

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.
Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.
Psalm 25:14

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A More Perfect Way

By Allen Stump

(The following study is an edited version of a sermon I recently shared. Based on the reaction that I received afterward, you will either be challenged to have a deeper experience in God's love or you will think I am taking matters too far. I pray that the former will be your experience and that the truth of God's Word on this matter will be a blessing to you.)

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou has a little strength, and has kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” (Revelation 3:7-9) God loves and cherishes His people. Our Father has deep feelings and emotions in His heart for His people and He wants other people to know just how precious they are to Him, but He says especially those who have persecuted His saints, “those who have been rejecting of Me, they will know how much I love you.” “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Revelation 3:10-13)

Philadelphia is called the church of “Brotherly love.” It comes from two Greek words for “love” and “brethren.” Simply, it means brotherly love. We have a city in eastern Pennsylvania called Philadelphia, which is known as the city of brotherly love. I understand that they used to have a sports stadium called Veterans’ Stadium in Philadelphia. It was torn down in the last few years to build a new stadium. I have read about the attitude of the fans of Philadelphia towards the opposing teams and visiting fans and from what I have read and from what I have heard, there was no place in this country that was a more unfriendly place for an opposing team to play a professional sport than Philadelphia. They say that when fans of another team would come to “The Vet,” as it was called, to watch their team play that they would be pelted upon with beer, spit upon, have obscenities hurled upon them, and treated with other such unpleasantness. It was just the most unfriendly place ever to be. So you see friends, we can take a name that signifies love (Philadelphia is called, “The City of Brotherly Love”), but we may not

Prayer Requests

I recently received a letter from a brother in Europe who was writing in response to a statement I had made in the last *Old Paths* that this might be the last General Conference ever. He simply asked why I made the statement. Perhaps I was naive, but if we really believe that Jesus is coming soon and the “final movements will be rapid ones,” (9T, p. 11) and with current events in the secular and religious world happening at lightning speed, should Jesus not return soon? He must return soon!

Please keep everyone at the General Conference Session in prayer. Pray especially that those from the Smyrna group and the brothers and sisters traveling to the meetings with us may receive the Holy Spirit and be able to distribute thousands of pieces of truth-filled literature. Keep the delegates and observers in prayer that their hearts will be open to the truth and that there can come a great revival among those who will accept the truth as God first gave it to our people over 150 years ago.

Editor

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exhibit such love. However, God's people will have love in action that will speak louder than words.

Now, Philadelphia is one of the seven churches that is noted in the second and third chapters of Revelation. It is one of only two churches that receive no condemnation, the other being Smyrna. Philadelphia was given good remarks, and it was known to be a place of brotherly love. The principle of brotherly love is taught a great deal in the Scriptures. In fact, it is emphasized as a part of holy living more than any other teaching in the Bible. In Mark 12:28, we have a scribe coming to Jesus and asking what the greatest commandment of all is. He wanted to know what the most important thing he could do with his life was, and Jesus said, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." (Mar 12:30) Jesus then followed the command to love God supremely by teaching us to love our neighbor as ourselves. (verse 31)

I find it very interesting that when Jesus said to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength, the Greek word for love is *agape*. *Agape* is a word spoken of a lot but sometimes we have been taught or we have been led to believe that the term *agape* is simply "a love of principle" alone. True love, Biblical, godly love, does involve principle, and we will look a little more about that later, but how do you "principle" something with all of your heart? Have you ever thought about that? Doesn't that involve some kind of emotion? Doesn't it involve some kind of a feeling, a deep passion, a pathos that we have? It most certainly does, and we are yet told to love our brethren in that same way. Do you know why? Because this is the way God is. God is just like this, and He wants us to become just like Him in character! So, part of becoming like God is to experience love like God.

