That the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created ... the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption. Matt 28:19. That Jesus Christ is very God, being of the same nature and essence as the Eternal Father. While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the nature of the human family”

What is most interesting about this change is the fact that it was not made by the same generation of people. In other words it was not made as a result of people who believed one thing studying and revising their opinions. It was a change which was implemented by a new generation of Seventh-day Adventists in total contradiction to the beliefs of the previous generation, and against the wishes of many of those who were still alive from that previous

generation. Russell Holt, former associate editor of the *Signs of The Times*, describes the change in this way:

1900-1930. This period saw the death of most of those pioneers who had championed and held the anti-Trinitarian position. Their places were being taken by men who were changing their thinking, or had never opposed the doctrine. The trinity began to be published, until by 1931 it had triumphed and become the standard denominational position. Isolated stalwarts remained who refused to yield, but the outcome had been decided. (Russell Holt – *The Doctrine of The Trinity in The Seventh-Day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance*)

Let us look again at the definition of apostasy. It is “*an abandoning of what one has believed in, as a faith, cause, or principles.*” It would be hard to find another example which fits this definition of apostasy as perfectly as does this change in Adventism from the concept of one God and His Son, to the concept of the Trinitarian, or Triune God. This is the only definitive change in the doctrines of Seventh-day Adventism which has taken place from the time that Adventists first published a statement of beliefs in 1872 unto the present time.

Many of the Independent Ministries, referring to themselves as “historic” Seventh day Adventists, claim that the SDA church is in apostasy. They accuse the church of having changed its position on “The Nature of Christ,” “The authority of Ellen White,” “The timing and nature of the atonement,” standards of dress, health reform etc. Interestingly, however, none of these ministries can point to a definitive statement by the SDA church in which it has officially changed its position on any of these doctrines from the time of the early Seventh-day Adventists until today. There is only *one* doctrine which has been changed officially and it is the doctrine concerning God. This change has been such a drastic one and of such a revolutionary nature that

it led George Knight, an SDA historian to write:

“Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination’s Fundamental Beliefs. More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the trinity.”– Ministry, October 1993 p.10

Therefore any charge of apostasy against the SDA church can only be valid if it focuses on the issue of the change in the SDA position on the doctrine of God. All other accusations can only be aimed at individual indiscretions, or apostasy of a localized nature. It is this realization which has caused many former “reformers” to find their way back to the “mother” church. It is this realization that the charges of apostasy really cannot be substantiated unless the focus is placed on the Godhead. In the *Issues*, book put out by the General Conference this fact was thrown into the teeth of the “Historic Adventists.”

*“If one wishes, however, to claim additional content from that era [the early Adventist era] and make that content binding in our day ... the question is: Would one be willing to accept **all** the content from that earlier era? Are the modern defenders of so called historic Adventism really prepared to return to a non-Trinitarian position?”*

Not surprisingly, none of the so-called “historic” Seventh-day Adventists responded to the challenge put out by the church in the book, *Issues*.

ARE THE CHICKENS COMING HOME TO ROOST?

We can expect in the future to see more and more “historic Adventists” returning to the fold of the mainstream SDA church, as they come to realize that they really have no real ground on

which to accuse the SDA church of apostasy. Not unless they recognize the only real ground for the charge of apostasy, which is the departure from the church's original position on the doctrine of the godhead.

Already there are significant indications that some of the bigger names around in Independent Adventism may be retracing their steps back to the mother church in the very near future.

Ominous Signs

The General Conference administrative committee (ADCOM), in early 1998, established an ad hoc committee to interview the leadership of *Hope International*, publishers of *Our Firm Foundation*, and two other private groups, *Hartland Institute*, headquartered in the United States, and *Remnant Ministries*, based in Australia.

The committee developed a 20-question instrument that was the basis of their inquiry and appraisal. The leaders of Hope International and its associated groups accepted the committee's invitation to answer the questions. They met with the General Conference-appointed group on two occasions for a total of three and one-half days. Below are some of the problems which the GC Committee found with the position of these ministries.

Excerpts from GC Committee Report

"... the emphasis on revival and reformation we found in the message of Hope International, Hartland Institute, and Remnant Ministries (hereafter referred to as Hope International and associates) is welcomed. Further, we observed in conversations with Hope International and associates that they affirmed agreement on many of the major elements of the Seventh-day Adventist faith.

