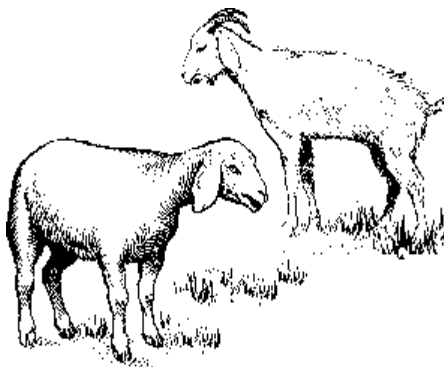




Open Face

THE NATURE OF CHRIST

From The Bible and Ellen G. White



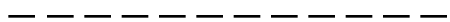
Many questions continue to arise concerning the divinity of Christ. When He was here on earth, was He divine or wasn't He? Did He retain His divinity or did He lay it aside? Was it a divine Being who paid the price for the sins of humanity or was the death of Christ merely the offering of a human sacrifice?

Critical to a proper understanding of this issue is the question of what nature Christ took in the incarnation. Was it the sinful, or the sinless nature? Could He take sinful nature and still be a divine Being? How could He be sinless if He partook of sinful, fallen flesh? The questions and the arguments go on and on.

It is not possible for a person to resolve the questions and seeming contradictions surrounding this issue unless he first of all understands the true nature of intelligent beings, whether they be divine, angelic or human. It is necessary that we have a clear understanding of the truth that all intelligent beings are composed of two parts, these two parts being body and spirit. These two components are not independent of each other. The one cannot exist in a conscious state without the other, but

at the same time, they are distinct aspects of any intelligent being. *(if this concept is new to you, send for our audio tape entitled, "The Biblical View of The Holy Spirit.")*

Bearing all this in mind we have endeavored to put together a sampling of quotations from the Bible and the writings of Ellen White which we believe will help to clarify the issue of exactly what was the nature of the Son of God when He became flesh and dwelt among us



DID JESUS TAKE MAN'S FALLEN NATURE?

(Heb 2:16-18) For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. {17} Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. {18} For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

*(3SM - 134) –Though He had no taint of sin upon His character, yet He condescended to connect our fallen human nature with His divinity. By thus taking humanity, He honored humanity. **Having taken our fallen nature**, he showed what it might become, by accepting the ample provision He has made for it, and by becoming partaker*

of the divine nature.—Letter 81, 1896. *(IBC - 1085) –What love! What amazing condescension! The King of glory proposed to humble Himself to fallen humanity! He would place His feet in Adam's steps. **He would take man's fallen nature**, and engage to cope with the strong foe who triumphed over Adam. He would overcome Satan, and in thus doing He would open the way for the redemption from the disgrace of Adam's failure and fall, of all those who would believe on Him*

*(Manuscript Releases Volume Seventeen - 29) – **Christ assumed our fallen nature**, and was subject to every temptation to which man is subject.—Ms 80, 1903, p. 12.*

DID JESUS TAKE MAN'S SINFUL FLESH?

Rom 8:3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Note: In the **likeness** here, does not mean that He merely resembled sinful

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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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flesh. See the following verse as an illustration of this fact.

(Phil 2:7-8) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

Jesus was made in the **likeness** of men. Does this mean that He merely resembled men, or did He indeed truly become a man? Of course He became man. He did not make-believe take humanity (1 John 4:2,3; 2 John 1:7). In the same way, when it says that Jesus was made in the **likeness** of sinful flesh, it does not mean that He merely resembled sinful flesh, but that He actually partook of sinful flesh.

(Medical Ministry - 181) – Daily the Saviour’s compassion must be revealed. The example He has left must be followed. He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succor those that are tempted.

(RH - 07-17-00) – Christ did in reality unite the offending nature of man with his own sinless nature, because by this act of condescension he would be enabled to pour out his

blessings in behalf of the fallen race. Thus he has made it possible for us to partake of his nature. By making himself an offering for sin, he opened a way whereby human beings might be made one with him.

DID JESUS PARTAKE OF MAN'S SINFULNESS?

(1 Pet 2:22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

(1 Pet 1:19) But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

*(ST - 05-29-01) – In the fulness of time He was to be revealed in human form. He was to take His position at the head of humanity by **taking the nature but not the sinfulness of man.***”

(5BC - 1131) – In taking upon Himself man’s nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin. He was subject to the infirmities and weaknesses by which man is encompassed...”

(S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5 - 1128) – Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God. He could fall, and he did fall through transgressing. Because of sin his posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience. But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but **not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity.** He was assailed with temptations in the wilderness, as Adam was assailed with temptations in Eden.

IN WHAT WAY DID JESUS PARTAKE OF MAN'S FALLEN NATURE?

(Luke 3:23) And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli (actually, the Son-in-law of Heli - see margin) ,

(Note: This genealogy of Jesus, given in the book of Luke, traces the ancestry of Jesus through His mother, Mary. Since among the Jews, the lineage was always traced on the father’s side, what was the point of this record given by Luke? Why did God ordain that it should be here, a part of Scripture? The only reason for this genealogy is to show what Jesus’ physical inheritance was on His human side.)

*(The Desire of Ages - 48) – It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man’s nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But **Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors.** He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.*

(Gal 4:4) But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

(Heb 10:5) Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

*(Selected Messages Book 1 - 268) – In what contrast is the second Adam as He entered the gloomy wilderness to cope with Satan singlehanded! Since the Fall the race had been **decreasing in size and physical strength, and sinking lower in the scale of moral worth,** up to the period of Christ’s ad-*

vent to the earth. And in order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he was. **He took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He, who knew no sin, became sin for us.** He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might be qualified to reach man, and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him.