In the beginning God created man in His own image. (See Genesis 1:26.) Today, the frailty of humanity does not compare well with Adam who was created in the image of God. Yes, Adam had hands with five fingers, he had two eyes, a nose, and all the features that most of us are fortunate enough have, but I am sure that Adam was a much healthier specimen of the race than I am. Adam was much nobler in his bearing and in his character. I believe that at a point, Adam had the ability to love in a way that I don't have yet. The Bible says that man was created in the image of God. Interestingly, the Hebrew word for "man" in Genesis 1:26 is "*adam*" and God called both Adam and Eve, "*adam*." (Genesis 5:2) Men and women are both referred to as *adam*. No race of humanity has ascended from a lower form of life. The Bible tells us that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." (Acts 17:26) I was recently visiting with one of my relatives who had to have a blood transfusion, and was asked, "Do you suppose I got any black people's blood?" And I said, "Well, I just don't know, but the fact is, really, unless they had marked it on the container, there would be no way for anyone to know because when you look at it under the microscope, it all looks alike." She said, "Really? I didn't know that." I said, "Yes." The fact is that God is the Maker of us all. Notice what it says in Proverbs 22:2: "The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of

them all." It doesn't matter if we are white, black, rich, or poor, tall or short, whatever, the Lord has made us all.

The Brotherhood of Man

Malachi 2:10 asks the question, "Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?" And of course the implied answer is, yes, of course, there is the one great God who has created us. There is one great God who is the Father of us all, and that is important to know because if He is my Father and He is your Father, than what does that imply about our relationship to each other? It makes us brothers and sisters! My children, Hans and Heidi, are brother and sister. Why? Because I happen to be their father, and the fact is that we have an elder Brother who is the Brother of us all.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Hebrews 2:9-11) Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren! In fact, beloved, He is thankful, happy, and even excited about that. It means something to Him.

When I was in college, I joined a Greek fraternity (*theta xi*), and this fraternity was sort of like a closed club. You could only get in by invitation and you had to go through several things to achieve membership, but once you got in, you had a very close, tight-knit experience among the people within the fraternity. We lived together in one big house. It was a zoo at times, but there developed a type of closeness that we only had among ourselves. It wasn't something that we were willing to share with someone else. And I wonder sometimes if that is the way we are in church. We belong to this church or that church, or "the" church, and do we really look upon people outside as being just that—outside? Or is there really a brotherhood of humanity that we all participate in, a brotherhood of man that we all are a part of? If God truly is the God of each one of us and if Jesus is really our Brother, then we all are brothers and sisters of the same family, and it doesn't matter, friends, what pew we sit in on Saturday or even Sunday morning. God says, "That person is your brother, that person is your sister because I am their Father, and you have a responsibility to that person and you are to love that person. Do you know why? Because I love him or her and I love that person so much that if he or she had been the only person outside of that little, nice, warm church you sit comfortably in, I would have sent Jesus to come and die for him or her."

The Fatherhood of God

In Jesus Christ alone, not in any church, not in any denomination or system, but in Jesus Christ alone, is the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and in Jesus Christ alone we find the brotherhood of man, when we find the brotherhood in every person, and not until it is in every person. Jesus says He is "not ashamed to call them brethren." (Hebrews 2:11) Everyone,

friends, who is of flesh and blood, everyone, Jesus says, “That is my brother and I am not ashamed of him.” And He is not ashamed to go and take him by the hand, and even though his breath smells of liquor, He says, “Come with me and I want to show you a better way.” That is what Jesus does. Jesus doesn’t stand off like we do at times. Let’s be honest. We have been taught, it has been inculcated within us, to feel like in some way we are an elite group of people that is somehow better than other people. That does not mean that God doesn’t love His people in a special way. In fact, as we noted earlier, He is going to let everyone know how much He loves us! But, I think about the disciple John. John referred to himself four times as the disciple whom Jesus loved. (John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7; 20) But, does that mean Jesus didn’t love the other disciples? No, He loved them all, didn’t He? He loved them dearly, but John, because of his close proximity to Jesus, because of his desire, was able to enter into a closer fellowship than the other disciples did.