However, the method they have used to express their concern has resulted in what is perceived by many to be a spirit of constant criticism directed against the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is the body of Christ, the remnant church. The effect of this meth-

odology is the discouraging portrayal of the church as steeped in a state of apostasy. After studying their materials and meeting with their leaders, we have some serious concerns with respect to the nature and purpose of Hope International and associates.

Areas of Serious Concern

1. Charge of Apostasy Against the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2c. Rewriting of the Baptismal Vow.

A baptismal vow was put together by Colin Standish using the 1932 Church Manual and other sources. An examination of this baptismal vow reveals that it is significantly different from what is found in the current Church Manual as approved by the world church. Among the differences are the following:

(1) A new fundamental belief added as a requirement for joining the church: that "Jesus took upon Himself our fallen nature." Such a statement has never been part of the Seventh-day Adventist baptismal vow or of official statements of fundamental beliefs...

(2) The vow dealing with tithing does not identify the church as the repository of tithe, as does the official baptismal vow.

3. Supporting Dissident Movements Hope International and associates have supported, and continue to support, dissident movements who turn against the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its organization.

4. Selectively Using Ellen G. White Writings

Conclusion

The accumulative effect of the above information results in the perception of many church members that Hope International and associates are offshoot organizations. They have not taken the decisive step of officially separating themselves from the Seventh-day Adventist organization, and they claim that they never will. However, by rejecting the authority of the world church in session when their interpretation of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy differs from that of the church, they have set their authority above that of the world church and operate in a man-

ner that is consistent with offshoot movements.

An Appeal

We appeal, in all sincerity and Christian love, to Hope International and associates to hear the counsel of the church they claim to love. It is time for the spirit of condemnation and rebellion to be set aside, allowing the reconciling blood of Christ to bring unity among His people.

If Hope International and associates cannot bring themselves into harmony with the body of the world church, clearly evidenced within 12 months, the Seventh-day Adventist Church may need to consider whether there exists a "persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church" (Church Manual, p. 169)."

Recent developments

There is evidence that the not so subtle threat by the General Conference has had its effect. Most of us have heard of the GC lawsuit brought against Pastor Rafael Perez and the Eternal Gospel church in Miami, for using the name "Seventh-day Adventist." Before and during the trial, Pastor Perez received strong support from the Standish brothers and most of the independent ministries which expressed deep shock and grief at the continuing "apostasy" of the church in calling upon the arm of the state to enforce its institutions. This trial was no secret event, but received widespread coverage both in the public media as well as in the publications of the various ministries.

Since that time however, some events have occurred which seem to be highly significant in light of the veiled threat issued to "Hope International and associates," by the General Conference.

Evidently Pastor Perez and his group put an ad in the *Toronto Tribune* and had a small group handing out pamphlets in Toronto during the recently held General Conference session. The advertisements were apparently openly critical of the Seventh-day Adventist

Church. Hope International have responded to Pastor Perez's actions by canceling Pastor Perez's speaking appointments at their campmeetings as the following letter from Hope reveals.

Email from Hope International:

Dear Brother Rafael,

This is just to let you know that the withdrawal of the invitation to the Angelus Oaks and Angwin camp meetings remains. There are some of the board members who are feeling uncomfortable about the Toronto ad also and so until we all have time to evaluate and digest the situation with prayer and guidance from above I feel it would be better to avoid any possible conflict it could cause for Hope's ministry.

Please know that you have my love and prayers. It is my desire that the pain of this court process will not cloud your message or your vision of a finished 3 Angels message to the world.

I am sorry my brother to send you this news but I pray that you will understand.

God Be With You,

Harry Hansen

The following quotation, taken from a recent issue of the *Remnant Herald*, the paper published by Dr. Russell Standish also reveals the displeasure of "Hope International and associates" at the activities of Pastor Perez in Toronto.

"In fairness we must report that in Toronto during the General Conference Session one self-supporting worker took the opportunity to place an advertisement in a newspaper which exposed some of the distressing matters within our church. Colin and I, without our knowledge, were accurately quoted in

that article. Our words, as quoted, were from material presented only within the church and that is where we intended it to be confined. Colin, on behalf of himself and myself, did personally express his disappointment that this material was spread to the world, for we dare not despoil the one object of Christ's regard, even if the organizational leaders do denigrate us.

