

UPLOOK

July 1998

Sometimes when the day is ended and its rounds of duty done,
I watch at the western windows the gleam of the setting sun.
When my heart has been unquiet and its longings unbeguiled
By the days vexatious trials and cannot be reconciled,
I look on the slope of the mountains and o'er the restless sea,
And I think of the beautiful city that lies not far from me.

And some time, when the day is ended and its duties He gave me are done,
I shall watch at life's western windows the gleam of the setting sun.
I shall fall asleep in the twilight as I never have slept before,
To dream of the beautiful city till I waken to sleep no more.
There will fall on my restless spirit a hush so wondrously sweet,
And I shall cross over the river to rest at my Master's feet.

—The Boston Globe

The Father's House



MY FATHER'S HOUSE

Heaven isn't only theology; it's geography and biography, too.

The writers of Scripture use many descriptive titles for the place where the redeemed will be forever. *Heaven* is the one most commonly used by God's people to name their eternal Home. We are told that "the Lord was received up into heaven" (Mk. 16:19), and Stephen "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). Paul, who had consented to Stephen's death, was soon after blinded by "a light from heaven." He calls it "the third heaven" and equates it with paradise (2 Cor. 12:2, 4).

The New Jerusalem is, strictly speaking, in heaven—the capital city, perhaps. Writing to the Galatians, Paul tells them, The "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26). Our mother is the source of our life, the object of our love, the seat of our loyalty.

But of all the names and descriptions used, nothing can rival "the Father's House." And how encouraging to hear the resurrected Saviour say to Mary, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father..." (Jn. 20:17). Bishop Hall (quoted by David Brown) comments: "*O mercy without measure!*

How wilt Thou, how canst Thou, call them brethren whom, in Thy last parting, Thou foundest fugitives? Did they not run from Thee?...It is not found in the power of the sins of our infirmity to unbrother us." His Father is our Father. Nothing can ever change that.

Dr. Harry Rimmer, a Christian scientist and archeologist, was a well-loved servant of the Lord. His talks on science and the Bible were a great help to many Christian students. He spent his last years in California after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. Rimmer often listened to Charles Fuller on his well-known radio broadcast, "The Old Fashioned Revival Hour." On one program, Fuller announced his upcoming subject: Heaven. Dr. Rimmer

sent Dr. Fuller a letter, including the following:

My dear Charlie:

Next Sunday you are to talk about Heaven. I am interested in that land, because I have had a clear title to a bit of property there for over 50 years. I did not buy it, for it was given to me without money or without price. But the donor purchased it for me at tremendous cost. I am not holding it for speculation, because the deed is not transferable....Fire cannot destroy it. Floods cannot wash it away. No locks or bolts will ever be placed upon its doors, for no devious person

can ever enter that land where my dwelling stands, almost completed.

It is ready for me to enter in and rest in peace eternally, without fear of being evicted.

There is a valley of deep shadow between the place where I live in California and that to which I shall journey in a short time...but I am not afraid, because the best Friend I ever had went through the same valley long ago, and drove away its gloom. He has stuck with me through thick and thin since we first became acquainted, and I hold His promise in printed form never to forsake me nor to leave me

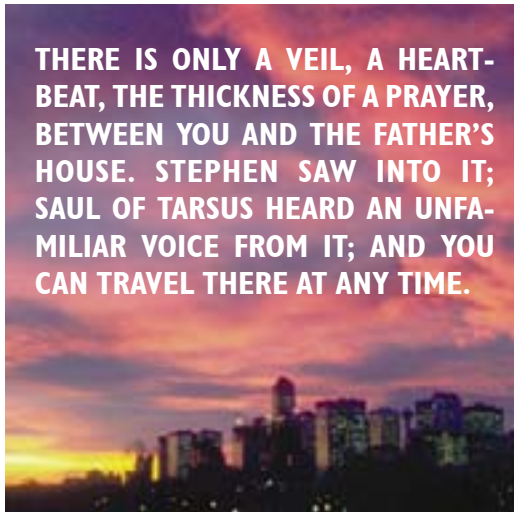
alone. He will be with me as I walk through the valley of the shadows, and I shall not lose my way when He is with me.

I hope to hear your sermon on Sunday next from my home here, but I have no assurance that I shall. My ticket to heaven has no date stamped upon it, no return coupon, and no permit for baggage. I am all ready to go, and I may not be here when you are talking next Sunday, but if not, I shall meet you there some day.

Harry Rimmer, Sc. D.

Harry Rimmer was already in the Father's House when his letter was placed on Charles Fuller's desk the following Wednesday.

THERE IS ONLY A VEIL, A HEART-BEAT, THE THICKNESS OF A PRAYER, BETWEEN YOU AND THE FATHER'S HOUSE. STEPHEN SAW INTO IT; SAUL OF TARSUS HEARD AN UNFAMILIAR VOICE FROM IT; AND YOU CAN TRAVEL THERE AT ANY TIME.



by J. B. NICHOLSON, J. R.

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Someone Special

A Masterpiece

For the birds


*When the question is asked, How much is the Saviour worth to you?
the answer must not only be heard but seen.*

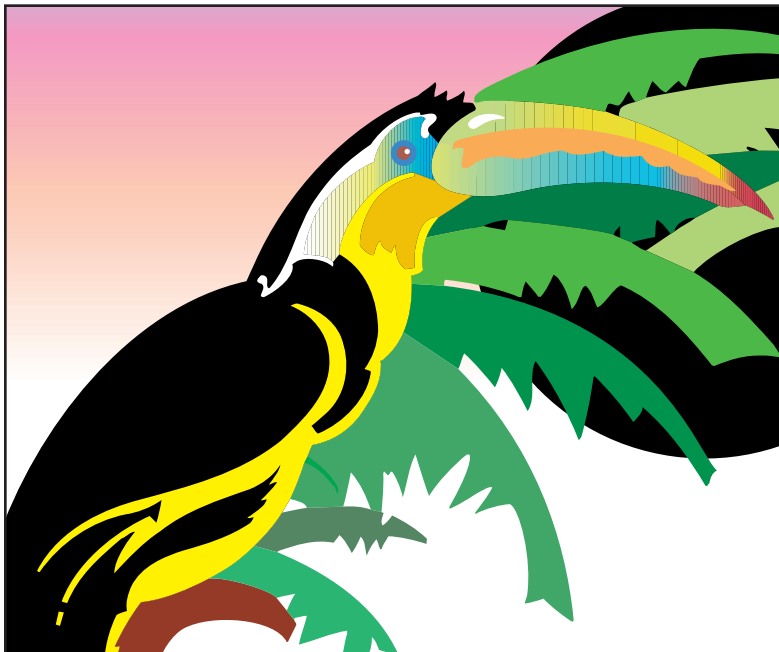
VANCE HAVNER

I have been reading an account of the life of John James Audubon, the great artist-naturalist, master painter of *The Birds of America*, and ground-breaking ornithologist. He was without formal learning, a wanderer over the earth, almost obsessed by his love for birds and a passion to make them better known. No hardship or hindrance kept him from his goal, and he reached it.

One thinks of devotees to other causes—some less worthy—men and women spending their lives in utter abandon, disregarding pain and persecution for a cause. Peter and John, fresh from seeing the risen Christ, fresh from Pentecost, made their debut in Acts 3 as evangelists of the gospel, sold out to Jesus Christ. One would die a violent death, the other end up an exile on lonely Patmos. Nothing mattered but Jesus, to know Him and to make Him known.

Alexander MacLaren was right in saying that Christianity has fallen into the hands of a church that does not half believe its own gospel. Glorious exceptions there are, thank God, but the average church member singing, “To the old rugged cross I will ever be true, its shame and reproach gladly bear,” is anything but a martyr.

Peter and John were so devoted to Jesus that miracle power was theirs. They aroused an amazed world and received a storm of opposition from organized religion. Two lowly fishermen, by knowing the Name above every name and the power behind it, saw miracles happen. And well might we sing, “Ye blind, behold your Saviour come and leap ye lame for joy,” and see crippled souls changed from limping to leaping if we were as all out for Jesus as was Audubon for the birds. 



Ninety and nine

A valiant warrior approaches a century of life on the planet and 65 years of service for the King.



John Bramhall was probably Harold Harper's first convert. Commended to preach and teach the Word full-time in 1934 by two assemblies in Rochester, NY, brother Bramhall still takes part occasionally. He and his wife make their home in Florence, SC.

P. S. We tried to phone him on his birthday. But we couldn't reach him. He was out all day.



(Ireland); Kim Loney (Austria); Eunice Russell (Uruguay); and others. For further information or accommodations, contact:

Sheila Henderson
50 Birksdale Ave.
North York, ON M3H 4S5
(416) 630-8726

WORKERS & ELDERS

The annual Workers' and Elders' Conference is scheduled for Oct. 6, 7, and 8 at Westside Bible Chapel in Wichita, KS (119th St. and W. Central Ave.) with a theme of "The Great Need for Godly Leaders." Expected speakers are Jean Gibson, Jack Spender, Steve Price, Jack Fish, Steve Hulshizer, George Farber, Robert Clark, Larry Pile, and Tom Wilson, as well as several seminar leaders. Questions and registrations may be directed to:

Arnold Burkle
1503 N. Caddy Ln.
Wichita, KS 67212
(316) 721-3354

MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

Lord willing, Grace Bible Chapel in Fullerton, CA, will be hosting its sixth annual Fall Missionary Conference. Speakers will be Rowen Jennings (BC) and Dick Yarrell (CA). The dates of the conference will be Oct. 23, 24, and 25. The conference will focus on missions at home in our own country. The goal is to encourage the believers who attend to be more committed servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be more active in their outreach for Him.

WE'RE TELLING YOU

DIME (pronounced "dee-may") is a Spanish word which means "tell me," the cry of millions who have not yet heard the Good News of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

UPWARD BOUND

Upward Bound is a two-week program from Sunday, Aug. 23 to Friday, Sept. 4, at Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo, ON) for serious Bible study and fellowship.

Lord willing, Boyd Nicholson, Sr. (ON) will be speaking on the topic of *Basic Doctrines for Christian Living*, with an emphasis on prayer. Frank Burgess (MO) will give an overview of dispensations. Roy Houghton (ON) will also be speaking.

If your schedule permits, plan to stay the second week, and take a canoe trip into the interior of Algonquin Park. In-depth Bible studies will be continued in the park.

Minimum age is 18. \$200 (CDN) is the cost for one week—\$350 for both. This covers meals and accommodation. For info. or to register, call Saju Mathew at (519) 886-5187 or Sandy McEachern at (519) 638-2928.