(S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7A - 448) – The Son of God humbled Himself and took man’s nature after the race had wandered four thousand years from Eden, and from their original state of purity and uprightness. Sin had been making its terrible marks upon the race for ages; and **physical, mental, and moral degeneracy prevailed throughout the human family.** When Adam was assailed by the tempter in Eden he was without the taint of sin. . . . Christ, in the wilderness of temptation, stood in Adam’s place to bear the test he failed to endure.

(*The Desire of Ages* - 117) – Many claim that it was impossible for Christ to be overcome by temptation. Then He could not have been placed in Adam’s position; He could not have gained the victory that Adam failed to gain. If we have in any sense a more trying conflict than had Christ, then He would not be able to succor us. But **our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured.**

(*God’s Amazing Grace* - 167) – He was a mighty petitioner, **not possessing the passions of our human, fallen natures, but compassed with like infirmities,** tempted in all points even as we are. Jesus endured agony which required help and support from His Father.

(*Testimonies for the Church Volume Two* - 202) – He is our example in all things. **He is a brother in our infirmities, but not in possessing like passions.** As the sinless One, His nature recoiled from evil. He endured

struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin.

DID JESUS RETAIN HIS DIVINITY IN THE INCARNATION?

(*Luke 1:35*) *And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

(SBC- 1129) – But although Christ’s divine glory was for a time veiled and eclipsed by His assuming humanity, yet **He did not cease to be God when He became man. The human did not take the place of the divine, nor the divine of the human.** This is the mystery of godliness. The two expressions “human” and “divine” were, in Christ, closely and inseparably one, and yet they had a distinct individuality. **Though Christ humbled Himself to become man, the Godhead was still His own. His deity could not be lost while He stood faithful and true to His loyalty.** Surrounded with sorrow, suffering, and moral pollution, despised and rejected by the people to whom had been intrusted the oracles of heaven, Jesus could yet speak of Himself as the Son of man in heaven. He was ready to take once more His divine glory when His work on earth was done.

(S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7A-444) – Laying aside His royal robe and kingly crown, Christ clothed His divinity with humanity, that human beings might be raised from their degradation and placed on vantage-ground. Christ could not have come to this earth with the glory that he had in the heavenly courts. Sinful human beings could not have borne the sight. **He veiled his divinity with the garb of humanity, but He did not part with His divinity.** A divine-human saviour, He came to stand at the head of the fallen race, to share in their experience from childhood to manhood. That human beings might be partakers of the divine nature, He came to this earth, and lived a

life of perfect obedience.

(S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5-1126) – He “was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death.” He voluntarily assumed human nature. It was His own act, and by His own consent. **He clothed His divinity with humanity. He was all the while as God, but He did not appear as God. He veiled the demonstrations of Deity, which had commanded the homage, and called forth the admiration, of the universe of God. He was God while upon earth, but He divested Himself of the form of God, and in its stead took the form and fashion of a man. He walked the earth as a man.**

For our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. He laid aside His glory and His majesty. He was God, but the glories of the form of God He for a while relinquished.

WHAT ASPECT OF DIVINITY DID JESUS RETAIN?

(*My Life Today* - 323) – **In His human nature He maintained the purity of His divine character.** He lived the law of God, and honored it in a world of transgression, revealing to the heavenly universe, to Satan, and to all the fallen sons and daughters of Adam that through His grace humanity can keep the law of God. He came to impart His own divine nature, His own image, to the repentant, believing soul.

(S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7A - 456) – Jesus looked for a moment upon the scene,—the trembling victim in her shame, the hard-faced dignitaries, devoid of even human pity. **His spirit of stainless purity** shrank from the spectacle. Well He knew for what purpose this case had been brought to Him. He read the heart, and knew the character and life history of everyone in His presence. . . . The accusers had been defeated. Now, their robe of pretended holiness torn from them, they stood, guilty and condemned, in the presence of **Infinite Purity.**

WAS JESUS JUST LIKE OTHER PEOPLE in every way?

(John 1:14) And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father;) full of grace and truth.

(The Youth's Instructor- 09-08-98) – No one, looking upon the child-like countenance, shining with animation, could say that Christ was just like other children. He was God in human flesh. When urged by his companions to do wrong, divinity flashed through humanity, and he refused decidedly. In a moment he distinguished between right and wrong, and placed sin in the light of God's commands, holding up the law as a mirror which reflected light upon wrong. It was this keen discrimination between right and wrong that often

provoked Christ's brothers to anger.

WHY COULD NO OTHER BEING HAVE ACCOMPLISHED CHRIST'S WORK?

(John 1:18) No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

(The Desire of Ages - 22) – The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awak-

ened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. **Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known.** Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Mal. 4:2.

*(Advent Review and Sabbath Herald— 10-01-89) – We cannot explain the great mystery of the plan of redemption. Jesus took upon himself humanity, that he might reach humanity; but we cannot explain how divinity was clothed with humanity. **An angel would not have known how to sympathize with fallen man,** but Christ came to the world and suffered all our temptations, and carried all our griefs.*



THE REVELATION OF THE FATHER

Ellen G. White

The Son of God came from heaven to make manifest the Father. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Matthew 11:27. When one of the disciples made the request, "Show us the Father," Jesus answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" John 14:8, 9.

In describing His earthly mission, Jesus said, The Lord "hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18. This was His work. He went

about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. There were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house, for He had passed through them and healed all their sick. His work gave evidence of His divine anointing. Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of men. He took man's nature, that He might reach man's wants. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Even little children were attracted to Him. They loved to climb upon His knees and gaze into the pensive face, benignant with love....