It is true that maybe through knowing God better and having the goal of having God as my best friend, and really striving to see that happen, maybe I am able to enter into a closer proximity than maybe some other people, but it doesn’t mean that God doesn’t want to enter that same close proximity with everyone else. Think about Abraham, he was called, “The friend of God.” (James 2:23) David was a man after God’s own heart even though he did some very wicked things. He repented, didn’t he? But that same kind of closeness, the Lord wants to have with each one of us. Do you know what else? He wants us to have it with each one of us.

Now, if I were to write today that I love everyone with the same care and concern, I would be lying, and I think anyone who knows me would realize that it is not yet true. I have to be honest, I don’t have the love without respect for the individual, but that is my goal. That is what I want to do. I mean, I can’t think of any person I love more than my wife, Charmaine. And I suppose I love Hans and Heidi next. Maybe sometimes I love them more in a different way, I don’t know. We have each had this kind of discussion, “Don’t you ever make me choose between you and the kids because you lose.” And it has been that way from both ends. But please consider the following: Throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity, if we, by God’s grace, are in the kingdom of heaven, we are going to learn to have a love and an appreciation for the most vile sinner that repents, which will be far beyond the most love we could ever have for our spouse or our children right now! Isn’t that something? Isn’t that a wonderful thought? God can give us that kind of a deep love even for the person who is a drunk, drug dealer, murderer, thief, prostitute, or the one who is the most reprobate person of society. God loves that person desperately and He wants us to love that same person just as desperately.

The Spirit of the Papacy

By now most everyone has heard about the election of Benedict XVI as the new pope and we are probably all appalled by that very system which he leads, called the papacy. We are appalled by the papacy and think we would never be a member of the papal system. O, wouldn’t we? I challenge you because many do not really understand what the basis and the true spirit of the

papacy is. The great trouble with heathenism was that it considered God to be far away. Now consider this: In heathenism, God is far away. Not only that, but He is full of wrath and He is only waiting for a chance to get a hold of people and to pick them up and to shake them vengefully. That is what the heathen believed, but that is not what the Bible says:

“That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; ... Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God.” (Acts 17:27-29) Paul says that He is so close it is as if we could reach out and touch Him. But the idea of heathenism was that God isn’t close at all. He is far away, and He doesn’t necessarily want to be close to you except to get a hand on you and to do something violent or harsh to you. That is heathenism. Then another form of heathenism arose that is called the papacy, the very incarnation of that enmity between man and God. This incarnation of evil entered under the name of Christianity, and it also puts God and Christ far away, so far away that you can’t even approach God. You can’t even approach Christ. You have to have Mary and different saints and mediators. Nobody can come near them, and **this is the spirit of the papacy**. Do we have that spirit at times? Oh, we would be loathe to think that we are papal followers, but the first time, friends, that we start to put people far away, we have the spirit of the papacy!

Agape, Phileo, & Eros

In the Greek language, which I believe beyond reasonable question is the language of the New Testament, there are three main words that express the concept that we use the single word, love, for today. Two of these are found in the New Testament and one is not there at all. The one that is not there is *eros* and from that word we get our English word erotic. It means lust. *Eros* is without principle or care for others. It is very selfish-natured. There is another word that is used in the New Testament a lot and it is called *phileo*. It carries a lot of connotations, but it means a love that carries emotion, passion, a brotherly love, love such as we would have for a brother, a wife, a father, a mother. It is the word for love that is used in the name, “Philadelphia.” The third Greek word translated love is: *agape*. *Agape* is what is called the divine love, a love that is not selfish. Now interestingly, neither Jesus nor most of the disciples usually spoke in Greek, especially, of course, when you read the accounts of Jesus in the Gospels. They spoke Aramaic. So, what we have in the Greek New Testament are the words that the Holy Spirit has impressed the writers to use to try to convey the meaning that Jesus had when He used the term love in the Aramaic. As noted, in English we use one term, “love,” and it can mean many, many different things. The same is true in the Aramaic and in the Hebrew languages. There is basically one term that is used to cover a very wide range of those kinds of feelings and emotions. In fact, Hebrew is a language that is very difficult to express abstract concepts in. However, Greek is a rich language to express these ideas in and although they may not be the exact words that Jesus used when He spoke, they were the words that Inspiration guided the apostles to use to express the

point Jesus was trying to get across, and that is what is important.