LABOR DAY CONFERENCE

Horton Haven Christian Camp in Chapel Hill, TN, will host the annual Labor Day Bible conference September 4-7, 1998. We are looking forward to ministry from J. B. Nicholson, Jr. (MI). Plan now to attend this special time for the family. For more information, call:

(931) 364-7656

FALL CONFERENCE

Lynde Creek Bible Chapel (Hwy. 12 & Taunton Rd.) in Whitby, ON, will be holding their annual Fall Conference Sept. 19-20, 1998. Saturday sessions with Dr. Rob Linsted from Wichita, KS, speaking on the topic, "Current Events and Bible Prophecy" are at 10:00, 1:00, 3:00 and 7:00. Sunday ministry at 11:00 only. For more information:

Kirk Dupre
(905) 723-1278
kdupre@interlinks.net

N. ONTARIO CONFERENCE

Bethel Gospel Chapel in North Bay, ON, will host their annual Northern Ontario conference Sept. 18-20 on the theme, "Thoughts of the Inner Man." The invited speakers are Alan Parks (SC) and Brian Gunning (ON). A special children's program will be provided by Dwane and Joyce Norton.

TORONTO LADIES' MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

Plan to attend "Challenge '98" on Saturday, Sept. 26, to be held at Don Valley Bible Chapel in Toronto, ON. This annual ladies' missionary conference includes an exciting program for girls (Grade 2 and up). Speakers expected are Rosemary Sheldon

Two of the helpers at DIME Publishers have recently had to return to Argentina because their work permits expired and a third helper is moving on to a different ministry. As a result, they are experiencing extreme difficulties getting their work out on time.

At the present, they are in need of a person to work in a managerial or administrative capacity, perhaps a retired missionary or someone contemplating a change in the Lord's work. The person would require bilingual (Spanish/English) skills.

LOOKING FOR FELLOWSHIP

A small number of families would like to see a new fellowship started in the Orange Park area of Florida. If interested, please contact:

Andy Hamilton
(904) 269-0042
achfl2@juno.com

TAKING AMES

A group of young people has been meeting for prayer and fellowship in Ames, IA, every Monday. Anyone interested in this (especially students from Iowa State University) contact:

Bill and Carol Moore
127 East ONeil Dr.
Ames, IA 50010
(515) 232-1167

HOME FOR RENT

A ranch-style home at Greenwood Hills Bible Conference (Fayetteville, PA) is available for rent either on a seasonal or year-long basis. The house has 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and a mountain view. This property would be ideal for retirees or missionaries on furlough. Contact:

Carl Balsam
phone: (847) 869-4561
fax: (773) 279-7960
ceb@northpark.edu

STAFF NEEDED IN NC

Pittsboro Christian Village has

staff positions available in two areas.

They are looking for an assistant administrator to work with the management team of the Village under the direction of the Administrator. This person would have to be born again with an assembly background and have the ability to manage people in one or more of the following areas: health care, food service, maintenance, or business operations.

They are also looking for an Activities Director to organize and lead in social settings and resident activities while meeting North Carolina state requirements for documentation of resident activities.

NEEDED: DIRECTOR OF CAMP MINISTRIES

Seattle area assemblies which own and operate Lakeside Bible Camp are seeking contact with brethren who may be interested in the work of Director of Camp Ministries. This is regarded as a fulltime, year-round responsibility, starting August 1.

Candidates are solicited who understand, teach, and practice New Testament assembly principles.

Contact:
Mac Sauerlender
833 S. 223rd St.
Des Moines, WA 98198
(206) 878-2145
or
Doug Kazen
8515 Juanita Dr. NE
Kirkland, WA 98034
(425) 487-3157

COMMENDATIONS

Doug and Joy Pilgrim

It is with great joy that the elders, on behalf of the believers at Elmwood Bible Chapel, Renfrew, ON, commend Doug and Joy Pilgrim, to full-time service in the Lord's work.

Doug and Joy both accepted the Lord early in life and were married at Elmwood Chapel in 1985. They have

worked faithfully in the assembly for several years in the Sunday School, Awana, and leading the young people. Doug has ministered the Word at home as well as in other places in the Ottawa Valley. The last few years he has served as an elder in the assembly. They have been involved in the summer at Galilee Bible Camp.

The Christians rejoice that Doug and Joy have the desire to serve the Lord in this way and heartily commend them to work full-time in the assembly, teaching the Word to all ages, building up the saints, and preaching the gospel. This will involve work at Camp Galilee, helping in the various needs of winning souls to Christ, and teaching them to walk worthy of the vacation to which we are called (Eph. 4:1).

Their present mailing address is:
Doug and Joy Pilgrim
RR # 5
Renfrew, ON K7V 3Z8

Alan and Christine Coburn

Alan and Christine have been in fellowship and actively involved with the assembly that meets at Middlesex Chapel (Middlesex, NJ) for sixteen years.

The Lord is calling them to serve Him at Camp Li-Lo-Li in western New York. Alan will be camp manager there, having excellent experience working as Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds for the Warren School District in NJ.

Please pray for Alan and Christine and their children, that this new avenue of service might be faithfully implemented and bring glory to the Lord and spiritual fruit in many.

Jim and Alice Weisbecker

The saints meeting at Linwood Gospel Chapel (Linwood, NJ) have withdrawn their commendation for the Weisbeckers due to their return to secular employment at Bob Jones University.



Rebuilding Grand Forks

Some through the fire and some through the flood

In the wake of the great floods and fires that devastated Grand Forks, ND, more than just the buildings and homes are being re-built. Christians from the surrounding area are trying to point the city to Christ as the only firm foundation on which they can build their lives.

Groups from Fargo, ND, have been travelling to Grand Forks on Saturdays to visit homes and distribute gospel literature, information about New Testament churches, a free Bible offer, and to invite them to a weekly Bible study. New contacts have been made through the reply cards. Some are attending Bible studies, while others have requested Bibles or other literature.

Marvin Ee, a Christian in the Air Force, stationed in Grand Forks since the beginning of this year, was vital to the evangelistic work there. Rather unexpectedly, he was transferred to southwest Asia in mid-May. Fifty-nine of the 60 men over whom he is commander volunteered to go with him, mainly because of their respect for him. He is continuing the work even in Asia, holding Bible studies and daily devotionals with those interested. Perhaps he'll return to Grand Forks some day with the nucleus of a new assembly!

Lord willing, a series of gospel meetings will be held from August 17-21. The people involved with Story Book Lodge Teen Challenge (a Christian camp in northern Minnesota) will be helping with the effort. On a daily basis they will travel from Fargo to Grand Forks to do door-to-door work, inviting people to the gospel meetings in the evening. Pray on!



ANTI-MISSIONARY ACTIVITY IN ISRAELI KNESSET

A bill which calls for serious sanctions against missionary activity in Israel passed preliminary reading in the Knesset on May 20. It must pass three more readings in order to become law.

The bill calls for a three-year prison sentence or \$13,700 U.S. fine for anyone found guilty of "preaching with the intent of causing another person to change his religion," even if no printed material is distributed. It relates equally to all religions.

Introduced by MK Raphael Pinhasi (Shas), the bill was supported by 37 coalition MKs.

It was brought to the vote without speeches or a discussion. Coalition whip Meir Sheerit opposed bringing

the bill to the vote. "This bill will be buried in committee like similar bills before it," he said. "...There is no way this will become a law."

The bill is broader than the bill by MKs Moshe Gafni (United Torah Judaism) and Nissim Zvilli (Labor) which passed preliminary reading and relates to the distribution of written missionary material.

The explanation to Pinhasi's bill reads: "In recent years missionary activity has increased to worrying proportions. This is particularly evident among youth and new immigrants. Whereas in the not so distant past, the very thought of everything related to missionizing was shocking and disturbing to all Jews, unfortunately there is now indifference to this serious phenomenon of an inten-

sive destructive campaign among Jews. Therefore, a broad bill should be legislated which includes all activities involving proselytization or the ability to influence any person to change his religion, and in this way. People can preserve their traditions for future years according to the tradition of 'every person shall live according to his beliefs.'"

Executive Director of Jews For Jesus, David Brickner, says, "The minority group of Orthodox Jews are the ones who are pressing this bill. It certainly does threaten freedom and democracy in Israel. I have to believe that most Israelis, if they know about this legislation, will oppose it.... We pray that somehow God will turn this legislation around to make the gospel even more clearly understood." —*Jerusalem Post, MNN*

WASHING AWAY SINS

The Kumbh Mela bathing ritual has attracted as many as 10 million Hindu pilgrims to the Ganges River. Some 25,000 police have been deployed to maintain order in Haridwar, site of the months-long rite. "This is our last chance to free ourselves from sins before the end of the millennium," said one Hindu visitor from Toronto. One tourist remarked, "I was amazed that even in the cold of night, they kept going in the water. It is incredible how much they are willing to suffer for their belief." —*Pulse*

HIGH ABORTION LEVEL IN VIETNAM

Vietnam has the highest abortion rate in Asia—on average, every woman has 2.5 in her lifetime. The cost of the procedure in hospitals is only \$3, and a mother is not required

WHAT'S GOING ON?

to provide any information about herself before undergoing an abortion. The government, shocked that 40% of all pregnancies end in abortion, has started to promote alternatives. However, its two-child policy remains a potent reason for the carnage. Government employees who have more than two children can lose their jobs or be forced to give up some benefits. —*Pulse*

ROUGH TRANSITION

On May 21, a national holiday to celebrate the ascension of Christ, Indonesians awoke to find they have a new president who is a Muslim.

Vice President Bacharuddin Jusef Habbie assumed leadership after President Suharto resigned the post he had held for 32 years. He had been elected to a seventh five-year term last March.

Mr. Suharto announced plans to resign on May 20 but did not say when. He left office the following day. The resignation came after a week of intense rioting in Jakarta, the capital, left more than 500 dead.

Indonesian Christians expect a rough transition and would appreciate the prayers of brothers and sisters around the world. —*World*

CONVENTIONAL U.S. FAMILY CONTINUES TO DECLINE

The conventional American family declined by 4% during the 1990s, extending a trend that began at least as early as the 1950s, according to Census Bureau figures released Thursday. By March 1997, the date for which the latest statistics are available, 72.4% of U.S. families with children under 18 had two parents living in the household. Mothers ran 22.7% of other families single-handed and fathers managed the remaining 4.9%. Back in 1950, the figures were 92.6% run by married couples, 6.3% by mothers and 1.1% by fathers. By 1990, two-parent

teams accounted for 76% of families with young children, mothers 20.4% fathers 3.6%. The Census Bureau, in its commentary on the figures, played down the significance of the changes.