Let us in self-supporting work never move outside the bounds of inspiration and let us ever present an example of the highest level of conformity to divine counsel. Only thus can God bless us, whether we are privileged to serve Him in self-supporting work or in the organized work."

The truth is that, as we have stated before, neither Hope International nor any of the Independent Ministries really have any ground for accusing the Church of apostasy, as long as they continue to be in agreement with the Church in the act of rejecting the position of the pioneers on the question of the Godhead. They are all in the same boat in apostasy and the other issues being agitated by the independent ministries are quibbles compared to this issue. Those other issues may be reason for concern and agitation, but are not enough of a reason for reasonable people to separate from the mother church. This is why we would not be surprised if Hope International and company make their way back home to "mother" in the near future.



"Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience."

Desire of Ages, p. 232

THE BUSY MAN

If you want to get a favor done
By some obliging friend,
And want a promise safe and sure
On which you may depend,
Don't go to him who always has
Much leisure time to plan,
But if you want your favor done,
Just ask the busy man.

The man of leisure never has
A moment he can spare,
He's busy "putting off" until
His friends are in despair;
But he whose every waking hour
is crowded full of work
Forgets the art of wasting time-
He cannot stop to shirk.

So when you want a favor done,
And want it right away,
Go to the man who constantly
Works twenty hours a day.
he'll find a moment, sure, some-
where
That has not other use,
And fix you while the idle man
is framing an excuse.

But not too busy

Too Busy

Too busy to read the Bible
Too busy to wait and pray
Too busy to speak out kindly
To someone by the way

Too busy with care or struggle
To think of life to come
Too busy building mansions
To plan for a heavenly home

Too busy to help a brother
Who faces the wintry blast
Too busy to share his burden
When self in the balance is cast

Too busy for all that is holy
On earth beneath the sky
Too busy to serve the master
But not too busy to die

The Measure Of God's Love Continued from page 2

stand it. The fact that Christ died on a cross for me, I mean that commonplace thing that we talk about all the time, is there really so much depth in it? What a wonderful project this gives us! If that is going to be our study for eternity, then we should start digging on that subject right now. We should start on a project that is worth while, because every endeavor of man in this life will come to an end somewhere. Sometimes you come to a place where man knows no more, but the depth of God's love can never be exhausted. Not only is that depth there, but we have a Father who is willing to open it up to our understanding. It is the whole purpose for which we were created. To know what that love is. I learned the words of a song some time ago, and I just want to share them with you.

*Oh the bitter pain and sorrow,
that the time could ever be
when I proudly said to Jesus,
"all of self and none of thee."*

*Yet he found me, I beheld him
bleeding on the accursed tree;
and my wistful heart said faintly,
"some of self and some of thee."*

*Day by day his tender mercy
healing helpful full and free,
brought me lower while I whispered,
"less of self and more of thee."*

*Higher than the highest heavens
deeper than the deepest sea
Lord thy love at last has conquered,
none of self and all of thee.*

That's what the knowledge of the love of God will do for us. That's the transformation it will bring, taking us from all of self to none of self; taking us from none of God to all of God. That's what God wants to do and there is only one thing that can accomplish it. It is the knowledge of the love of God.

John 3:16

John 3:16 is a well known verse. It gives the essence of the message of

the entire Bible in a few lines. It is a text that is so precious that it has been translated into eleven hundred languages. The Bible society, *Gideons International*, has included it at the beginning of every New Testament which they publish, in twenty six different languages.

"God so loved the world." The first thing I see in that verse, is an explanation of the degree of God's love. Now you know when you talk about degree, you are talking about the extent. This is high, this is higher, this is still higher. In using the word *SO* in that verse, God is trying to show us the degree of His love. To what extent He loves the world. He so loved the world, that He gave. The second thing I notice, is that true love is not content to sit quietly by. True love cannot be idle. God's love was of such a nature, that He had to do something. He gave. But what did He give? He gave His only-begotten Son. Let's meditate on that for a little while.

I realize that the people who believe in the Trinity are doing a great disservice to God's love. They are doing a dishonor to God. God did not give a speech, He did not give a mountain of treasure He did not give worlds or galaxies. What would it take for God to give these things? It would take the breath of His mouth. All it takes for God to create a world, is the breath of His mouth. What does it take for Him to create a mountain of gold? His word. God didn't give these things. What God gave was His only begotten Son. Now think on that. There is nothing in all eternity, there is nothing in all infinity that God could have given, that was more valuable to Him than that son. Meditate on that and know that it is true.