Jesus did not suppress one word of truth, but He uttered it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact and thoughtful, kind attention in His intercourse with the people. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a

sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He spoke the truth, but always in love. He denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity; but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes. He wept over Jerusalem, the city He loved, which refused to receive Him, the way, the truth, and the life. They had rejected Him, the Saviour, but He regarded them with pitying tenderness. His life was one of self-denial and thoughtful care for others. Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He ever bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with the tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save.

Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God. It is from the Father's heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out

to the children of men. Jesus, the tender, pitying Saviour, was God “manifest in the flesh.” 1 Timothy 3:16.

It was to redeem us that Jesus lived and suffered and died. He became “a Man of Sorrows,” that we might be made partakers of everlasting joy. God permitted His beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory, to a world marred and blighted with sin, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted Him to leave the bosom of His love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:5. Behold Him in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, upon the cross! The spotless Son of God took upon Himself the burden of sin. He who had been one with God, felt in His soul the awful separation that sin makes between God and man. This wrung from His lips the anguished cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Matthew 27:46. It was the burden of sin, the sense of its terrible enormity, of its separation of the soul from God—it was this that broke the heart of the Son of God.

But this great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father’s heart a love for man, not to make Him willing to save. No, no! “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” John 3:16. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption.

Jesus said, “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.” John 10:17. That is, “My Father has so loved you that He even loves Me more for giving My life to redeem you. In becom-

ing your Substitute and Surety, by surrendering My life, by taking your liabilities, your transgressions, I am endeared to My Father; for by My sacrifice, God can be just, and yet the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.”

None but the Son of God could accomplish our redemption; for only He who was in the bosom of the Father could declare Him. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it manifest. Nothing less than the infinite sacrifice made by Christ in behalf of fallen man could express the Father’s love to lost humanity.

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” He gave Him not only to live among men, to bear their sins, and die their sacrifice. He gave Him to the fallen race. Christ was to identify Himself with the interests and needs of humanity. He who was one with God has linked Himself with the children of men by ties that are never to be broken. Jesus is “not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11); He is our Sacrifice, our Advocate, our Brother, bearing our human form before the Father’s throne, and through eternal ages one with the race He has redeemed—the Son of man. And all this that man might be uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin that he might reflect the love of God and share the joy of holiness.

The price paid for our redemption, the infinite sacrifice of our heavenly Father in giving His Son to die for us, should give us exalted conceptions of what we may become through Christ. As the inspired apostle John beheld the height, the depth, the breadth of the Father’s love toward the perishing race, he was filled with adoration and reverence; and, failing to find suitable language in which to express the greatness and tenderness of this love, he called upon the world to behold it. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John 3:1. What a value this places upon man! Through transgression the sons of man become subjects of Satan. Through

faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ the sons of Adam may become the sons of God. By assuming human nature, Christ elevates humanity. Fallen men are placed where, through connection with Christ, they may indeed become worthy of the name “sons of God.”

Such love is without a parallel. Children of the heavenly King! Precious promise! Theme for the most profound meditation! The matchless love of God for a world that did not love Him! The thought has a subduing power upon the soul and brings the mind into captivity to the will of God. The more we study the divine character in the light of the cross, the more we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice, and the more clearly we discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite and a tender pity surpassing a mother’s yearning sympathy for her wayward child. (*Steps To Christ, pp. 11-15*)

It is true that God gave His only-begotten Son to die for us, to suffer the penalty of the [broken] law of God. We are to consider this and dwell upon it. And when our minds are constantly dwelling upon the matchless love of God to the fallen race, we begin to know God, to become acquainted with Him, to have a knowledge of God, and of how Jesus Christ, when He came to our world, laid aside His royal robes and His kingly crown and clothed His divinity with humanity. For our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. The Father sent His Son here, and right here on this little atom of a world were enacted the grandest scenes that were ever known to humanity. {1888 *Materials, p. 75*}



MORE THOUGHTS ON THE LOVE OF GOD

David Clayton

This article is a compilation of some thoughts somewhat randomly written more than ten years ago.

Love is the Key

If ye love me, keep my commandments. (John 14:15)

Jesus said, "if ye love me." This is the condition, showing the factor on which everything depends. Love for Jesus is the critical factor. Everything hangs on this. Without this nothing may be achieved. There is no stronger motivation. 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' (2Cor.5: 14:)

To "keep," means to observe, to remember, to do, and to carry out. In order to keep the commandments of Jesus one must keep them ever before His mind. But in order to keep them before his mind he must keep Jesus before his mind (1John 3:24, Eph. 3:19)

Why should I love Jesus?

(1 John 4:19) We love him, because he first loved us.

This is the reason why I should love Jesus. Therefore how may I come to love Him? Clearly, by coming to the realization, by seeing, by understanding that He loves me.

How do I know that He loves me?

(1 John 3:16) Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

(1 John 4:9-10) In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

The proofs of God's Love are given here:

1. He sent His son into the world (His only begotten)
2. To lay down His life for us
3. To be the propitiation for our sins
4. That we might live through Him

He sent : He, the eternal, and omnipotent one, The God who fills the universe, who

is beyond our understanding, has yet revealed to our wondering minds this wonderful reality of His unspeakable love for us by sending His Son. He had a choice in the matter. It was not a matter of course. It was not automatic. He made the choice to send His son. Why? Because of the greatness of His love for me. He felt the pain that His only begotten must feel. He knew the disgraceful treatment he would receive, the path of suffering He must tread. He knew Jesus' final despair when He must veil His presence from Him and the horror of a great darkness, which would break His Son's heart. But He chose to send Jesus, His only begotten, for me, in spite of all this.