MORMONS IN AFRICA

The number of Mormons in Africa has grown from a mere handful about 20 years ago to more than 100,000. The growth follows a change in Mormon theology allowing black men to serve in the priesthood. Some African converts say that the Mormon account of how the Latter-Day Saints began, with a vision, has much resonance in their cultures. After the theological switch in 1978, the Mormons sent many missionaries into sub-Saharan Africa. The group is seeking to consolidate its gains by promoting literacy and translating the Mormon scriptures into tribal languages. —*Pulse*

RELIGIONS IN AFRICA

Christians	348,176,000
Roman Catholic	122,108,000
Protestant	109,726,000
Orthodox	29,645,000
Anglican	25,362,000
Other	61,335,000
Non-Christians	379,898,000
Atheist	427,000
Baha'i	1,851,000
Buddhist	36,000
Chinese Folk religion	12,000
Confucian	1,000
Ethnic religion	72,777,000
Hindu	1,535,000
Jain	58,000
Jewish	163,000
Muslim	300,317,000
New-Religionist	19,000
nonreligious	2,573,000
Parsee	1,000
Sikh	36,000
Spiritist	4,000
Other religionists	88,000

Total Population 728,074,000
—1997 *World Almanac*

WHITE SPEAKS OUT

Reggie White, football star/Baptist minister was reprimanded by *Sports Illustrated for Kids* for making “dumb comments” in a speech to the Wisconsin state legislature—including calling homosexuality a sin.

CBS withdrew their tentative offer to have White serve as an on-air football commentator.

Family Research Council hosted a luncheon to let him know that many are behind his stand for morality and awarded him their Family, Faith, and Freedom Award. Senator John Ashcroft said, “You’re a credit to sports at a time when many ‘stars’ set the wrong example.” —*World*


NEWSPAPER EVANGELISM

Missionaries say their covert evangelistic work will continue in the predominately Muslim country of Pakistan. Nearly 700 Christians were arrested recently in Punjab Province for protesting the country’s blasphemy laws. Christians there are involved in newspaper evangelism. They buy ads in an effort to introduce people to Christ.

We need to pray for the safety of these believers. In the past, some have been thrown out of the country on trumped-up charges accusing them of disrespect to the prophets or something similar. —*MNN*

ASIANS CATCHING A VISION

Asians are catching the vision for Bible translation and are sometimes more effective than westerners.

“They’re not perceived as westerners. They’re accepted on their own merit and they can often develop relationships more easily than we can. They can work with local people more easily than we can,” says Wycliffe Bible Translator’s Arthur Lightbody. He says there are more than 200 members on their Asian translation team. 



YOUR FATHER

A closer look at the God of heaven

HE MAKETH NO MISTAKE

*My Father's way may twist and turn,
My heart may throb and ache,
But in my soul I'm glad to know,
He maketh no mistake.*

*My cherished plans may go astray,
My hopes may fade away,
But still I'll trust my Lord to lead
For He doth know the way.*

*Though night be dark and it may seem
That day will never break,
I'll pin my faith, my all on Him—
He maketh no mistake.*

*There's so much now I cannot see,
My eyesight's far too dim;
But come what may, I'll surely trust
And leave it all to Him.*

*For by and by the mist will lift
And plain it all will make;
Through all the way, though dark to me,
He made not one mistake.*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

James 1:17

There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity...I know nothing which can so comfort the soul; so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief; so speak peace to the winds of trial, as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead.

—CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall YOUR FATHER which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him? Mt. 7:11

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without YOUR FATHER. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Mt. 10:29-30

Even so it is not the will of YOUR FATHER which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. Mt. 18:14

For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and YOUR FATHER knoweth that ye have need of these things. Luke 12:30

Fear not, little flock; for it is YOUR FATHER'S good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke 12:32

Jesus saith...I ascend unto My Father, and YOUR FATHER; and to My God, and your God. John 20:17

I find that doing the will of God leaves me no time for disputing about His plans. —George MacDonald

What I believe about God is the most important thing about me. —A. W. Tozer

Begin to know Him now—and finish never. —Oswald Chambers

Faith brings us to the Father; hope anchors us in the Father; love makes us like the Father. —Anonymous

Loyal love

The greatest thing in the world is love. And the greatest love in the world is God's. But what is it like?

DONALD L. NORBIE

What is God's love like? Is His love capricious and unstable like much human love?

There is much talk today about unconditional love. They say you are to love people regardless of what they do, and accept them with no conditions. Is God's love unconditional?

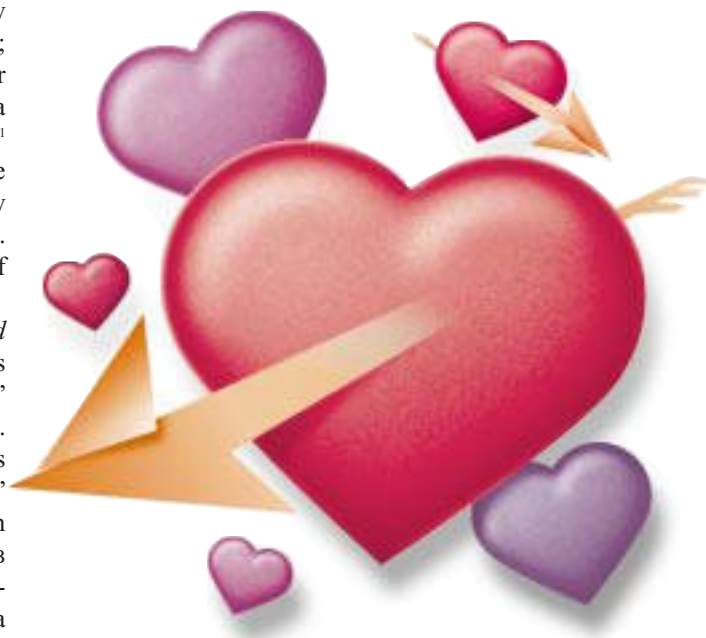
The Hebrew noun *chesed* means to be loyal, to show solidarity in a relationship; it is mutual liability for those who belong together, a covenant relationship often.¹ Of God it is said, "With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful" (2 Sam. 22:26). God shows Himself faithful in all relationships.

The noun form of *chesed* appears frequently and is translated often as "mercy" or "lovingkindness" (KJV). The RSV translates it as "steadfast love" or "loyalty." The NIV uses the expression "unfailing love." The NASB has "lovingkindness," "kindness;" or "love." Perhaps a good translation of it often is "loyal love;" for it has the idea of fidelity in it. God is faithful to His promise, to His commitments, and to His character.²

God is described as "showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Ex. 20:6). He is described as "keeping mercy (*chesed*) for thou-

sands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Ex. 34:7). Because of His loyal love, He is a forgiving and compassionate God.

For many centuries, *chesed* was translated as mercy, kindness, or love. In 1927, Nelson Glueck published a doctrinal dissertation in German on *chesed* in the Bible. In this he stressed the fact that God's *chesed* was not simply mercy or kindness, but loyalty to covenant obligations.³ This thesis has been accepted by



many and there is much truth in it. In the cases where a covenant is not involved, there is at least the idea of a loyal love and faithfulness, a sense of obligation. For example, Rahab cast in her lot with the spies and sheltered them. She had shown them *chesed* and asked them to show the same kindness to her (Josh. 2:12).

David showed *chesed* to Hanun, king of Ammon, because of the kindness his father had shown David (1 Chron. 19:2). David felt a sense of obligation or loyalty to Hanun even if there had been no formal covenant.

The first time the noun *chesed* appears is in Genesis 19:19, where Lot is speaking to the Lord and pleads with Him: "Indeed now, Thy servant has found favor in Thy sight, and Thou hast increased Thy mercy (*chesed*) which Thou hast shown me by saving my life..." God had indeed shown His loyal love, His mercy, to Lot in saving him from the destruction of Sodom—Lot, who had been living a life of compromise with the world. Our God is a loyal God.

God was loyal to Israel. As the children of Israel came through the Red Sea in triumph and left the armies of Pharaoh destroyed behind them, they sang a song of victory. They praised God, saying, "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people whom Thou hast redeemed" (Ex. 15:13). God had been faithful and loyal to His people and to His promises. He is characterized by such "mercy" or "loyal love." Moses, in speaking to Israel at the close of his life, described God to them: "Therefore know

that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments" (Deut. 7:9). This loyal love is the love of God for His people who have entered into a covenant with Him. He is committed to them.

David in his psalm praised God, singing, “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever” (1 Chron. 16:34). His mercy, His loyal love, is enduring. Surely David experienced the faithfulness of God after his fearful sin of adultery with Bathsheba. God disciplined him, but did not cast him away. God is loyal and committed to His people.

However, one must not confuse loyal love with unconditional love. Because God is loyal in His love, there are conditions that He expects of His people. The emphasis in some thinking today is that real love will be unconditional love, non-judgmental, accepting people and their actions without reproof or correction. God is committed to those who have entered into a covenant with Him, but there are obligations with such a relationship. “Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you according to these words’” (Ex. 24:7-8).

In His loyal love (*chesed*) God rebuked and warned His people of their wrongdoing. If they did not repent, He punished them to bring them to repentance. This is the recurring story of the history of the people of Israel. When there was turning away from God to idols, God’s patience could be exhausted to the point where He could say to Israel, “You are not My people and I will not be your God” (Hos. 1:9). So today Israel is described as branches broken off because of unbelief (Rom. 11:20). Israel will one day be restored spiritually when there is brokenness, repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus

(Zech. 12-13; Rom. 11:25-26). It is because of God’s love that He has disciplined Israel. “For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives” (Heb. 12:6).

When a person accepts Christ today, he enters into a covenant relationship with the Lord. Every time we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we acknowledge this relationship. As we take the cup, we hear Him say, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you” (Lk. 22:20). As the blood sprinkled the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai, they entered into a covenant relationship with Jehovah God. Their response was to commit themselves to love and to serve their God. God is a God who “keeps covenant and (*chesed*) mercy” (Neh. 9:32). He expects His people to be loyal also. God tells Israel through Hosea, “I desired loyal love (*chesed*), not sacrifice” (Hos. 6:6). God still desires that loyal love toward Himself by those He has redeemed. It should be the grateful response by the sinner to the Saviour.

This covenant relationship involves a commitment to obey and to follow the Lord. Obedience is not the basis of salvation, but surely it should accompany salvation. Accepting Christ as Lord and Saviour is to obey the gospel (2 Thess. 1:8); it is to be the beginning of a life of obedience. The great commission is not to make professors of Christ, but disciples of Him (Mt. 28:18-20), disciples of Christ who submit to Him and obey Him.

Christ shows loyal love (*chesed*) to His disciples: “Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end” (Jn. 13:1). In His loyalty He promises: “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5). His love and loyalty should move His followers to an answering devotion and commitment.

But we need to remember not to presume upon that love. Believers must not be careless in their attitude toward sin and disobedience to God. He loves His children too much to allow them to go astray. If we are without discipline and chastening, the Scripture states that we are not truly His children (Heb. 12:8). “Therefore since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28-29). God is committed to loyally love His people. Let us respond with such loyal love and obedience toward Him.