Since the Old Testament was written in Hebrew we don't have this distinction. The closest we can come to try to see a distinction is to examine the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. You are familiar with Jeremiah 31 verse 3 was: "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Now, I want to say very frankly, very point-blank, and I make no apologies for saying this, that while the term agape does involve principle, and we are all familiar with statements to the effect that "love is a high and holy principle," right? (*R&H*, February 2, 1886) But I would also like to say that that kind of love is not simply principle alone. Do you know what the Greek word is that the Septuagint translators used here in Jeremiah 31:3 was? It wasn't eros, was it? Neither was it phileo. No, it was agape! Can you read Jeremiah 31:3 without it conveying great pathos to you? Doesn't it have meaning? Isn't there emotion? How can you read this and picture God pouring His desire upon His people, even those who will be lost for eternity, ("Oh, I have loved you with an everlasting love"), without deep pity and emotion.

When I was first starting to read the Bible and before I knew Charmaine (my wife-to-be at the time) had read the Bible very much, I found some passages from the Song of Solomon in a modern dynamic translation and I wrote a bunch of them out for her. Those passages were full of emotion and feeling. She asked me, "Why are you quoting me Song of Solomon for?" But beloved, they were full of what I wanted to express to her and they are what God wants to express to us. "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth." (Song of Solomon 3:1) The Septuagint translates "loveth" as agape. "...I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth..." (verses 1, 2) and again the Greek word is agape.

Well, we could look at some other statements, but Jesus said we are to love (agape) the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind—the intellect, the principles, yes—but all our heart as well.

Jesus Commanded Us to Love One Another

Jesus commanded us to have this kind of love. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love (agape) one another; as I have loved (agape) you, that ye also love (agape) one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love (agape) one to another." (John 13:34, 35) And the Greek word all the way through is agape. It is a love that goes beyond emotions. Sometimes we can have emotional love, but that love can be fickle sometimes. I have seen this over and over and you have too. A young man and a young girl get together and they *think* they are in love for awhile, but then one does something that disturbs the other, and then the other all of a sudden is mad, upset, even revengeful. "Oh, if that person is going to act like that, I'll fix him." That is a love that is based upon emotions and not upon any principle, and not upon the right emotions either, by the way. Are there good emotions to have? Do you think God

is an emotional being? The Bible says we were made in His image. We are emotional beings, whether we like to admit it or not. In the 1960's TV series Star Trek, there was a character from the fictitious planet Vulcan, called Mr. Spock. The notable characteristic of Mr. Spock, and other Vulcans, was that they had no emotions, they could neither love nor hate. However, we are emotional beings. Jesus says "love others like I have loved you."

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary, on page 682 states concerning *phileo*, "This kind of love is never commanded in the Bible, for it is more or less spontaneous, ..." But, I found some interesting texts, and you might find them interesting also. In Hebrews 13:1 it says, "Let brotherly love continue." "Brotherly love" is from phileo. It says we are to love, to let that love continue on. This was part of the problem of the first church. They lost their first love. That church at Ephesus that is mentioned in the book of Revelation lost that first love, and you know it is easy to forget that first love. It is easy to forget love altogether. Love is something that is like a little garden. It has to be cultivated and weeded, cared for and nurtured, or it becomes quite weedy and discordant.