Why? How could He make such a choice? What thought or feeling is in the mind of the Eternal One as he beholds me? Sorrow, yes, at my sinful state. Pity, yes, for my suffering and ignorance. But LOVE too! Yes, love so great, so wonderful that it tipped the balances in my favour when he weighed my life against the thought of the sufferings of His Son.

God sent: What marvelous comforts are in the words! I'm worth something! It's worthwhile to fight against sin! My life has meaning and purpose.

It was His only begotten that He sent. Here is the proof of His love. In a thousand ways His love is demonstrated to us day by day. In sunshine and rain, food, shelter and good things. In every way He is pouring out His love upon us. But the highest demonstration of this love, the true revealing of His heart towards us, is seen in the gift of the only begotten. Jesus was not only the commander of the angels, the Creator of the universe, the confidant and close associate of the Father. No, He was the beloved Son. The only-begotten. He was the delight of His Father's heart. Prov.8: 20; Matt.3: 17.

What did it cost my Father and Jesus?

He sent His Son into the arena to fight against a deadly enemy. But how did He send Him? Not as an equipped warrior with an arsenal equal to that of the enemy. No! He came as a helpless human being, with all the limitations of a human being knowing that He would be assailed at every step by a superhuman foe of terrible strength and cunning. He had but one weapon. This weapon was FAITH. Indeed, it was an awesome weapon, for with it, He could lay hold on any weapon in the armoury of heaven. But faith could

be tested, faith could be shaken, faith could be broken. Faith meant, not fighting Himself, but depending on another to fight for Him. Would that One always help? Never let Him down? In moments of test when there seemed to be no help, would His faith fail? All this risk Jesus accepted for me. All this, my Father chose, that I might live. It was His beloved who was to suffer thus, and it is easier to suffer oneself than to watch a loved one suffer. But because of their love for me, God and His Son made the awesome sacrifice.

At the moment when He made the choice to come to live and die for my sake, Jesus stood with His father and looked down the stream of time. He saw that for a fearfully long time He would be separated from His beloved Father in every way except through faith. He saw that he would lose His cosmic awareness; He would be unaware of the decisions of the heavenly council, be unable to see - except by faith-beyond the veil of the invisible. Yet he bade His father good-bye, laid down His position as Prince and commander of heaven and came down to earth to fight for me, FOR ME. For He could not be happy in the peace and light and joy of heaven, while I perished in darkness without hope

To lay down His life? One may ask, "But didn't Jesus rise again?" This is true, yet the measure of His sacrifice may only be appreciated as we come to understand what He went through. It was the degree, and the kind of suffering which He underwent which makes His sacrifice either small or great.

Jesus suffered;

- a) The pain, and reality of physical death.
- b) The mental agony and the fear of the uncertainty of death.
- c) The spiritual separation from His Father, the hiding of the face of God, which is the reality of the second death.
- d) The fierce attacks of a powerful, determined enemy (Satan) who used every means at his command to try to break his will, shatter his faith, lead him to sin and to destroy him.
- e) The unbelievable ingratitude of those whom He had come to save.

Yes, Jesus gave up his life, suffered and died as fully as any human being has ever died, to be the propitiation for our sins that we might live through Him.

Today, we may live through Him. Live the

life of heaven, the life of victory, because through Him, we have the life of God (The Holy Spirit). We have also everlasting life: The life that never will end. The life that measures with the life of God. All this, because Jesus loved me and gave Himself for me. Oh that I may truly appreciate this 'unspeakable gift' and live as one who has received it! (2 Cor. 9:15)

What is the extent of God's Love for me?

(Jer 31:3) The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Everlasting means to have no end. To continue forever and forever. Why did God choose that word? Why didn't He say, "strong," or "deep," or "true?" Because He wants me to know that He will never stop loving me. No matter what I do, where I roam, how I forget, He will NEVER stop loving me. This is a reality I can count on forever: God's love for me is everlasting. Nothing can stop it, block it, or weaken it.

"Therefore," he says "with loving kindness have I drawn thee." This love is not a passive, impotent thing. It leads God to draw me to Him, to be ever seeking ways and means by which he may pull me closer to Himself, that I may know the more abundant joy. When I have fallen again and again; when I am acutely aware of my own evil heart and my helplessness, O may I remember the everlasting love of my Father! The love that will not let me go, nor leave me in sin. This love which pursues me is my guarantee of victory. My part is to turn around and simply meet this love which has always pursued me. No need to search for Him. He has been seeking me forever. All I need to do is to face that love.

called the sons of God

(1 John 3:1) Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:

By nature we are the sons of Adam, flesh and blood, a combination of certain elements, soon to be disintegrated and returned to the dust whence we came. In behaviour and mind we were the children of Satan sold into sin, unable to do any good thing, polluted and corrupt to the core of our being, fit only to be eradicated from the face of creation.

But God in His indescribable love has wrought a marvellous change; has performed a wondrous miracle through the

life and death of His Son Jesus, and translated us from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of light. Has made us heavenly beings, with the mind and outlook of Jesus, His only begotten son, that we also could become the Sons of God.

What manner of love is this? To care for, to love us who were enemies, afraid of Him, polluted, disgusting, loathsome, separated from Him: To love so much that it was not enough to make us servants only, or friends only, or guests only, or to give us life only. No. We are, because of His wondrous love, through His grace, in His Infinite wisdom, by the gift of His only begotten Son, THE SONS OF THE ETERNAL GOD! Heirs to all the rights and privileges of sonship. From being the dregs, the offscourings of the universe, to being the princes, the true sons of the king!