ENDNOTES:

1. Ludwig Kochler and Walter Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), p. 318.
2. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1960), p. 305.
3. *Ibid.*

**I love my God, but with no love of mine,
For I have none to give;
I love Thee, Lord; but all the love is Thine,
For by Thy life I live.
I am as nothing, and rejoice to be
Emptied, and lost, and swallowed up in Thee.**



**Thou, Lord, alone art all Thy children need,
And there is none beside;
From Thee the streams of blessedness proceed,
In Thee the blest abide—
Fountain of life, and all-abounding grace,
Our source, our center, and our dwelling-place.**

—Jeanne Marie de la Motte-Guyon

Salvation is of the Lord

*This is my story, to God be the glory,
I'm only a sinner saved by grace!*

JOHN SMITH

Having just greeted my family, we were walking from the airport terminal to the car. With enthusiasm characteristic of a three-year-old, my older son burst out, "Daddy, I know my Sunday School verse! Do you want to hear it?"

As a dutiful father, but lacking the same enthusiasm, I responded, "Yes, son. What is it?"

"Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9).

The verse, like the divine arrow it was, hit the bull's-eye of my heart. "That's very good," I said, as the words echoed in my mind.

The previous morning I had awakened with the expectation of flying to a professional conference, before joining my family for a vacation at the beach. However, I quickly realized I was feeling rather ill. Unable to do anything but lay immobile on the living room couch, I remembered a book which I had hidden away some years before in a nearby bookcase.

I began to read through the book, a popular 1970's best seller on prophecy. As I considered the detailed accounting of past prophecies fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ, as well as prophecies yet to be fulfilled, I became fully convinced of the authenticity of the Bible as God's Word.

That realization soon led to a conviction that I could no longer avoid squarely confronting the all-important question of the Lord Jesus Christ

John and his boys shortly after his conversion



The Smith family today, in fellowship at Schenectady, New York

to each man or woman, boy or girl: "But who do you say that I am?" (Mk. 8:29). Finishing the book later that day, I made arrangements to fly to meet my family.

While never having unequivocally rejected Christ, my actions had declared year after year: "I will not have this Man to reign over me." As I look back, I can only marvel at God's mercy and longsuffering for a sinner such as I. God had blessed me at 34 years of age with a godly heritage, parents who knew and loved the Lord, a good education, a loving wife, two wonderful sons, and an excellent job. However, notwithstanding such blessings, pride, rebellion, and the lure of worldly things reigned in my heart.

Though from a human perspective

I had everything, I increasingly realized that there was a deep void in my life. True satisfaction was lacking. I wondered if this was all that life had to offer. I was experiencing the reality of the words of the French scientist/philosopher Pascal: "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the human heart."

That vacation was a time of spiritual wrestling. I read through the New Testament. One passage in particular seemed to stand out: "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Assuredly I say unto you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it" (Lk. 18:16-17) But while I was familiar with this passage from my youth, my

heart seemed to be blinded to it all.

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

Saturday evening arrived, and we planned to leave the following Monday. I was at an old sink in the rustic cottage bathroom, beginning to shave and despairing of ever knowing God's free gift of salvation. Perhaps, I thought, the day of salvation for me had passed.

Suddenly, the light of God's glorious gospel shone into my soul. I thought about how my young sons would stand on the bedroom staircase. When I held out my arms to them and said, "Come," they would with full assurance spring forward into my arms. That was trusting, believing, coming, or receiving. Then my son's Sunday School verse flashed to mind, "Salvation is of the Lord." And at that moment I simply accepted the Person and work of Jesus Christ, as the One who died for my sins in my place at Calvary.

A peace and inexpressible joy filled my soul. As I continued shaving, the words of the hymns, *Christ, the Saviour of Sinners* and *How Great Thou Art*, raced through my mind.

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.*

Since that day over twenty-three years ago, the Lord has been ever-faithful. While I have failed Him so often, He has never failed; He continues to shower His grace upon me. I realize now much more fully the depth of His amazing grace. May the Lord help me, out of love for all that He has done, to serve Him more faithfully.

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.*

With the passage of time, I can only marvel at the many links in God's chain of redemptive grace: a faithful Christian father (who had died the previous year) and mother, a faithful and loving wife who helped our son learn a Sunday School verse, a faithful young Sunday School teacher, a faithful older saint who had asked my mother to send along the aforementioned book, a faithful sister and brother-in-law living authentic Christian lives, and others, including many faithful praying Christians.

May the Lord strengthen and encourage us, as opportunities arise, to be similarly faithful and to redeem the time until His soon coming. May He comfort in a special way those who are praying for unsaved family and loved ones. God is faithful (1 Cor. 1:9); He is able (Eph. 3:20).

*When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun. (John Newton)*



THE OTHER JOHN SMITH

The grandfather of the author of the previous article, also John Smith, was one of the young Scots that came with Donald Ross to pioneer assemblies in North America. My maternal great-grandmother witnessed to him in Torrey, Scotland, and was instrumental in his conversion. He would see her on the street and step into a pub to avoid a confrontation. So she would call in the door, "Ye can get awa' frae me, John Smith, but there's a day comin' ye'll no get awa' frae God." Later, in Canada, John Smith was influential in the spiritual awakening of my grandfather. Smith settled in Cleveland, Ohio, and helped in the start of the assembly there.

Watch for a *Heroes* article on this John Smith in an upcoming issue of *Uplook*. —ed.



This is My Father

The Son longs for us to know His Father. He Himself declared that this was what life—eternal life—was all about.

R. E. HARLOW

The Son of God came to this planet to reveal His Father. Before He came, God wanted to be known as the Father of Israel nationally. He showed His mercy by offering Himself as Father of orphans. He promised to be a Father to Solomon, and to chasten him for iniquity (2 Sam. 7:14). The Lord would be the same to others also (Prov. 3:12). Israel may have wanted God as their Father, but they did not honor Him as such (see Mal. 1:6; 2:10; Jn. 8:41). No one on the record called God his Father in the Old Testament. The Son of God is mentioned only once (in Dan. 3:25), but sons of God are mentioned twice in Genesis, and three times in Job.

The Father identified Jesus as His Son when He was born and in manhood so all would know, (Lk. 3:22; 9:35; Heb.1:5). He revealed to the Baptist and to Peter the fact that Jesus was His Son (Jn. 1:33-34; Mt.16:17).

The Son spoke to the Father. The Son thanked His Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, for revealing deeper truth to spiritual babes. He thanked Him for hearing His prayer about raising Lazarus from death. His whole life can be summarized in His prayer, "Father, glorify Thy name," but also in His words, Yes, (even so), Father. We have the Father's words in reply only in John 12:28. But the Father objected to the proposal that His Son be given equal honor with Moses and Elijah.

The Lord often prayed to His

Father, but the Spirit has not recorded His actual words for us.

The Lord spoke about His "heavenly" Father, who was perfect, and called Him righteous and holy in John 17, and merciful, in Luke 6:36. He knows our hearts and our needs. The Lord always did His Father's will, and those who do the same are His brothers and sisters (Mt. 12:50).

The Father put all things in the hands of His Son (Lk. 10:22), and appointed Him the kingdom (Lk. 22:29). The Father is One with the Son, yet greater than all. And the believer is protected in the hand of the Father and the Son (Jn. 10:28-30).

The Father is Spirit and invisible (Jn. 4:24; 6:46), but to see the Son is to see the Father (Jn. 14:9). The Lord could speak of His God (Jn. 20:17), but this does not mean that the Son was created, or less than God. The Father is true and His Word is true (Jn. 7:28; 17:17).

The Father loves His Son and love gives. What then did the Father give His Son? God gave the Spirit to Christ without measure, and all things into His hand (Jn. 3:34-35). The Father gave His words to His Son, who never spoke as from Himself (Jn. 8:28; 14:10; 17:8, 14).

He sent His Son, giving Him this privilege and honor. The Father gave

His Son work to finish and He always obeyed His Father's commands (Jn. 5:36; 14:31; 17:4).

God gave the Son to have life in Himself, and He has authority to give eternal life to men (Jn. 5:26; 17:2). The Son has authority to judge all men (Jn. 5:27). The Lord received His disciples as a gift from the Father, and God is quite able to keep them (Jn. 6:37, 39; 17:6-12). He will rejoice over His Church as a bridegroom over his bride (Isa. 62:5b).

To save sinners Christ had to die, and the Father gave Him this cup of suffering (Jn. 18:11). So He has the honor of being Redeemer forever. His Father loved Him before the foundation of the world, but commanded Him to die for His sheep. Then the Father loved Him for obeying (Jn. 10:17-18). God is love, and the great, eternal, unchangeable, undeniable proof of His love to men is that He gave His Son. This also proves His love for His Son, because it brought eternal glory to Christ. The Father loves His children in the same way as He loves His Son (Jn. 17:23).



To receive the Son is to receive the Father; equally, to hate the Son is to hate the Father (Jn. 13:20; 15:23). Knowing and believing in the Father is knowing and believing in the Son (Jn. 12:44;). Father and Son knew each other and honored each other (Jn. 8:49, 54; 10:15).

The Lord promised to answer prayer, but told us to pray to the Father (Jn. 14:13; 16:23-24). The Son can do nothing of Himself, but everything which He sees the Father do, which is everything (Jn. 5:19). The Father's will is that all men should honor the Son as they honor the Father (Jn. 5:23). The Father loves all men, but especially those who love His Son and keep His words (Jn. 14:21, 23; 16:27).


On the last night, the Lord said He was the true Vine, the disciples were the branches, and the Father was the Husbandman, the Vine Dresser. The Father wants fruit. He trims in part any branch which is dry, indolent, or out of touch with the Vine. This is called purging or cleansing. In the Old Testament, the same word is used for threshing grain. The Husbandman shows great patience (Jas. 5:7), and so does the Father, but finally He takes a branch away, when its potential for fruit bearing is gone.

The Spirit of God enlarged on this important teaching in Hebrews 12. The Father chastens every son whom He receives, a proof of His love. This is grievous, not joyful, but must be endured. The apostles were chastened (2 Cor. 6:9), as well as the church of Laodicea.

Later that night, the Lord endured the squabbling of His apostles, as to who should be the greatest (Lk. 22:24). He knew that one of them would betray Him, another deny Him, and all forsake Him. He asked His Father if it would be possible for the cup to pass from Him, three times (Mt. 26:44). The answer was in the negative and He said, "Not My will but Thine be done." His own people bawled out that they had no king but Caesar, and that He should be crucified (Lk. 23:21; Jn. 19:6). They and their children are responsible (Mt.27:25).