The Early Church Forgot This Love

In Volume 8 of the Testimonies, page 241, Ellen White noted, "The early Christians began to look for defects in one another..." Now this is the people who lost their first love. Listen to what Sister White says, "The early church began to look for defects in one another, dwelling upon mistakes, giving place to unkind criticism. They lost sight of the Savior and the great love He had revealed for sinners. They became more strict in

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regard to outward ceremonies, more particular about the theory of faith." In other words, they were doctrine specialists. They were defenders of the faith. "...more severe in their criticisms. In their zeal to condemn others, they forgot their own errors. They forgot the lesson of brotherly love that Christ had taught, and saddest of all,..." and I thought this was an interesting observation, "...they were unconscious of their loss. They did not realize that happiness and joy were going out of their lives and soon they would walk in darkness, having shut the love of God out of their hearts." How can that be? Slowly, imperceptibly it happens, not over night! You know, we don't go straight from being a Christian to being an infidel. We don't go from being a hot Christian to being a back-sliding Christian individual overnight. It is a slow process. It begins with little things. Little things are important, aren't they? As Solomon said, it is "the little foxes that spoil the vines," isn't it? (Song of Solomon, 2:15) We need to be careful about many little things. We may cease to pray as much as we used to. We are still praying, but not as much. We may still read the Bible, some, but we cease to

study. Our witnessing may be lacking, just a little at a time until finally our Christian experience is just a hollow shell.

The apostle John, the apostle of love, realized that brotherly love was waning in that early church. You know John spent a great deal of his time ministering in Ephesus, the first church in Revelation, the one that is noted for losing its first love. This was a place that John had dwelt in and pastored at. He understood this and he spoke to this need. How the words of Jesus in Revelation must have pricked his heart. Let's notice a few things in his first epistle: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." (1 John 4:7) The translation has the word "love" twice, "beloved" once, and "loveth" once, and they all come from that same basic word, agape. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (verse 8) In all these verses it is the Greek expression *agape*. Agape is love that works on principle we are told. Sometimes we say we love someone, right? I may

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say I love my neighbor today, but then he steps on my toes tomorrow, and I get upset with him. I am really mad at him, but, no, I am not going to be mad because out of principle I love him. The principle keeps me in line, we say, but I tell you friends, if we simply are having behavior because of principle, we are not where God wants us to be! We must have a genuine care for others. The principle helps us, it is true. The principle reminds us, but we have to have that deep concern for our brother. Not just simply because if I don't love him right I won't be right with God, or if I don't quit harboring these resentful feelings because he stepped on my toes, I won't go to heaven. John says, in verse 9, "In this was manifested (or made known to us) the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." This is the great love. This is the demonstration. This is what Calvary is truly about. I know we rightfully speak a lot about the vicarious nature of Jesus dying, in other words, His dying in my place, on the cross. But the greatest point of the cross is to show us God's love so that we could be drawn to Him, so that we could understand His great love for us.

Faulty Concepts Lead to Faulty Experiences

Many Adventists realize that anyone who believes the doctrine of the immortal soul cannot fully understand the cross, because that concept says that Jesus couldn't truly die since the soul lives on forever. This is true, but when you understand and believe the doctrine of the Trinity, and really know what it means, then you have to admit also that Jesus didn't really die

because Jesus, being a part of the triune, eternal, immortal, god-head, could never die. So the cross becomes obscured again and we don't even think to bring in the love of the Father that was manifested in giving His Son. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (1 John 4:10)