This state of sonship does not consist merely in the bearing of a title; does not mean chiefly the acceptance of certain duties and responsibilities. No, principally, it means the binding of our souls with the soul of God in the closest possible bond. It is the emphasizing of how full, deep, warm and certain is His love for us. It is the assurance of our complete acceptance by Him in every situation under every circumstance, at every moment no matter what my situation, no matter what my circumstances. He is my **DADDY** (abba)! (Rom.8: 15). It also emphasizes our position as little children; humble, submissive, meek. Always listening for, and obeying instructions from our Daddy. Knowing that He is so much wiser and much more knowledgeable than we are, and – because he is our Daddy – so willing to guide us in the right way so that we may not hurt ourselves.

As God Loves Jesus

(John 15:9) As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

As the father hath loved me – in the same way, with the same kind of love. With the same degree (measure) of love.

How does the Father love Jesus?

- a) He is His beloved- Matt.17:5
- b) He is His delight- Prov.8:30

Beloved is the term used to refer to one who is loved in a special way. One who is particularly dear. One who is loved, not just as a matter of principle, but loved in an intimate way. One with whom communion and fellowship is a thing sought after and which brings delight. One who is taken to the bosom and hugged and cherished and loved.

This is how Jesus loves us as we obey Him. Such a love is not easily daunted. Such a love is ever seeking ways of demonstrating itself, of making itself manifest. Our God 'delights' in us, we make him happy, He sees our every action. We make Him smile if indeed we do the things that please Him.

God's demonstration

(Rom 5:8) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (New King James Version)

A demonstration is a public display for the purpose of convincing others. So I could say, then, "God put His love on open display; He found a way of showing it so that it could be appreciated. This was not love, in a general sense. This is God's **own** love. This is to say that there is none other of this kind in the whole universe. Where this kind of love appears, there, we may be sure, we are seeing God's own love.

Towards us

This demonstration of God's love is particularly a demonstration of His love towards the race of Adam. Though unfallen beings may behold in this demonstration an indication of the greatness of God's love, yet, this is a statement of love, not in a general sense, but towards the sons of men. We had no claim on love, no rights, no reason to be loved. So the greatest characteristics of God's love, revealed here, and perhaps never realized before, is the **unconditionality** of God's love.

(Mat 5:44-45) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45) That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

This is the key now. This is the thing, which gives us the nature of that love.

While we were yet sinners

- We were, voluntarily aliens and strangers to God
- We did not seek Him, nor have any inclination to seek Him.
- We had chosen the ways of the great enemy of God, Satan.

- Our hearts were vile; our natures were evil and full of corrupt thoughts and deeds.
- We despised that which was good and pure and upright. Even to this day a good person is often referred to as being “soft.”
- We were the most despicable, unlovely beings in all the universe

It is our nature as fallen beings to scorn, despise, shun and hate those who are unlovely and wretched and evil. Not so with God, He sees beneath the surface. He sees the tortured hearts, the desire for something better, the potential to change under his hands and become beautiful and worthwhile. Therefore He loved us in our wretched condition, and moved all heaven, and gave its best gift so that we could have the new life. This is how God’s love for us has been demonstrated. In the giving of the best for those who were the worst. For those sons of Adam He poured out all of heaven. He lavished the abundance of Himself upon them in their wretched state, and elevated them to a position of closeness with Himself more intimate and full than any other creature is able to achieve. In Himself, soothing their pain, washing away their dirt, overwhelming them with such a flood of love as to take away the memories of their 6000 years of horror.

In sending Jesus to die ‘while we were yet sinners,’ God demonstrated that His love is unconditional. It does not matter who I am or what I have done. He gave Jesus for me. I am only one of billions and billions of specks of life in an infinite universe, but He will not give me up! Losing me would have been an immeasurable loss, measured by the only worthwhile scale in the universe, that is, the love of God. He weighed my eternal loss against the sufferings of Himself and His Son, and He chose in my favour. Needless to ask how or why He could love thus. This is the revelation of the heart of God to the universe. The unfolding of what He is. There is no reason, or need of reason why He should love me. He does, because of who He is. Therefore I may be certain of this: **while God lives I will be loved!**

Christ died for us

What was there in us to commend us? What was there to plead for God’s good will? Nothing. There was not a shade of anything lovely. Here, then, it is demonstrated once and for all and forever, that God loves us, not because of who we are, or because of what we have done, but rather because HE IS LOVE! This is the

eternal security of the universe. God is love! His everlasting attitude towards all His creatures, is one of good will. He cannot be otherwise, because this is what he is. Such a Being may always be trusted. Christ died for us. And in this sacrifice, God gave His best to those who were worst. More than that, He gave everything He could give, to those who were, in themselves, worth nothing. He gave His life, for, and to those who were fit only to die. This is God’s love, and only God’s love.

(Rom 8:38-39) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul mentions life, death, powers, principalities, suffering, persecution, height, and depth, things present and things to come. But the most common thought in the minds of men, with regards to this, is that SIN can and does separate us from the love of God. What is the truth on this matter?

The truth is, sin separates us from God’s demonstrations of love. When we choose to deliberately disobey Him, we close the channels by which He may bless. But we can never shut ourselves away from His love. That love is ever seeking ways and means of drawing us back to the place of blessing. Back to the place where He may once again manifest Himself to us.

Therefore, those who are given the privilege of being persecuted and hated so that they may reveal that love of God, are blessed in a special way. To them has been committed a weighty trust and a high honour, that of revealing God’s unique love to the world. Wherever this love for those who are unlovely and despicable, and grateful, is demonstrated, there we may know that God is present.