While impaled on the gibbet, the Lord spoke to God three times: "Father, forgive them..." in their ignorance. About mid-afternoon, He cried as the Sin-bearer, asking God why He had been forsaken. The third time, He declared, "Father, I commit My spirit into Your hands."

God sent His Son into this world, and the Son was delighted to do His Father's will. So He gives us also the privilege of going to the world with the gospel (Jn. 17:18; 20:21). But the Son is now preparing a place in His Father's home for all who believe in Him. The day and hour of His coming for His Bride is in the authority of the Father.

Now He says to us, This is My Father. We can know Him and His personal, individual love by knowing the Son yet more intimately. 



To Walk with God

*To "walk with God"—Is this some dreamer's dream,
Reserved for ancient men of different cast
Than I? For men of slowly moving years?
And must I think such holy joy is past?*

*And can it be, that as from distant Ur,
There is a path that leads from idol shrine,
Marked out by tent, by altar, and by fire,
Yet points me to the glory that is Thine?*

*And is it so, that I may walk with Thee,
May hear Thy voice above earth's din below?
And like old Sinai's sage and warrior saint,
May find Thy ways and see Thine afterglow?*

*How can I see Invisibility?
Or how with finite mind reach to confide
Transcendent thoughts; or how with halting thigh
Draw near and keep apace Thy mighty stride?*

*A mystery? There is a Way for all
Who thirst for God; not trod by feet, but heart;
An eye, not needing man's external aids;
A mind, the schools of earth cannot impart.*

*"The Way," to reach the Inaccessible,
"The Truth," the great Inscrutable to know;
"The Life"—and thus He opens up the eye
To see, the mind to grasp the way to go.*

*To "walk with God"? 'Tis not too late to join
That holy band, who soared above the sod
Of transient things, of weights, besetting sin,
And feel the mighty pulse of life with God.*

—J. B. N. Sr.

Congratulations, you're a father!

Even those not fathers can be fatherly

Fathers in the Bible have a mixed record. Some were godly, and so were their children. Some were godly, but their children were not. Some were ungodly, but their children were godly and some were ungodly, and so were their children.

God Himself is portrayed like a father in the Old Testament, and the New Testament shows us He is our Father. Dads are important to God. While the New Testament addresses fathers in the realm of the home, the obedience to His instructions will be felt in the assembly.

For example, be an example. Fathers make a lot of decisions in the family lifestyle. It is vital therefore that fathers teach that lifestyle by example. If I think my children watch too much television, I better check my time with the tube. If I want my children to read their Bibles more, then maybe they will get the idea if I read my Bible more. This business of being an example can take over our lives.

For instance, if I want my children to be a positive help in the assembly, then I should be one. And what about conversation in the home about the assembly? It is unwise to talk about assembly difficulties with a critical spirit in front of children. If I am a critic, they will be, too. Fathers should guard the family discussion.

The local assembly is an essential place to be. The family schedule should recognize that. Determine not to get involved with things that will inevitably conflict with the assembly. Sports, hobbies, optional work and business opportunities will never get first place. There may be unavoidable exceptions, but they should stay exceptions and not the rule of life. Fathers often have to make these decisions. Keeping the Lord first in everything sets the perfect example.

As a father, my conduct in the assembly should be consistent with my conduct at home. A glaring inconsistency in this will confuse my children and hurt the assembly. No use standing in the assembly meetings using one kind of language and at home using another.


But fathers have a duty to be encouragers as well. Positive recognition towards others goes a long way. This

does not just include our own family. Some folks are annoyingly preoccupied with their own family, but have little time or sympathy for others. My family will be affected for good if they see their father being good to others. Encourage and rejoice in others' accomplishments. The flesh loves to promote self and has a hard time seeing others recognized. But a father who knows how to offer encouragement, both inside the home and out, will be an asset to the assembly as well as at home.

Paul exhorts fathers in both Ephesians and Colossians to keep from angering children. Constant correction becomes wearying. Demanding too much too soon can discourage. Remember, children are not perfect. Neither are fathers.

Fathers can extend themselves to be part-time fathers for others. Many young people come to the assembly without Christian parents. A father should show an interest and try and be a help to them. One has to use discretion. Don't cause problems by intruding into areas you have no authority. But show a warm, friendly interest in Christian young people.

Fathers bring experience to the assembly. Timothy and Titus both show us that family life is training for elder's work. The Word of God reasons that if a man cannot rule his own house, he will not be able to take care of the church of God. It is not just a matter of being overbearing and keeping visible signs of rebellion out of view, but bringing up children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). This same approach is essential in caring for the flock of God. This involves training, nurture, and admonition, love, patience, prayer, and teaching. If I am going to nurture and admonish in the Lord, I am going to have to know what that is myself. It will mean knowing His Word and desiring a godly walk.

They say being a father today is tough. I am not sure it ever was easy. We are all sinners, even our children. Ours is not the first society to declare war on God's plan for the family. But God intended it to work. Millions of godly men have found that it can work. When it does, it cannot help but overflow into the local church. 



by BRIAN GUNNING

Fellowship with the Father

Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3

J. BOYD NICHOLSON

This surely must be one of the most amazing statements for a sinner, saved by grace, to read. To be brought into fellowship with those who comprise the family of God is a marvel at which angels must wonder. Then to read that this fellowship embraces God Himself, the Father, and His beloved Son staggers the mind.

God was not known as a Father to the Old Testament saints, except in a very limited way. Israel neither knew Him, addressed Him, nor honored Him as a Father. To the patriarchs He was known as El Shaddai, the Mighty God, when He sought to cherish in their hearts a sense of dependence on an Almighty Helper.

When He was forming a nation out of a band of refugee slaves escaping from Egypt, He revealed Himself by a new name "Jehovah"—The Eternal God who reveals Himself in time. *And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty...but by My name Jehovah was I not known to them* (Ex. 6:3).

Even when they were carried away captive, the Lord did not forsake His people, but revealed Himself by another great Name, "Jehovah Sabaoth," the Lord of hosts.

When He was teaching them that He was Sovereign over the hosts of heaven and of earth, and He was the One who would at last be the scourge and slaughter of their enemies.

A NEW REVELATION

It wasn't until that lonely Stranger walked the long miles into the Vale of Shechem and sat wearily at the well, that the Son of God brought this most wonderful revelation that God wanted to be known as a Father, a Father seeking children; children who would

be worshippers. One might think how much more appropriate it would have been to bring this revelation to five thousand on the hillsides of Galilee, but here the Lord, in great grace, brought those words to one sinful woman, who was looking for something to slake her burning thirst. *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him* (Jn. 4:23).

God had spoken down through the ages to humankind in various ways, but at last in the fullness of the times, in His Son, He revealed Himself as a Father.

However, as soon as we are introduced to the idea of having fellowship with the Father, we are faced with three great problems to this fellowship, and the Son presents these:

- The Father is invisible to the natural eye: *Not that any man hath seen the Father* (Jn. 6:46).
- The Father is inscrutable to the natural mind: *Neither knoweth any man the Father* (Mt. 11:27).
- The Father is unapproachable by natural means: *No man cometh unto the Father* (Jn. 14:6).

How, then, is it possible to have fellowship with One whom we cannot naturally see, apprehend, nor approach? This miracle of love and grace is made possible and presently enjoyable through the Person and ministry of the Son.

He is seen by His manifestation in the Son: *He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father* (Jn. 14:9). He is known by the



revelation of the Son, for...*the Son will reveal Him* (Mt. 11:27). And He is approached through the mediation of the Son: *cometh unto the Father...by Me* (Jn. 14:6).

THE PREREQUISITES OF THIS FELLOWSHIP

While the *relationship* of the children with the Father is indissoluble—assured by the Word of God, secured by the blood of Christ, and sealed by the work of the Spirit—*fellowship* with the Father has certain prerequisites. It goes without saying that the first is *life*. As beautiful and marvellous as was Adam's clay form, fresh from the hand of the Creator, there could be no fellowship until it was imbued with the breath of God to become a *living soul*. So there can be no fellowship with the Father now without the gift of eternal life. *God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life* (1 Jn. 5:11-12). This life introduces us into the relationship, but John goes on to tell us that fellowship requires more.

The next prerequisite is *light*. In the things of God there are different radiations of light. There is revelation; that is light shed spiritually. There is illumination; that is light shed intellectually. There is holiness; that is light shed morally. There is righteousness; that is light shed practically and there is glory; that is light shed visibly.

The wonder of that fellowship of the children with each other and with the Father demands that they "walk in the light." This means first, coming to the light: *But he that doeth truth cometh to the light* (Jn. 3:21a). If there is going to be fellowship with the Father, and a "doing" of the truth—not just a speaking of the truth—there must be a willingness to let the light shine into every nook and cranny of the life. We might fear to do this, knowing the wickedness of our own hearts and what might be lurking in some closet of corruption there, until we remember that it is the Father who has made full provision for our forgiveness and cleansing, that every obstacle and hindrance to fellowship might be removed.

It will mean coming under the light...*that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God* (Jn. 3:21b). This is not to expose our sins to all and sundry. God has no pleasure in that. Indeed, when we uncover our sins to the Father and confess them, it is His joyous prerogative to remove them from His sight and His memory. The Father wants to help His children distinguish what is of God in their lives and what is not. This heavenly discernment enlivens our fellowship with the Father.

It means continuing in the light, "*walk in the light*" (1 Jn. 1:7), that is, making steady progress in the things of God. The steps may be small, and slow, and faltering at times, but there ought to be a going on with God in the

life, little by little. It may not be noticeable from day to day, but as we look back along the path we have taken, we can see in retrospect, *...all the way which the Lord thy God led thee* (Deut. 8:2).

CONFORMITY OF NATURE ESSENTIAL FOR FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship of the children with the Father will involve not only life and light, but also a family likeness. Conformity of nature is essential for fellowship. Adam looked for a suitable help among the animals, but *there was not found an help meet for him* (Gen. 2:20). Why not? What was he looking for? Someone with the same nature as he. Then the Lord made the woman and brought her to Adam. His response was, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*. Literally he said, "At last!" Here was one of his own nature. Now fellowship on every level was possible—spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and physically.

The measure in which the Father's children conform to the nature of His dear Son will determine the sweetness and the intimacy of their fellowship with the Father Himself. So in love for the children, the Father works in them to conform them to the likeness and the image of His Son. There is first a judicial likeness; they are *called the sons of God* (1 Jn. 3:1). That took place in the past. But there is an experiential likeness; *Beloved, now are we the sons of God...* (3:2). This is a fact of the present moment. Ultimately there will be a perfected likeness; *But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is* (3:2).

But day by day the vicissitudes of life, without exception—the things God causes, and the things God permits—are being worked together to conform us to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-29). The more the children are conformed to the Son, the richer and deeper will be their fellowship one with the other and with the Father.