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." (1 John 2:9,10) We need to love our brethren. We can love them because they are our brothers; they are our sisters. Why? What makes us to have the same brother and sister? As we have seen, we have the same Father! And further we have the same elder Brother! He is not ashamed of us. (Hebrews 2:11) "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. ... My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:11, 12, 18) "Verse 14 says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren..." Jesus says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35) Jesus reaffirms the need that we have to love each other. I want you to notice something amazing Jesus says in John 15. It is so hard sometimes to just follow what God's Word says, if we don't want to do it. It's hard if we don't want to do it to start with. This Spring when I was at the Jamaica camp meeting, Sister Onycha Holt was reading some Bible texts that were some of the simplest, plainest, easiest to understand, not ambiguous in any way, texts in the Bible. Yet it is amazing how hard it is for many people to want to follow and want to abide by what those texts say. Do you know why? Because we don't want to follow the texts! Notice what Jesus says in John 15:17, and it is not ambiguous in any way. "These things I command you, that you love one another," and that word love is agape love. It is a very unselfish love. It is a godlike love. It is a love that brings the whole package of what we need. That is how you love other people and that is what Jesus said we should do.

True Love of the Brethren

The wise man stated: "A friend (a true friend) loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." (Proverbs 17:17) Several years ago when I was disfellowshipped, there was a group of faithful people who came to the meeting on my account. I really appreciated knowing that there was a group of people there who, because the cause was righteous, were willing to stand up for the truth and even march into hell with me if necessary. I have a brother I work with named Lynnford Beachy. Most all the readers of *Old Paths* know of him and some know him. I know Lynnford loves me! For a righteous cause, that man will walk into hell with me and I will walk into hell with him. That is the way the Lord wants us to love.

When we have a true brother, nothing is going to separate us, nothing is going to keep us from loving each other. When Charmaine and I married we, like most couples, said wedding

vows. Boy, I am glad Charmaine said, “for better or worse.” I know she has had a lot more worse than she has had good out of me, but I appreciate that she is my wife and I love her dearly. She is a precious person. Do you know what, friends? We can have the kind of deep love married people currently have for their spouses, for others, as we grow in grace. David and Jonathan experienced it and you can too.

We have, I believe, a poverty of language. It is difficult for us sometimes to know how to express ourselves; we, of all people, we who speak English. I don’t know of any language in the world that has as large a vocabulary as English. If you compare English with any of the European languages, to French, German, or Russian, you will see we have three to four times the vocabulary. Maybe because we have chosen to pick words from all these different groups and bring them in, but it helps us to express ourselves in little nuances and ways we couldn’t otherwise, right? Yet, I think we still have a poverty of language in some spiritual matters and sometimes it is hard to even see what God is trying to say to us because of that poverty, but notice 1 Thessalonians 4:9: “But as touching brotherly love (phileo) ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love (agape) one another.” Isn’t that interesting? He says you don’t need to worry about this because you have been taught of God. You got this love from God, it takes care of everything. You have the whole package. With this love you let people know that you care, and show them concern. You expression emotion, you show some pathos. There is nothing wrong with that, because that is the way God is. How do I know? Because that is the way that Jesus (the express image of the Father) is. When Jesus came upon Jerusalem, amidst the hosannas and the palm branches He wept (Luke 19:41) and said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matthew 23:37) Ellen White says that Jesus’ weeping was “not of ordinary grief, but of intense, irrepressible agony.” (*Great Controversy*, p. 19) Irrepressible mean that it cannot be controlled. It was not just a

God sends the rain on the just and the unjust. As you read this, I am not sure what category you are in, but when it rains, some of it is for you!

little trickle of tear that went down the cheek of Jesus, but great sobs of agony that he wept.

I read a story that took place the day after Christmas. A man parked his car to pick up the morning paper. He noticed a dirty, poorly-dressed boy looking at his car. Seeing the boy eyeing the car, he reminded himself to be quick or he might be missing a hubcap when he returned. He came out of the store with his paper under his arm and, just as he opened the door to the car, the boy asked, “Mister, how much would a new car like this

cost?” The man responded, “I really don’t know. My brother bought this car for me as a gift.” The ragged, little boy looked unbelievably at the car and then with a look of wonder in his eyes, said, “Boy, I wish I...” Can you finish it out? He didn’t say, “Boy, I wish I had a brother like that.” He said, “Boy, I wish I could *be* a brother like that.” Do you get the difference? “Boy, I wish I could be a brother like that, that I could give something so nice to someone.” That is how Jesus loves us, friends, with a concern about what He could do for us, no matter what His need. He was interested in what He could do for us.