Which passes knowledge

(Eph 3:19) And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Knowledge has to do with information received. Intellectual understanding, something that may be described with words. God’s love is beyond this (do not believe that merely reading 1Cor.13 will make us understand God’s love). To appreciate this love one must experience it. There is an awareness, which comes deep within the soul which words cannot express.

This comes when God Himself dwells there. It is not information, which comes, but love itself (Himself). Just as a person may describe an experience, a sensation such as the moment when a couple consummates their marriage, may compare it to other things; may use words such as satisfying, electrifying, phrases such as “waves of ecstasy.” Yet, what would these phrases mean to someone who had never experienced it? What impression or concept would be conveyed to the mind? Something entirely different to the reality, because there is nothing else in human experience with which to compare it. Similarly with God’s Love. There comes to the soul of the one wrapped up in God, an awesome awareness. What words or comparisons can express it? It is unspeakable, it passes knowledge. It is not a mere concept, but is a compelling power, which completely changes ones outlook on life.

How have I personally seen His love for me?

1. I realize that it was for me personally that you (my Father) sent your only begotten son Jesus, to suffer and die. You know me. I was in your mind from eternity and you loved me; just as much, as fully, as completely as though I was the only person in the entire universe. You saw my pain, my suffering, my hopelessness, and chose to send Jesus that I might live. That I might be set free from slavery to Satan and achieve a high, noble and wonderful destiny. O my Father, with such a love, such a sacrifice, what a dreadful thing it is that I have not appreciated it. That I have continued to sin! O my mind is darkened by abuse and bad habits, but keep me clinging to you, my Father that your life, wisdom, strength and perfection, may appear in me.
2. I have felt the drawing of your Holy Spirit, heard your voice, lovingly calling all my life. You have never ceased to plead with me, for my sake. Before I knew you, when I would feel an inexplicable yearning at the sight of some scene of beauty, or peace. Always drawing me after I became a Christian, to come closer, closer still. Pleading with me – for my sake – not to leave you, not to neglect you.
3. Forgiving me again and again. I, Father, have grieved you. I have fallen into the most grievous and presumptuous sins. I fear to think of the consequences of some of these sins and I shudder to think of my presumption. Yet, you have always forgiven me, wiped away my guilt; treated me as though I had never

strayed and drawn me back to the inner circle of your love. Why? Because you felt my need and my suffering. Because you love my company and wanted me to be with You, without any barriers between us.

4. In the preservation of my life and health. I know Lord, that some have not seen your hand in their lives (in this respect), as clearly as I have (though I do not doubt that you have abundantly revealed your love and mercy in other ways to them). Still, I see your mercy in my life, in this regard. I consider all these years of riding a bike; all the accidents that I have passed through, the excellent health I have always enjoyed. While I did spear fishing, played football, cricket and all the crazy things I used to do, You did not leave me, but hedged me around and protected me even as you continue to do to this day, for my family and me.
5. In providing for all my needs. What can I say about this? Though I have not worked for six and a half months (at the time when this was written ten years ago), I have not for a single moment been in need of any material thing. This, in spite of mounting economic hardships in this country, and in spite of my unworthiness and at times my unfaithfulness. No matter how great, or unexpected the need, your provision has been always more than adequate. In all these ways, and so many more my Father, you have shown your wonderful love for me personally. Who am I, and what am I that I should be the recipient of such a love! O may I be worthy in some small degree of even a fraction of that love!
6. In little unnecessary tokens of love. My Father goes beyond the necessities. He delights to pour out His love on me. To make me happy, to see me smile. He shows me a beautiful flower, sends a rainbow, reveals some beautiful truth, and gives me a gift above and beyond my needs. My Father, please help me to look for, and to appreciate these tokens of love, today and every day.

What would have been my destiny if His Love had not reached me?

Here is the reality: Had God abandoned the race of Adam we would have all perished without hope millennia ago. Satan and our own evil natures would have destroyed us. Why didn't God leave us alone? Why did He insist on interfering even after we had made our choice? Because He is our Father. Because He loves us and the thought of our hopelessness

caused Him much pain. Though millions may be lost, yet, how can He shut the door while there is still hope for one? Because His love for each one is as full and complete as though such a one were the only being in the universe! So, while we say, 'O Lord, please come now and put an end to sin.' He says, "There are some more of my beloved children there who may be saved yet! Please be my hand and my voice. Reach them for me. Help them to receive my life, for I cannot bear the thought that they may be lost! I will not close the door; I will not make an end while there is hope for even one soul who is yet in darkness!"

For me personally, that love was effective. What was I? I was a person of impure, filthy thoughts and loose morals. I cared not for the hurt I caused others, did not regard the rights of others. How I wounded my conscience and abused and disgraced myself! Today, I might have been a drunk, or a drug addict, or a father of a host of illegitimate children. But God reached me with his love! Through His grace He saved me from the bondage to such filth and has made me a worthwhile person (and there is far greater yet to come, even in this life).

Forgive me my Father for having appreciated your love so little. Though you must veil your face, yet you have uncovered your heart, so that all may see, who choose to see



Need a Visit?

Would you like someone from Restoration Ministries to visit you? Would you like to have someone hold seminars in your area? If you would simply like to have serious discussions with someone on any of the following topics, then please write to us. We will be happy to have someone visit with you, or if your need is to have a seminar in your area, then we will be happy to come for a day, or a week-end or even a week if necessary. Just give us a call or write a letter.