THE ASCRIPTIONS OF THE FATHER

The more we discover of the character of the Father, the more we learn the implications of fellowship with Him. Certain great ascriptions are attributed to the Father that enlarge our understanding of Him and what it means for His children to walk with Him in happy fellowship.

The Father of Mercies: *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort* (2 Cor. 1:3). The word translated "mercies" is really "compassion." Immediately we are reminded that we are the daily recipients of His compassion. *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness* (Lam. 3:22-23). The moment we open our eyes to a new day, we can

immediately give thanks to the Father for the fresh load of compassions He has already delivered to us. Someone said to an elder brother, patting him on the shoulder, "Have a good day!" The old saint replied, "Brother, if I open my eyes in the morning, that's already a good day!" An appreciation of this daily freight of His compassions will impel His children into His presence with thankfulness, beginning the day in fellowship with the Father of Mercies.

A recognition of His compassions—His "mercies"—will lead His children to acknowledge their obligation to be ready and available for the Father to use in His service. *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"* (Rom. 12:1). The word "present" is not simply making a present or an offering of ourselves in a moment of grand dedication to God. Gabriel uses this word when speaking to Zacharias about the birth of his son John, the forerunner of the Messiah. *"I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God..."* (Lk. 1:19). How long had that great angel stood in the presence of God waiting to bring the name of the forerunner of the Messiah—an age? A thousand ages? It mattered not. Gabriel's place was to "stand" by, to be available for the slightest command from the throne. Ability was not the qualifier; it was availability. So also with Mary and John at the cross; they were "standing by"—available for any request from those parched lips. *"Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved..."* (Jn. 19:26).

Fellowship with the Father of mercies, then, involves an appreciation in His presence for all His tender compassions, and a loving response to all those mercies by standing by, obedient and ready to carry out His will.

The Father of Lights: *"Every good gift and every per-*

fect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. 1:17). To have fellowship with this Father of Lights is going to teach us some significant aspects of giving. The unchanging beneficence of the Father is seen by the use of two words, "variation" (RV) and "shadow." "Variation" is *parallax* from which we get the English *parallax*. That has to do with an object relative to the viewer's position. With the Father of Lights there is no "parallax."

It matters not how the Father views His creature, there is no change in His generosity towards them. *"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; 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"* (Mt. 5:44-45).

The other word is "shadow," actually "overshadow," caused by the variation of the light. The eclipse of the sun is when it is "overshadowed" by the changing position of things. They may change, but the Father is immutable—He changes not. "No changes in this lower world can cast a shadow on the unchanging Fount of light... God is incapable of change and incapable of being changed by the action of others" (Mayor).

The lesson the children can learn is that fellowship with the Father of Lights would mean that the attitude of others towards them should not change their position of generosity towards them.

While we rejoice in the statement that *our fellowship is with the Father*; the more we learn of Him the more we are brought to see the practical implications of that holy fellowship from day to day.



WHAT DOES THE FATHER DO FOR HIS CHILDREN?

Only a very partial list. But we will have forever to discover how wonderful our Father is to us.

1. He is the Giver of every good gift (Lk. 11:13; Jas 1:17).
2. He is the Answerer of every prayer (Mt. 6:6; Jn. 16:23).
3. He is the Blessor of every blessing (Mt. 7:11; Eph. 1:3).
4. He is the Promise-keeper of every promise (1 Pet. 1:3).
5. He is the Comforter of the sorrower (Jn. 14:16; 2 Cor. 1:3).
6. He is the Forgiver of every trespass (Mt. 6:14; Lk. 23:34).
7. He is the Revealer of every secret (Mt. 11:25; Eph. 1:17).
8. He is the Receiver of every child (2 Cor. 6:17-18; 1 Jn. 3:1).
9. He is the Ruler in the affairs of men (1 Thess. 3:11).
10. He is the Rewarder of every servant (Mt. 6:4; 1 Thess. 1:3).

DONALD MUNRO

The Munro “doctrine”: do the work of an evangelist! And it is.

Donald Munro (1839-1908) was born in the county Caithness, in the far north of Scotland. His parents, James and Hannah Munro, held the “old Puritan theology of the highlands that conversion is a necessity, the new birth a work of the Spirit in the soul, and the gospel the means used to effect it.” They gathered their children daily to read from the Gaelic Bible and to pray. In the Disruption of 1843, James took his family out of the Established Church of Scotland and joined the Free Church which was more evangelistic. But despite his parents’ godly example, Donald was resistant to the gospel.

His older brother Charles was the first of the Munro children to make a clear profession of salvation. Charles witnessed to his younger brother on a long walk, but Donald “didn’t want to be spoken to in that way again.”

In July of 1858, while working as an apprentice cabinetmaker in the town of Wick, he went to hear Hay MacDowall Grant, the laird of Arndilly. He spoke from Romans 8:1, and seemed to talk directly to Munro. “Young man! You may have read your Bible and said your prayers this morning, but did you pray? I warn you now before God, who knows you thoroughly, that if you are not in Christ, you are under condemnation.”

Six weeks later, he went to speak privately with Brownlow North, who laid the facts before Donald in a way he had never seen them before. Later that night, he looked to God in faith. Immediately, he wanted to tell his roommate that he had been converted, but was afraid. Finally waking him in the middle of the night, he told the whole story, and the roommate also trusted Christ.

Early in his Christian life he contacted James Dewar, who was preaching under Donald Ross’ Northeast Coast Mission among the fishing villages. After working hours, Donald would accompany Dewar. This was harvest season along that coast. Dewar’s success owed nothing to

any brilliance or natural persuasiveness on Dewar’s part. Rather his proximity to God and the throne of grace gave him influence among men. He would spend protracted periods in secret prayer, sometimes cloistering himself for days seeking God in private.

Munro was simply a helper to Dewar. Then, one night James announced to the congregation that there would be two meetings going on at the same time the next evening. Donald knew Dewar would speak at one of them. After the meeting he asked who would be preaching at the other meeting. “You will,” Dewar answered.

In 1865, Donald Ross invited Donald Munro to join in the gospel outreach of the Northeast Coast Mission. Donald worked mainly in the far north, in Sutherland shire. He also helped in the awakenings along the Moray Firth and in Aberdeenshire, lending a hand in the reaping of souls at Cairnbulg, Inverallochy, and at Footdee. Where the power of God was manifested, the meetings continued day and night.

As Ross searched his Bible, he decided to end his service in the Northeast Coast Mission. In 1870, he started the Northern Evangelistic Association. Munro was one of the first

evangelists to join. It seemed a risky step, but Munro reasoned that if God was leading them out, then God would supply their needs. “His pot will be big enough to hold porridge for me.” Soon the new mission society dissolved, and the men discovered that their relationship of co-laboring did not need the artificial bands and ligaments of some society or denomination.

At Inverurie there was strong opposition, but Munro was an overcomer. At their second gospel meeting, “few were present but scoffers, and such an exhibition of the devil, I never did see before anywhere. There were about thirty scoffers. During the time of prayer they hissed, cheered, and shouted so, that one could not hear his own voice.” Munro took heart, knowing that sometimes the



by JOHN A. BJORLIE

AMONG THE CONVERTS THAT DONALD MUNRO BROUGHT TO THE SAVIOUR:

JOHN RITCHIE, WRITER, PUBLISHER & ENCOURAGER;

T. D. W. MUIR, EVANGELIST & SHEPHERD;

WILLIAM FAULKNER, MISSIONARY TO AFRICA;

H. A. IRONSIDE, BIBLE TEACHER & COMMENTATOR.

devil's roars are his admission of defeat, and that he leaves his victims to "wallow foaming" (Mk. 9:20). At the conclusion of the week, they saw twenty saved, among them an eighteen-year-old named John Ritchie, who went on to serve Christ with his tongue and pen, forming what is now John Ritchie Publishers.

In 1871, after a strenuous twelve months of gospel campaigns, Munro took a break to visit his brother Charles in Parkhill, Ontario. He also hoped to witness to his unconverted brother, William.

Mr. Munro reported on the progress of the work. His letters were printed in the *Northern Intelligencer*, and the *Northern Witness*, and became seeds of interest to bring other gospel preachers such as John Carnie, John Smith, Donald Ross, and Alexander Marshall over to Canada and the United States.

At this time, Ross was in Scotland examining the issue of Christian baptism, while Munro did likewise in Canada. Ross corresponded with his friend, saying that he saw the matter clearly, and was baptized in the River Dee one Saturday morning. Donald Munro sailed the ocean to have Ross baptize him at Aberdeen on December 31, 1871. Thereafter, believer's baptism was a key element of teaching to the new converts.

Munro also saw a bold step being taken in Scotland. In November of 1871, as James Campbell recalled, "the table of the Lord was spread in the simplicity of early times...It was a beautiful sight to us indeed. We had never heard of such a meeting until we saw it with our own eyes." As New Testament-style congregations sprang up, the opposition sprang up, too.

Munro discovered the meaning of that saying, "Endure hardness...do the work of an evangelist" when a Mr. McIntosh published the inflammatory booklet, *The New Prophets*. The scoffers felt that they had the support of the established church, and all restraint against violence and public ridicule was removed. At the meetings in Huntly, a clergyman stood up to disrupt the message with railing denunciations. Donald Ross said the mockers gave "savagely, cruel, and brutal treatment, worthy of the palmy days of the Inquisition...God's truth had laid bare the sores, and they were very sore."

At a packed Sunday evening meeting, the scoffers turned the lights out and tried to cause a panic, but the Christians remained calm—even some of the scoffers were saved! At the climax of that meeting, the opposition rushed onto the platform, threw the preachers to the floor, and told them to desist or they would be murdered.

The devil must have been quite worried about losing hold of Huntly. Rightly so! Thereafter it became the birthplace of a number of missionaries and Christian workers.

In October of 1872, Munro returned to Ontario. In 1873, he was joined in the work by James Campbell and John Smith to campaign in Chatham, Dundas, Forest, Galt, London, Orillia, St. Catharines, Stratford, and Toronto. The Word went out in power. Numbers came to the Saviour, and congregations were established.

The opposition persisted. A clergyman in Forest, ON warned, "Mr. Munro is all right so long as he keeps at the gospel, but I warn you against his Bible readings. They are sure to lead you astray."

One night in 1873, Munro visited the town of Shakespeare, near Stratford. "We can never forget the first time we heard the voice of Donald Munro preaching on the street in Shakespeare...Nobody spoke to him, and when he had finished he returned to Stratford. He came again the following night, preached in the open-air, and obtained permission to have meetings in the schoolhouse. There he was joined by Mr. Smith, his fellow-laborer. They preached the Word simply and faithfully each night, and God gave blessing. Sinners were saved, and those who were the Lord's revived."