Loving as Jesus Did

Perhaps we have wanted people to do things for us and we have said something like this, “You know, if you could just do this one thing for me today,” and sometimes if it is just one thing, we are willing to do it, or if it is something very important we are willing to do it, but Jesus said, “This is my commandment. Do you really want to know what the essence of being a my follower is? Well, this is what it is.” ‘This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ (John 15: 12, 13) This is the kind of love I have and this is what I want for you.”

This is that kind of love that shows no preference. It is self-sacrificing. Jesus says in Matthew 5:45 that God sends the rain on the just and the unjust. As you read this, I am not sure what category you are in, but when it rains, some of it is for you! The Bible says that God is no respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34)

There is an interesting text in James 2:1. It says, “My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.” Now, what does that mean? Well, let me read it from the *New International Version*, which I don’t usually quote, but I think it is accurate to the Greek and expresses the thought well. “My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favoritism.” Now, is that easy to do? Maybe not always, but we don’t need to quit loving anyone any less. There are some people that we love a lot, more than most, and I am not saying we should love anyone less. Oh no, not at all. What we want to do is learn to love other people more, so that somewhere down the line, friends, it comes to the point that we love the drunkard in the gutter, we love the man who murdered and raped our daughter, more than we love our own children and our wife right now. Much more! Do you think that you can do that? You can, if you are taught of God, because that is the way God is. You say, “Are you sure God’s love is like that?” Yes we can know for sure because of the message of Calvary. Jesus went to the cross for our sins. We murdered God’s Son. We nailed spikes through His hands and mocked Him and spit in His face, and yet the Father still loves us anyhow. I have a poverty of language to explain that love, a feeble mind to diagnose it, but God can give me a heart of flesh to appreciate it! I can have it, and if I partake of His Spirit, if I partake of Him, I partake of that love. That is why, friends, we have to partake of the Spirit of God so much. We have to have Him in our lives, in our very being.

The first fruit of the spirit that Paul mentions in Galatians 5:22 is “love. (agape)” The Bible says, “Owe no man any thing,

but to love (agape) one another.” (Romans 13:8) We should love our brethren. We should treat others better than ourselves. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:” (Philippians 2:3-5) This is the way the mind of Christ Jesus is. He is looking upon the things of others.

What is true love? I want to read you something I found in *The Baptist Challenge*.

“Love is slow to suspect but quick to trust.” But how often are we quick to suspect and slow to trust? “Love is slow to condemn and quick to justify.” But, again, how often are we quick to condemn and slow to justify? “Love is slow to offend and quick to defend.” But, how quick are we to offend and slow to defend. “Love is slow to reprimand but quick to forbear. Love is slow to belittle but quick to appreciate. Love is slow to demand but very quick to give. Love is slow to provoke but quick to conciliate. Love is slow to hinder and quick to help. Love is slow to resent and quick to forgive.” (“The Baptist Challenge”)

Well, those are just some things that I thought were very nice, but friends, we need to remember the principle of the brotherhood of all mankind. God has created each one of us, and by His Son He has redeemed us back to Himself, and yet we are so prone to forget this and the need of the love God has for us in our lives.

There are some good Baptist people, aren't there? A lot of precious Baptist people. How many of them does the Lord love? All. How many of them are our brothers and sisters? All. If I go so far to say that, are all the Catholics, as well, my brothers or sisters? What about the pope, is he my brother? Even the pope is a creature of God, part of His creation and part of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Jesus Christ, and if he will be in the kingdom, he will be my brother, and if he is not in the kingdom, he may not be my church brother, but he is still my brother in the brotherhood of humanity.