"The Eternal Father, the unchangeable one, gave his only begotten Son, tore from his bosom Him who was made in the express image of his person, and sent him down to earth to reveal how greatly he loved mankind. (Advent Review and Sabbath Herald - July 9, 1895)

If God wanted to show me His love, what could He have done? Some of us might have appreciated a mountain of gold more, some of us would rather we were millionaires, than that Christ



died for us. Isn't that a dreadful thing, but what does it take for God to make me a millionaire? A snap of His fingers; a word spoken and I could be materially richer than any other being in the universe. If God speaks a word, what does that cost Him? Nothing. But there was one Being in the universe who was one with the Father. From the days of eternity, He was the only person whom God could talk to as a Counterpart.

If God talks to me like a friend, I wouldn't even understand what is going on in his great mind. Mind cannot meet mind on that level. Where God and I are concerned, it is a genius speaking with a worm. True, He speaks in the worm's language. Glory and praise and thanks. But how much intellectual harmony can He achieve with a worm?

God had one Being in the universe who was one with the Father; He could understand the mind of God. God could discuss things with Him, think with Him and feel with Him. He knew exactly what the Father could feel, and that was the One that God had to give up. When I say give up, I mean He had to lose Him for thirty-three terrible years. In those thirty-three years, He had to watch Him in the slime pit, as if He had thrown Him into a hog pen and had to stand there watching Him covered with the filth of it; had to watch Him suffer, battered, bruised, scorned and despised by the beings He had gone to save, and yet God could not deliver

Him. Couldn't do for Him what His heart yearned to do. He had to let Him suffer, and watch helplessly as His Son died. God weighed that against me and I came out on top.

Such a Gift For Whom?

When God weighed the suffering of His Son against David Clayton, the love for David Clayton came out on top. He put both things in the balance and He weighed them, and David Clayton came out on top. I was more precious than the sufferings of His Son, and the Bible holds that up to us as the measure of God's love. The Bible says, "He loves you so much, that He gave this for you." It asks us to contemplate that love.

Romans 5:8 says,

"God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Let us look at this word *commendeth*. "Commend" as used here, means "to demonstrate, to show." It is the greatest, the most complete statement of His love for us, that in our worst, most unacceptable, degraded, repulsive state, He gave the greatest gift, hurt himself the most, deprived himself of the thing most precious to Him, because of the degree of His love for us.

Now I want you to think of what that is saying. It was the greatest for the worst. Search through the universe from corner to corner, from the milky way galaxy to the other three hundred million galaxies somewhere out there. Billions and billions of worlds without end that go on forever. Search through it, and you will never find anything as vile and corrupt as *a sinner*. There is nothing in all of God's creation that is worse, more degraded, more fit to be destroyed, more worthy of eternal damnation than a sinner. You may not believe that that is your true state, or that is what you deserve, but I want to tell you this, sin raised up a wall between us and God that was impenetrable and dark. We might have searched through eternity and never found a way through

that wall. There was no way, and on the other side of this wall was us. That was what we were when the Bible says, "*while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*" It is showing us that at the moment, when we were the worst thing possible, God gave the greatest gift that could ever have been given.

When I say the greatest gift, I don't mean the greatest gift of this period of time, nor the greatest gift that God could have given. I mean the greatest gift that any being any where in any time, in any place, could ever have thought of giving. That was what God gave. When I think of it I ask myself, "what am I that I could be the object of such a love?" This reminds me of a song that was sung by Skeeter Davis. It says, "Who am I that a king should bleed and die for?" I don't have an answer to that question, I just know it happened. I know it is true, because God did it for me, and when He did it, It is not because I was worth a single cent, It was just because He loved me.

True Sons

1 John 3:1, says:

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

Again, we are being invited to examine the love of God, and we are asked to look at the kind and the degree of that love. What kind of love is it? A kind of love that gives us the privilege of being identified as the sons of God.

I have seen people on this earth who have received the privilege of being called by another name. There are some Jamaicans who consider it the highest privilege to be called by the name "American." They will do anything to get a green card, or get American citizenship. They consider it the highest privilege to get another name. Some people who have been grown as orphans, consider it a high privilege when they have been adopted into a family, and receive the family name.