But the Presbyterian minister was not so encouraged when he noticed some of his sheep straying over to the schoolhouse. He set in motion a cycle of abuse. Munro and Smith lost the use of the schoolhouse, and every place they rented or stayed at was vandalized. Windows were broken, and stones smashed against the doors of private houses. One day a property owner stood looking at the work of a mob on the previous evening, when an elder of the church which was the most guilty of the violence walked by. While embarrassed by his fellow parishioners, he made the lame excuse, "The truth must be upheld at all cost, even if stones have to be used." On hearing this, John Ritchie remarked, "Very likely the murderers of Stephen would have given a similar answer." Yet in the spring Munro baptized twenty-five from Shakespeare.

At Clyde, ON, Munro, Smith and Carnie preached for five weeks. A brother McPherson hosted Munro. "His godly life in our home and his earnest prayers had a wonderful effect on all. He often retired alone to the edge of a wood to pour out his soul in prayer to God, continuing for a long time. He was the first to open up the Word of God to us, and we never knew any who could do it so simply and plainly as he did. In one day Mr. Munro bap-

tized fifty believers in a pond near Clyde.”

In June of 1874, Munro and Smith came to Hamilton, ON. They preached six weeks of gospel meetings and decided that the meager results dictated that they should pack their bags. But on the last night, a young man named Thomas Muir was saved. Munro and Smith were heartened, and decided to stay a little longer. They unpacked their bags. Two nights later, Thomas Muir leaned over to a distressed young man and asked, “Have you eternal life?” “No, I have not, but I wish I did have.” A few minutes later, the man, William Faulknor, trusted Christ. Sitting behind them, Kenneth Muir listened, and he was saved. Faulknor would eventually go to Angola to serve in mission work with Fred Stanley Arnot, while Muir became a missionary to the metropolis of Detroit.

In Toronto, Munro became a frequent guest in the John and Sophia Ironside home, along with his co-worker, John Smith. A ten-year-old named Henry Allen Ironside would never forget the men who “carried with them the atmosphere of eternity.” “One of them was very tall, and wore a long brown beard. His name was Donald Munro. The other was quite short; his beard was long also, but it was black, and his eyebrows were bushy and very shaggy. Harry used to enjoy watching him clip them.” The shorter man’s name was John Smith (but privately nicknamed “Hellfire Jack”). As they came down the stairs for breakfast, one of them asked, “Harry, my lad, are you born again?” In defense, Harry reported on his tract distribution efforts, Bible memorization, and Sunday School attendance, but the interview ended with a bearded preacher saying, “O laddie, you may give out tracts and still spend all eternity in hell. ‘Ye must be born again,’ Harry, boy.”

When Harry’s widowed mother moved the family to San Francisco, Harry thought that those preachers would never button-hole him again, but he was wrong. The next year, 1886, Donald Munro married Miss Helen Dorr, and the Munros settled in Toronto. Meanwhile, in 1887, Ross saw an assembly established in the San Francisco Bay area. That October, they held their first annual Bible conference. And who else would Ross invite to such a conference, but his comrade Donald Munro?

In the late summer of 1889, Munro again appeared. The fourteen-year-old was returning home from school when Mrs. Ironside said, “Harry, who do you suppose is here?” He guessed, by her excitement that it was uncle Henry. “Guess again,” and without waiting for another wrong guess she enthused, “It’s Mr. Munro!”

Donald greeted him, “Well, well, Harry, lad, how you have grown! And are you born again yet, my boy?” Ironside never could hide his blush. Speechless, Harry was eyeing the floor, when his uncle Allan interjected,

“Oh, Harry preaches himself, now,” referring to some Sunday School and Bible club work Harry had started.

“You are preaching, and yet you don’t know that you’re born again! Go and get your Bible, lad.”

As his biographer put it, Harry was so eager for an excuse to leave the room that he “flew up the stairs. He knew he had to come down again, but he took as much time as he possibly could to do so. When finally he could stay away no longer without being rude, he descended with his Bible in his hand. The first thing that Mr. Munro asked Harry to do was to turn to Romans 3:19. The boy did, and Mr. Munro said: ‘Now read it aloud.’ Harry complied: ‘Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.’ He had scarcely begun reading when Harry knew why his catechist had chosen the passage. ‘Harry, lad, have you ever been there?’

“‘What do you mean?’ the boy countered.

“‘Well, I understand that you have got your mouth pretty wide open trying to preach to other people. When God makes a preacher, He stops his mouth first and then, when he sees his lost condition, God leads him to put his trust in the Lord Jesus. When he trusts, he is born of God and his soul is saved. Then God opens his mouth. You’ve been putting the cart before the horse, haven’t you?’

“‘Maybe I have,’ Harry replied.”

That interview with Munro gave him emotional whiplash. In six months he still suffered from the jolt. One Thursday night in February of 1890, he again read from Romans 3, then John 3. That night H. A. Ironside looked to the One who was lifted up on a cross for him.

Campbell, Carnie, Gill, Marshall, Munro, Ross, and Smith, “toiled for the perishing.” They led by example. Besides the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba, Munro evangelized in Boston, Chicago, Kansas City, New York, and Philadelphia. He made ten trips to the west coast.

The years 1905-1906 were perhaps Donald’s busiest, but then his health gave in. Donald and Helen made visits to his many children in the faith, hoping by this to recoup his strength. Donald felt like Gideon, “faint, yet pursuing.” At the age of 69, having walked with God over fifty years, he passed to glory in 1908.

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Cameron, H. A., *Reminiscences of T. D. W. Muir*, G. F. P. Hawthorn, J., *Alexander Marshall*, Gospel Tract Publ.
Ritchie, J. Ed., *Donald Munro*, Gospel Tract Publ.
Ross, C. W. Ed., *Donald Ross*, Gospel Tract Publ.
English, E. Schuyler, *H. A. Ironside: Ordained of the Lord*, Loizeaux Bro.



If God is our Father

“They understood not that He spoke to them of the Father.”

H. W. SMITH

One of the most illuminating names of God is the one especially revealed by our Lord Jesus, the name of Father. While God had been called by many names, Christ alone has revealed Him to us under the all-inclusive name of Father—a name that holds within itself all other names of wisdom and power, and above all of love and goodness, a name that embodies for us a perfect supply for all our needs.

Christ, who was the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, was the only One who could reveal this name, for He alone knew the Father. “As the Father knoweth Me,” He said, “even so know I the Father” (Jn. 10:15). “Not that any man hath seen the Father save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father” (Jn. 6:46).

In the OT, God was not revealed as the Father so much as a great warrior fighting for His people (Ex. 15:3) or as a mighty king. The name of Father is only given to Him there six or seven times; while in the NT it is given about 268 times. Christ, who knew Him, was the only One who could reveal Him. “Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.”

All the discomfort and unrest of so many of God’s children come from this very thing: they do not understand that God is truly their Father. They think of Him as a stern Judge, or a severe Taskmaster, or at best as an unapproachable dignitary, seated on a far-off throne, dispensing exact-

ing laws for a trembling world. But of a God who is a Father, loving, full of compassion; a God who will be on their side against the whole universe, they have no conception.

But I must make it plain that it is a Father such as our highest instincts tell us a good father ought to be. Sometimes earthly fathers are unkind, or selfish, or even cruel, or they are merely indifferent and neglectful; but none of these can by any stretch of charity be called good fathers. But God, who is good, must be a good Father or not a Father at all.

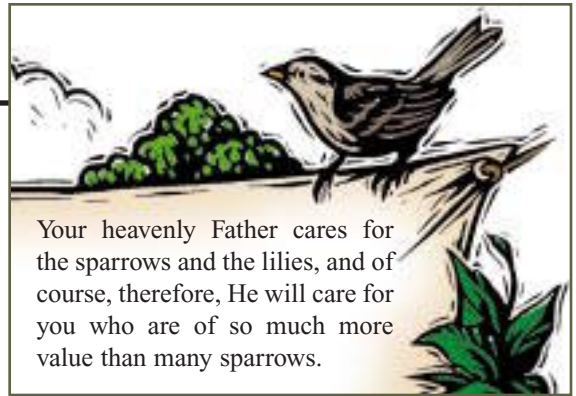
Had all who used the name known what it meant, it would have been impossible to misrepresent His character and doubt His love and care, thoughts that have desolated the souls of His children through the ages.

Moreover, since He is an “everlasting Father,” He must in the very nature of things always act as a good father ought to act, and never in any other way. It is inconceivable that a good father could forget, or neglect, or be unfair to his children. A savage father might, or a wicked father; but a good father—never!

But you may say, “What about the other names of God? Do they not convey other more terrifying ideas?” They only do so because this name of Father is not added to them.

Has He been called a Judge? Yes, but He is a Father Judge, when He deals with His children. He corrects as a loving father would. There is “no condemnation” to those in Christ.

Is He a King? Yes, but a King who is at the same time the Father of His subjects, and who rules them



Your heavenly Father cares for the sparrows and the lilies, and of course, therefore, He will care for you who are of so much more value than many sparrows.

with a father’s tenderness. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust” (Ps. 103:13-14). It is not “as a judge judges, so the Lord judges”; not “as a taskmaster controls, so the Lord controls”; not “as a lawgiver imposes laws, so the Lord imposes laws”; but, “as a father pitieth, so the Lord pitieth.”

In our Lord’s prayer in John 17, He says that He has declared to us the name of the Father in order that we may discover the wonderful fact that the Father loves us as He loved His Son. Which one of us really believes this? We have read this chapter over, I suppose, oftener than almost any other chapter in the Bible, and yet do any of us believe that it is an actual, tangible fact, that God loves us as much as He loved Christ? If we believed this to be actually the case, could we, by any possibility, ever have an anxious or rebellious thought again? Would we not be absolutely sure always under every conceivable circumstance that the divine Father, who loves us just as much as He loved His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, would of course care for us in the best possible way, and could not let us lack any good thing? No wonder our Lord could tell us so emphatically not to be anxious or troubled about anything, for He knew His Father and knew that it was safe to trust Him utterly.

Again, our Lord draws the comparison between earthly fathers and our heavenly Father: “If ye, being

evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Can we conceive of a good earthly father giving a stone or a serpent to a hungry child instead of bread or fish? And yet I fear many of God's children actually think that their heavenly Father does this sort of thing to them, giving them stones when they ask for bread, or curses when they ask for blessings.

But not only is our heavenly Father willing to give us good things, He is more than willing. Our Lord says, "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Why should we ask Him in such fear and trembling, and why should we torment ourselves with anxiety lest He should fail to grant what we need?

The principle is announced in the Bible that if any man provides not for his own household, he has "denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Since we are of the "household of God," this principle applies to Him, and if He should fail to provide for us, His own words would condemn Him. I say this reverently, but I want to say it emphatically, for so few people seem to have realized it.