TOPICS

What is the Church?
Who is the holy spirit?
The Truth About The Trinity
The Mark of The Beast
Last Day Deceptions

Write or call:

Restoration Ministries
P.O. Box 23, Knockpatrick
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.
Ph. (876) 904-7392

Missionary Journeys

By the time you receive this newsletter, brothers Howard Williams of Restoration Ministries and Lynnford Beachy of Smyrna Gospel Ministries will be in Africa. They will be spending the better part of four weeks there, meeting with people in different countries including Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania. They will also meet with brethren from Uganda, Rwanda and possibly Nigeria. Please pray for these brothers as they seek to spread the Third angel's message in the context of the truth about God and His Son.

In late September there are also plans for Pastor Allen Stump of Smyrna and David Clayton of Restoration Ministries to visit Australia with the view of meeting with, and seeking to encourage and strengthen believers there. We also hope to share the truth with unbelievers at every possible opportunity and arrangements are being made for us to hold a few days of public meetings with this aim in view.

We greatly appreciate your support, especially in prayer, and encourage you to keep these ventures constantly before our Father.

When I Say I Am a Christian

When I say... "I am a Christian"
I'm not shouting "I am saved"
I'm whispering "I was lost"
That is why I chose this way

When I say..."I am a Christian"
I don't speak of this with pride.
I'm confessing that I stumble
and need someone to be my guide.

When I say..."I am a Christian"
I'm not trying to be strong.
I'm professing that I'm weak
and pray for strength to carry on.

When I say..."I am a Christian"
I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting I have failed
and cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say..."I am a Christian"
I'm not claiming to be perfect,
My flaws are too visible
but, God believes I'm worth it.

When I say..."I am a Christian"
I still feel the sting of pain
I have my share of heartaches
which is why I speak His name.

When I say..."I am a Christian"
I do not wish to judge.
I have no authority.
I only know I'm loved.

CAMPMEETING REPORT

It started out threatening to be a huge non-event. Initially we had planned to have our camp meeting in Portland at the beautiful Crystal Springs camp site. We made all our plans to this end and informed all our correspondents of the details. We also planned for special visitors who would be coming from overseas.

But one week before the camp meeting was scheduled to begin, we received the first inkling of what seemed to be impending disaster. This happened when we called the person in charge of the camp site, just to make one final confirmation and received the devastating news that the camp site had been given to another group! The reason given was that the person had lost our phone number and when we had not made any further contact for a while, the person, fearing that we might have changed our minds, had booked the place out to another group.

After the initial consternation and frantic searching around for another place (which proved fruitless) we eventually took a look at our options and decided that the only thing left for us to do was to plan to have it right where we were. We already had a chapel which could hold about eighty people, but we knew that especially on the week-end we were likely to have well over a hundred attending. We solved this difficulty by pitching a tent on the outside of the chapel and setting up a television monitor under the tent with a live feed of all

the events taking place in the chapel.

The other difficulty was the problem of accommodating all the people who would be attending from outside the area. This at first seemed to be a major problem because there is very little room around the chapel environment to pitch tents. Once again however, the Lord had already planned for this problem. The brethren opened their homes and their yards to the visiting brethren. Some had to pitch tents on my (concrete) roof. Others were camping on the pavement in Brother Bill's back yard, but everyone found a place and eventually it turned out to be a wonderful camp meeting.

I later discovered that for one reason or another several persons would not have been able to attend the camp meeting if it had taken place in Portland, partly because of the distance and partly because of the cost that would have been involved. However, because of the change of venue, they were able to attend and all confessed that they had been richly blessed.

The Lord greatly used our speakers. Many confessed that they had never been to a camp meeting which was so manifestly under the control of the spirit of God in the sense that all the speakers were united in their themes and where every message made such a strong appeal to the heart. Among these speakers were brothers Willis Smith and Benjamin Vela from the United States. Willis is the pastor of a little church in Cleveland Ohio and is also responsible for the Three Angels Prison Ministry. His messages were

filled with illustrations from personal experience which had everyone in the audience always on the edge of their seats. Brother Ben also pastors a small church in Miami. His messages were simple, easy to understand and very practical. He always had some way of making sure that his points would not be forgotten. In addition, Ben was always available to pray for those who needed prayer, or to administer some simple treatment to those who needed some help for some ailment, whether it was a massage or a simple herbal treatment.

A very special treat was given to us by the testimony of sister Cheryl Bonner. We had been thrilled at meeting after meeting by the electrifying singing of this gifted sister, but when she gave her testimony we discovered that God had other uses for her besides the ministry of song. There was not a single heart in the audience which was not deeply stirred. Some indeed were moved to tears.

The Jamaican speakers also were specially blessed by God. There was a power and a conviction in every message as our Father used each one as a vessel for revealing how abundantly He desired to bless us. When we finally came to the end of the camp meeting we could scarcely accept that it was over and at the end of the last testimony on the final night we were left with a yearning for that better country where fellowship will never end and where the blessings of our Father may be enjoyed forever.



New Materials

VIDEO TAPES

- 4 Who is The God of The Bible? David Clayton
- 5 The Love of God Lynnford Beachy
- 6 The Holy Spirit David Clayton
- 7 God's Administration David Clayton
- 8 The Death of Christ Allen Stump
- 9 Relative Perfection David Clayton
- 10 Reasons to Doubt - Reasons to Believe David Clayton
- 11 Life's True Goal David Clayton

AUDIO TAPES

- 105 God's Administration
- 106 The God of The Bible
- 107 Relative Perfection
- 108 The Joy of The Lord
- 109 Conflicting Agendas
- 110 Are You Fit To Be Free?
- 111 Reasons to Doubt - Reasons to Believe

YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT

Marsha Russell

Every believer is called to be a colabourer with Christ in His vineyard. The Lord has apportioned to every person at least one tool to carry out this task. It is therefore the duty of the worker to know what this tool is in order to carry out the task efficiently and effectively.