John says, we are to consider the kind of privilege God has given us in that He has given us the right to be called the sons of God.

Now you have often seen the case where somebody has the right to call himself by a name, but in actual fact, even though he calls himself by that name, nothing can really make him forget that he is not a part of that family. He does not have the blood, and sometimes there are little signs that make him know that he is not quite accepted as a member of the family. Take the Bible when you have the time, and look through it. Write down all the things a son has the right to. Then I want you to see if God has not given us every one of those things.

God has given us an inheritance. What does the Bible say about inheritance? It says that we are *joint heirs* with Christ. Christ is the son of God. If we are joint heirs with Christ, what is the Bible saying? It is saying that what is His, is also yours. "You are my son," God says. "I do not just give you the name, but I also give you the privilege, the right of a son." That's the love God has for me.

God gives us the right to a name. In Isaiah 56, He gives us a place and a name better than sons and daughters. In Revelation, He says He will write upon us His own new name. He gives us an inheritance, He gives us the right to a father's care. doesn't a son deserve that? Psalm 103 says: "*As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.*" He says in Isaiah 49:15, "*Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*" He gives us the right to have the same nature. A son has the blood of his father in his veins. We have the spirit, the very life of our Father. Where are we short of being true sons?

Let me tell you something, my sonship to God is true in the fullest possible way. I am not merely called a son of

God, I am truly a son of God. Even more so than in an earthly father-son relationship. I have an earthly father. He gave me of his life, but today I am separated from him physically. I am a different being, but when my Father in heaven makes me His son, what am I? He does not just give me something and leave me. He links Himself to me, so that His mind is my mind, His life is my life in a continuing relationship that is not broken or cut. It is closer than a physical father-son relationship.

God has truly, without pretense, without deception or exaggeration, exalted us to the state of sons. Sometimes when a man says "you are my son," he is only pretending. Sometimes he is just using a phrase, and only exaggerating a bit. He only means you can live in my home. He is talking out of two sides of his mouth and he is not quite straight. But God does not use pretense, or deception, or exaggeration. When He says "you are my son," He means I am His son.

When I realized this, I had to hold my head up. I am the son of the Almighty. I am somebody. I am worth something. I had to hold my head high and behave like royalty, to glorify Him in all my ways, because of that wonderful name by which I am called, because I am

His son. I have no other identity. He did not just call me His son, but He made me His son. That is the greatness of the love He has for me.

From The Gutter To Glory

In our natural state we were the Pariahs. In India, a Pariah is the lowest class of being. One who is scorned, despised and avoided by the rest of society. We were the Pariahs of the universe, the most despicable objects in all creation. That is what we were. There was nothing in humanity that was good. We were fit for destruction. The least deserving of all creatures. Ungrateful and unlovely, but oh so pitiable to the heart of infinite love and in such unspeakably great need. These conditions called forth from our Father's heart the greatest expression of love. Upon us, He bestowed the greatest gift of heaven, the greatest gift of all the universe. He exalted us to a privilege greater than that of any other created being. There is no other creature in all the universe that has called forth such an expression of love. Have you thought about that? No angel or being in the universe ever called forth such a demonstration of love as we have called forth from God. He has shown to us, a love that He never had

the opportunity to show to anybody else, and He did it when we were at our lowest, and worst. Never ever should we question God's love for us.

The other creatures in the universe have heard of the love of God, and they have seen the love of God in His workings. They have seen the love of God in the trees, in the stars, in rivers and in the hills, but I have felt the love of God in my experience. I have seen rags, and now I know riches. I have known the gutter, and now I know glory. I have experienced something that they will never experience, unless they have been in my place. I will know the love of God as nobody will ever know it, or ever could. God's purpose for us, is that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of his glory in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7). Yet we do not know that love. That is why we keep despising Him and disobeying Him so much. We need to study that love, and we need to make it the object of research and careful study every day of our lives, until we are so filled with it, that we can truly echo the words of that song, "none of self and all of Thee."



CAMPMEETING

August 1-5

The date for campmeeting this year is August 1-5. It begins on a Wednesday morning (orientation on the evening of the Tuesday) and we break camp on the morning of the Sunday following. It will again be held at Mount Forest. Please notify us early if you are planning to attend by writing to the address, or calling the number below.