We may have been accustomed to think that our doubts and fears were because of our own unworthiness and arose from humility; and we may even have taken them as a sign of special piety, and have thought they were in some way pleasing to God. But if, with their earthly parents, children should express doubts of their love, and fears lest their care should fail, would these doubts and fears be evidences of filial piety?

If God is our Father, the only thing we can do with doubts and fears and anxious thoughts is to cast them behind our backs, and have nothing more to do with them ever again. We can do this. We can give up our doubts just as we would urge a drunkard to give up his drink.

"Behold," says the apostle John, "What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." The "manner of love" bestowed on us is the love of a father for his son, a tender protecting love, that knows our weakness and our need, and cares for us accordingly. He treats us as sons, and all He asks in return is that we treat Him as a Father, whom we can trust without anxiety. We must take the son's place of dependence and trust, and must let Him keep the Father's place of care and responsibility. Because we are the children and He is the Father, we must let Him do the father's part. Too often we take on our shoulders the father's part, and try to take care of ourselves. No wonder we are told to cast all our care upon Him, for He cares for us.


The children of a good, human father are at peace because they trust in their father's care; but the children of the heavenly Father too often have no peace because

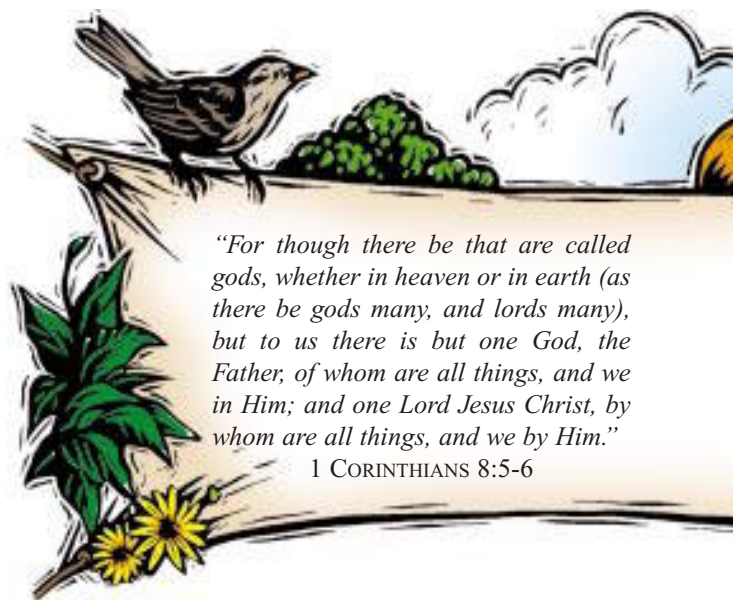
they are afraid to trust in His care. They make their requests known to Him perhaps, but that is all they do. It is a sort of religious form they feel is necessary to go through. But as to supposing that He really will care for them, no such idea seems to cross their minds; and they go on carrying their cares and burdens on their own shoulders, exactly as if they had no Father in heaven.

The remedy for your discomfort and unrest is to be found in becoming acquainted and united with the Father. "For," says the apostle, "ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" Is it this "spirit of adoption" that reigns in your hearts? You may ask how you get this "spirit of adoption." It comes simply as the result of the discovery that God is in very truth a real Father. When we have made this discovery, we cannot help feeling and acting like a child; and this is what the "spirit of adoption" means. It is nothing mystical nor mysterious; it is the simple natural result of having found a Father where you thought there was only a Judge.

In order to come to the knowledge of the Father, we must receive the testimony of Christ, who declares: "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works."

The whole authority of Christ stands or falls with this. If we receive His testimony, we set to our seal that God is true. If we reject that testimony, we make Him a liar.

"If ye had known Me," says Christ, "ye should have known My Father also; and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." Let us make up our minds that from now on we will receive His testimony. Let other people worship whatever sort of God they may; for us there must be "but one God, even the Father." 



"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him."

1 CORINTHIANS 8:5-6

THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT

He both afflicts the comfortable and comforts the afflicted

Life in the 90's seems to have brought with it a desperate attempt to be comfortable. Cotton has again emerged as the fabric of choice for our clothing—it's more comfortable. Our cars, homes, and offices have thermostatically controlled heating and air conditioning (of course, we're happiest when *we* control the thermostat). And even in the gatherings of the local church, we'd rather not have someone "stepping on our toes" in the course of teaching and ministry. The byword of our generation seems to be: "Don't rock the boat; I'm quite comfortable, thank you!"

When the prophet Isaiah wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people...speak ye comfortably (to the heart) to Jerusalem...her iniquity is pardoned" (40:1-2), he wasn't concerned with the usual creature comforts (externals) which we diligently seek today. He was addressing an internal situation, a relationship with God and hence with His people. In fact, we do well to often remind ourselves of the stinging rebuke of Amos 6:1, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."

Yet there is comfort for the soul to be found in God: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies (compassion), and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble (the same word as *tribulation* in Greek), by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Cor. 1:3-4).

The term "comfort" in this passage is more often translated as "consolation" or "exhortation" in our New Testament. W. E. Vine renders comfort as, "a calling to one side, an exhortation, or consolation." In just the same way that our heavenly Father is the Father of Eternity (Isa. 9:6) and the Father of Lights (Jas. 1:7), so too, He is

the Father—the Source, the Author, the Progenitor—of all comfort. What a happy thought in times of distress and trial.


"Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work" (2 Thess. 2:16-17). Yes, the Scripture does suggest that the Godhead is involved in providing comfort, just as the Trinity is involved in accomplishing the plan of sal-

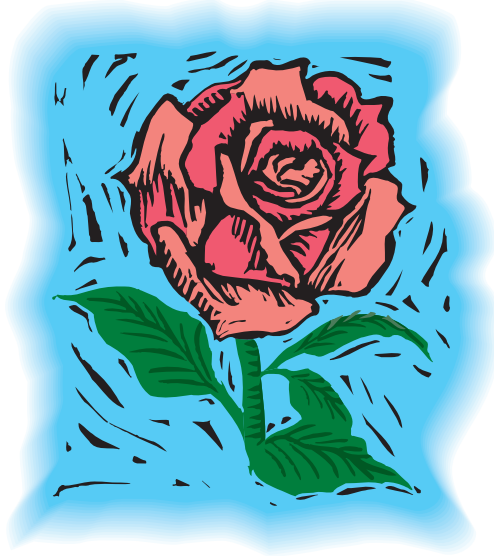
vation. The Lord Jesus told His disciples that "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name" (Jn. 14:26) would be available to them after His ascension. He would "not leave them comfortless" (Jn. 14:18). That Comforter is called the "Advocate"—One called alongside to give aid, legal defense, etc. (1 Jn. 2:1). Matthew Henry says that "because He loves us with an everlasting love, therefore we have an everlasting consolation."

All of this from our Father in heaven is included in the benefits of salvation. Paul reminded Timothy to "lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:12). Again, Vine tells us that means we are to be "practically

appropriating all the benefits, privileges, and responsibilities of eternal life."

Once we have appropriated and enjoyed these blessings of God, we'll be able to share that same comfort with others who are in need. It has been well stated that our desire should be to be used as channels of blessing, rather than reservoirs of truth. As we enjoy God's comfort in a very uncomfortable world, let's determine with His help to be a source of comfort to others. Our Father's supply is inexhaustible.

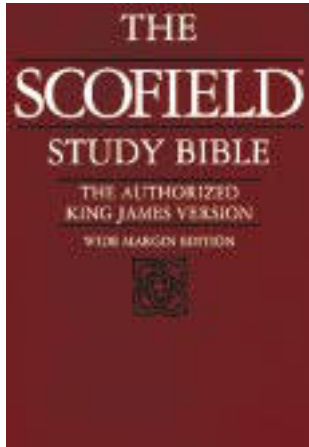
"Finally, brethren...be of good comfort" (2 Cor. 13:11). 



by WILLIAM H. GUSTAFSON

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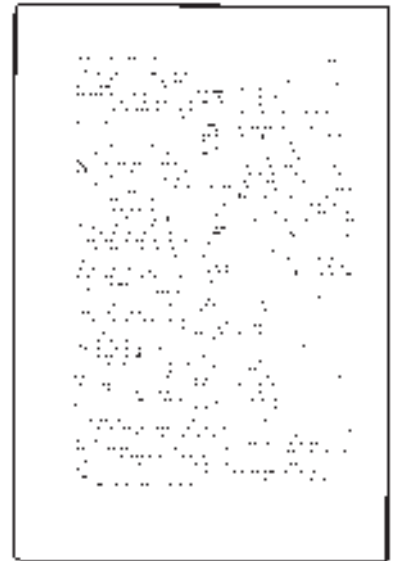
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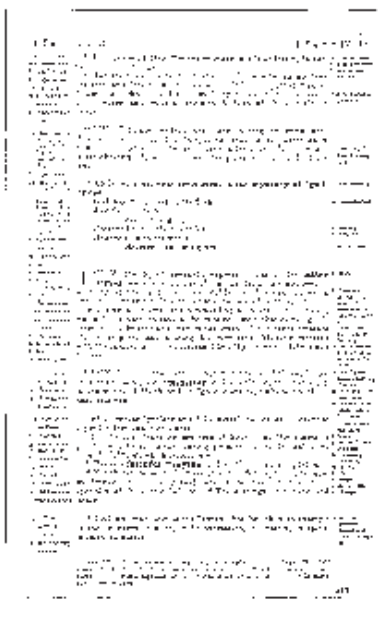
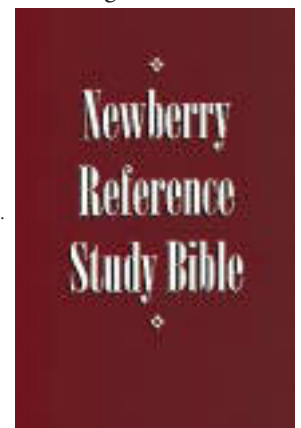
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A Song for the KING

The story is told of King George VI of England, a professing believer who, before his accession to the throne used to visit a small assembly in London and enjoy the weekly Bible readings. After he became king, he had to discontinue this practice but he remained a God-fearing ruler. In the course of his duties, the king came to Canada and his official visit took him to British Columbia. It was thought by the Canadian officials that King George might like to meet a native-born Indian chief. The one chosen for the honor was a well-known and influential native American known as Chief Whitefeather. Chief Whitefeather was supposed to sing something for the king, and, needless to say, the officials supposed he would sing a native war song. But the chief had something else in mind. One can picture the surprise of the officials when Chief Whitefeather began to sing:

*I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold,
I'd rather be His than have riches untold,
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land,
I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand—
Than to be the king of a vast domain
And be held in sin's dread sway;
I'd rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today.*

—SUBMITTED BY LES RAINEY