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (8) Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Eph 4:7-8)

The Lord has given the believers in Christ gifts; gifts for the edification of the church, gifts to ennoble and strengthen the believers in Christ. But often that edification is hampered by, firstly, the inability of the members to identify that gift, secondly the view of believers that certain gifts are not important and thirdly the failure on the part of believers to use their gifts in the cause of Christ..

In the new Testament a parallel is drawn between the human body and the church of Christ. Can the hand work zealously if it does not know that it is the hand? Can the mouth speak clearly without the realization that it is the mouth? The answers to these questions is NO. The parts of the body would be unable to do their work if they were uncertain of their function. In a similar way it is logical to see that each member of the body of Christ will be unable to work efficiently for the Master, if he is unsure of his function.

“ For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office. (Romans 12: 8.)

We are given a picture of diversity, all members will not be placed in the same position to carry out the same task, but each will have a place in the body that is equally as important as the other.

Today, some denominations identify and stereotype one gift as the sign of conversion, but as the Apostle Paul pointed out in 1Corinthians 12:14-16, “...*the body is not one member but many...If the whole body were the hearing, where were the smelling? And if the whole body were the smelling, where were the hearing?*” All of God’s children are given varying gifts. These are for the edification of the church, they are not a sign of conversion. The evidence of conversion is the fact that we bear the fruits of the spirit. These are, love, joy, peace, longsuffering gentleness, meekness, faith, temperance etc (Gal. 5:22,23). However, as born again workmen of Christ we are all entrusted with varied gifts.

“ One worker may be a ready speaker; another a ready writer; another may have the gift of sincere, earnest fervent prayer; another the gift of singing; another may have special power to explain the word of God with clearness. And each gift is to become a power for God because He works with the labourer. The diversity of gifts leads to a diversity of operations, but ‘it is the same God which worketh all in all,’ 1Corinthians 12:6. (9T 144:4).

In Romans 12:6-8, a list is given of some of the gifts of Christ. It states that even exhortation, giving and teaching, are gifts of God. Many people, including myself have felt that exhortation (encouraging) was not a gift. But the Bible makes it clear that the gifts are for the edification of the church and if for the church, what better way to help the weary Christian on his path than by encouraging words?

In my own experience of becoming a Seventh Day Adventist, the first time I went to church I had no clue of what Sabbath observance was about and so I did not take lunch with me. When

after the morning worship, one of the elders of the church and his wife invited me over for lunch. That did a world of good to my heart. A kind gentle deed, or a sweet word of encouragement can water the parched lands of the soul and renew us with life, pure and true. So let us remember that all gifts are equal in God’s eyes and if you discover that you have the ability to be hospitable, to be pleasant and encouraging it is your gift and God requires you to use it for His glory. Be bold in the power of His might and follow on as colabourers with Him in the field of the world, remembering that your gift is precious to God.

“ ...It may seem to some that the contrast between their gifts and the gifts of a fellow labourer is too great to allow them to unite in harmonious effort; but when they remember that there are varied minds to be reached, and that some will reject the truth as it is presented by one labourer only to open their hearts to God’s truth as it is presented in a different manner by another labourer, they will hopefully endeavour to labour together in unity. Their talents, however diverse, may all be under the control of the same spirit. (1T 411:2)

Here we see that there is unity in diversity, the body of Christ though varying in its parts, works together for one purpose – the advancement of the work of Christ. Let us all encourage ourselves with the assurance that our gift, when identified and exercised, will be used of God in helping to build His spiritual kingdom.

Finally brethren remember that the gifts are already ours in Christ, but their actual exercise depends upon our responsiveness to the Spirit of God.



THE SCARS

Some years ago on a hot summer day in south Florida a little boy decided to go for a swim in the old swimming hole behind his house. In a hurry to dive into the cool water, he ran out the back door, leaving behind shoes, socks, and shirt as he went. He flew into the water, not realizing that as he swam toward the middle of the lake, an alligator was swimming toward the shore. His mother - in the house looking out the window - saw the two as they got closer and closer together. In utter fear, she ran toward the water, yelling to her son as loudly as she could. Hearing her voice, the little boy became alarmed and made a U-turn to swim to his mother.

It was too late. Just as he reached her, the alligator reached him. From the dock, the mother grabbed her little boy by the arms just as the alligator snatched his legs. That began an in-

credible tug-of-war between the two. The alligator was much stronger than the mother, but the mother was much too passionate to let go.

A farmer happening to drive by, heard her screams, raced from his truck, took aim, and shot the alligator. Remarkably, after weeks and weeks in the hospital, the little boy survived. His legs were extremely scarred by the vicious attack of the animal and, on his arms, were deep scratches where his mother's fingernails dug into his flesh in her effort to hang on to the son she loved.

The newspaper reporter who interviewed the boy after the trauma, asked if he would show him his scars. The boy lifted his pant legs. And then, with obvious pride, he said to the reporter, "But look at my arms. I have great scars on my arms, too. I have them because my Mom wouldn't let go."

You and I can identify with that little boy. We have scars, too. No, not from an alligator, or anything quite so dramatic. But, the scars of a painful past. Some of those scars are unsightly and have caused us deep regret. But, some wounds are because God has refused to let go. In the midst of your struggle, He's been there holding on to you.

The Scripture teaches that God loves you. If you have Christ in your life, you have become a child of God. He wants to protect you and provide for you in every way. But sometimes we foolishly wade into dangerous situations. The swimming hole of life is filled with peril and we forget that the enemy is waiting to attack. That's when the tug-of-war begins, and if you have the scars of His love on your arms be very, very grateful. He did not - and will not - let you go.

Open Face

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