Among the speakers who we are expecting to participate this year will be Pastor Allen Stump of Smyrna Gospel Ministries and Elder Willis Smith of the Third Angels Prison Ministry. There may be others, as well as our usual local speakers. This promises to be a blessed campmeeting and we wish to encourage everyone to make every attempt to so organize your affairs that you will be able to attend all five days of the meetings. We will inform you more fully of the details of this campmeeting in future issues of Open Face.

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THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST

The whole life of Jesus was a living manifestation of the character of His Father. It was a living representation of the standard of the law of God. The life of Christ was the law personified. We see mirrored in our Saviour's life the true meaning of keeping the commandments of God.

*This transcript is taken from E.G. White's **The Desire of Ages**. The page references will be placed alongside each statement. As you behold the character of your Lord, will you consider that this is what it means to keep the law of God?*

HIS LOVE

- 62 At all times and in all places He manifested a loving interest in men, and shed about Him the light of a cheerful piety.
- 62 He worked to relieve every case of suffering that He saw.
- 66 He spoke a word of sympathy here and a word there, as He saw men weary, yet compelled to bear heavy burdens.
- 65 His life was marked with respect and love for His mother.
- 67 The healing power of love went out from Him to the sick and distressed.
- 127 He manifested an interest in men's secular affairs.
- 145 He spoke with solemn dignity, and both look and tone expressed such earnest love, that sinners were not offended as they realized their humiliating position.
- 225 His tender compassion fell with a touch of healing upon weary and troubled hearts.
- 225 His character expressed love in look and tone, and a sweet sympathetic spirit.
- 226 When He saw men refuse the message of peace, His heart was pierced to the very depths.
- 296 His heart, that loved and pitied, was a heart of unchanging tenderness.
- 334 His heart overflowed with love for the whole human race, but he never became indulgent about sin.
- 344 He who taught the people the way to secure peace and happiness was just as thoughtful of their temporal necessities as of their spiritual need.
- 384 His love was not circumscribed to race or nation.
- 446 He sought not to condemn, but to save. He spoke words of comfort and hope.
- 495 He was a lover of children. His gentle and kindly manner won their love and confidence.
- 516 His tender, pitying heart was ever awakened to sympathy by suffering.
- 595 His enemies read in His calm, solemn face, love, benevolence and quiet dignity.
- 669 During every hour of His life upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams.
- 726 His every feature expressed gentleness, and resignation and the tenderest pity for His cruel foes.

HIS UNSELFISHNESS

- 43 In principle firm as a rock, His life revealed the grace of unselfish courtesy.
- 46 From His earliest years He was possessed of one purpose; He lived to bless others.
- 62 He laboured earnestly for humanity.

- 64 He did not contend for His rights.
- 65-6 He was always sacrificing Himself for the good of others.
- 182 He was so emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself.
- 376 He was so fully surrendered to the will of God that the Father alone appeared in His life.
- 559 He did not manifest selfish sorrow.
- 663 His whole life was a life of unselfish service.
- 635 He did not think of Himself. His care for others was uppermost in His mind.

HIS TACTFULNESS

- 49 Jesus carried into His labour cheerfulness and tact.
- 127 He reached the hearts of the people by going among them as one who desired their good.
- 127 His strong personal sympathy helped to win hearts.
- 144 He did not meet argument with argument.
- 225 He had tact to meet the prejudiced minds.
- 223 He made truth beautiful by presenting it in the most direct and simple way.
- 498 In all His intercourse with rude and violent men He did not use one unkind or discourteous expression.
- 518 When He reproved, His words were spoken with the utmost gentleness.
- 577 It was not His purpose to humiliate His opponents.

HIS HUMILITY AND MEEKNESS

- 49 He shunned display.
- 63 He did not strive for worldly greatness, and in even the lowest position, He was content.

- 64 He did not contend for his rights.
- 66 He weeded all vanity from His life.
- 111 He took no measures to bring Himself into notice.
- 112 His manners were gentle and unassuming.
- 232 In that life there was no noisy disputation, no ostentatious worship, no act to gain applause
- 307 He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment.
- 556 He remained true to the humble lot He had accepted.
- 726 His every feature expressed gentleness and resignation and the tenderest pity for His cruel foes.

HIS PATIENCE AND COURAGE

- 63 He never manifested an impatient word or look.
- 64 In His work He was willing and uncomplaining.
- 64 He did not retaliate when roughly used, but bore insult patiently.
- 64 He never became discouraged.
- 307 He was still of good courage when amid the greatest opposition and most cruel treatment.
- 343 He was not impatient even though interrupted and robbed of rest.
- 606 He spoke no words of retaliation.
- 687 His heart was patient and gentle, and would not be provoked.

HIS PURITY

- 47 Neither gain nor pleasure, applause nor censure, could induce Him to consent to a wrong act.
- 47 He was wise to discern evil and strong to resist it.
- 63 He hated but one thing in the world, and that was sin. He could not witness a wrong act without pain which it was impossible to disguise.

- 66 His presence brought a purer atmosphere into the home, and His life was a leaven working amid the elements of society.
- 214 He was the embodiment of purity.
- 214 He dwelt among men as an example of spotless integrity.
- 223 His language was pure, refined, and clear as a running stream.
- 225 He was surrounded with an atmosphere of peace, even amid the turbulence of angry enemies.
- 307 In the heart of Christ where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace
- 569 His life was a rebuke to men's sins.

HIS DIGNITY AND MANLINESS

- 43 In principle He was firm as a rock.
- 62-3 He possessed a dignity and individuality wholly distinct from earthly pride and assumption.
- 146 He spoke with solemn dignity.
- 334 He never purchased peace by compromise.
- 565 His enemies read in His calm, solemn face, love, benevolence, and dignity.
- 733 Even under disgraceful treatment, he bore Himself with firmness and dignity.

HIS DILIGENCE AND INDUSTRIOUSNESS

- 47 In His industrious life there were no idle moments to invite temptation.
- 48 He was perfect as a workman, as He was in character.
- 62 He laboured earnestly for humanity.
- 179 A wise purpose underlay every act of Christ's life on earth.
- 341 His life was crowded with labour and responsibility

HIS MINISTRY

- 65 He would not enter into controversy, yet His example was a constant lesson.
- 66 He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the saving remedy to every soul.
- 66 To the discouraged, sick, tempted, and fallen, Jesus would speak words of tenderest pity, words that were needed and could be understood.
- 66 He would not betray secrets that were poured into His sympathizing ear.
- 127 He saw in every soul one to whom must be given the call to His kingdom.
- 127 He did not sermonize as men do today.
- 178 As people heard His word they were warmed and comforted. He spoke of God not as an avenging judge, but as a tender Father.
- 253 He had nothing to do with subjects of dissension among Jews. It was His work to present the truth.
- 223 He taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority.
- 223 He was earnest rather than vehement.
- 265 He loved to gather the people about Him under the blue heavens, on some grassy hillside, or on the beach beside the lake.
- 313 He rested by faith in His Father's care.
- 341 His life was crowded with labour and responsibility; yet how often He was found in prayer.
- 419 He taught men not to place themselves needlessly in antagonism to established order.
- 434 He was not presumptuous, nor would He rush into danger, or hasten a crisis.
- 577 It was not His purpose to humiliate His opponents.



WHY WE MUST THINK RIGHTLY ABOUT GOD

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.

The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God.

For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church....

Were we able to extract from any man

a complete answer to the question, "What comes into your mind when you think about God?" we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man. Were we able to know exactly what our most influential religious leaders think of God today, we might be able with some precision to foretell where the Church will stand tomorrow...

That our idea of God correspond as nearly as possible to the true being of God is of immense importance to us. Compared with our actual thoughts about Him, our creedal statements are of little consequence. Our real idea of God may lie buried under the rubbish of conventional religious notions and may require an intelligent and vigorous search before it is finally unearthed and exposed for what it is. Only after an ordeal of painful self-probing are we likely to discover what we actually believe about God.

A right conception of God is basic not only to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well. It is to worship what the foundation is to the temple; where it is inadequate or out of plumb the whole structure must sooner or later collapse. I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God.

It is my opinion that the Christian conception of God current in these middle years of the twentieth century is so decadent as to be utterly beneath the dignity of the Most High God and actually to constitute for the professed believers something amounting to a moral calamity."

The above passage is an extract from the book, "The Knowledge of the Holy," written by A.W. Tozer (who incidentally had wrong ideas about God himself, since he was a Trinitarian)

Open Face

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