Remember, the commands of the Bible are not hard to follow if we want to, but they will be very hard to follow if we don't want to. Paul says, “Let all your things be done with charity (agape).” (1 Corinthians 16:14) The seventeenth chapter of John records Jesus Christ's high priestly prayer to His Father. When I read the prayers of Christ, and particularly this prayer, I don't see something mechanical in it. Do you see something that is organized, that is simply there and said in a rote way with form and no emotion? Or do we see something that has a very personal nature to it? I think Christ's prayer on that night is the most personal prayer recorded in the Bible. Jesus is speaking so intimately to His Father. When you read this prayer, you can just envision that here is Christ and He is praying to the Father, He is praying about His relationship, He is praying about His followers, but it is almost as if He doesn't even realize that they are there with Him. It is the Father and Me at this point. Isn't that the way it comes across to you? It does to me. But, notice what He says: “And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that

thou hast sent me.” (John 17:19-21) As God and Christ are one in fellowship, so did Jesus pray for his disciples to be one, but not for them to be only in some kind of an agreed-upon unity, but to have a real Christian love and unity. It is a beautiful love

I found two texts that really sum up what I want to express. They are so beautiful. The first text is John 3:35: “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” The word “love” is agape. The Father loves Jesus so much. He has

“Love is slow to offend and quick to defend. Love is slow to reprimand but quick to forbear. Love is slow to belittle but quick to appreciate. Love is slow to demand but very quick to give. Love is slow to provoke but quick to conciliate. Love is slow to hinder and quick to help.” (The Baptist Challenge)

given all authority, all power into His hand. But I found another text that I thought was interesting. It says almost the same thing. It is in John 5:20. Do you know what it says? Look at the first five or six words: “For the Father loveth the Son.” Do you know what? There is a different Greek word here that is translated love. It is phileo. The Father said, “Oh, I have this deep passion, this deep emotion, for my Son.” Now, these aren't the direct words of the Father, are they? They are the words of Jesus. How did He know that? How did He know? Because the Father had showed Him His love. It wasn't that He could just say I love you and then Jesus say, “Oh, the Father told me He loved me.” He knew what that love was first hand. But, do you know what? We can too. We can know that same love first hand. That love, when everyone else wants to leave us and forsake us and forget about us, is a love that comes and cuddles us and holds us tight. It says, “You know, I love you, and even if you did something that wasn't pleasing to Me, I love you with an everlasting love.” That love will never stop. That is the kind of love the Lord has for us. The Bible says that we should love one another with a fervent, honest love. The only way we are going to get that fervent, honest love for one another is if we have it from God first, because He is the source of all love. He is the source of our whole being. As Paul quoted on Mars Hill, “In Him we live, and move, and have our being.” Acts 17:28)

This idea is not pie in the sky or an impossibility. But it will be an impossibility and it will be pie in the sky, friends, if you don't make God first and foremost and make Him your friend. You can't have any of it without that, but you can if you become the friend of God. If you will believe that He is someone that you can trust and that He is someone who truly loves and appreciates you, then beloved, you can have everything and so much more that I couldn't even begin to think about. 

Youth's Corner - The Love of God

Faith and love are the essential, powerful, working elements of Christian character. Those who possess them are one with Christ, and are carrying forward his mission. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ... But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

We are to sit at Christ's feet as continual learners, and to work with his gifts of faith and love. We shall then wear Christ's yoke, and lift his burdens, and Christ will recognize us as one with him; in heaven it will be said, "Ye are laborers together with God." Will our youth remember that without faith it is impossible to please God? and it must be faith that works by love and purifies the soul. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he that loveth God, love his brother also.

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ... This is my

commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. ... Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

It is profitable for all to read carefully, prayerfully, and frequently, the last prayer of Christ for his disciples. He prays: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

In these words we have a most convincing statement to prove the fact that unity, kindness, and love will exist among those who are Christians indeed. The world's Redeemer is exalted, glorified, in the character of all those who believe. He says, "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; ... that the world may know that thou has sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." What tremendous consequences to the world depend upon the unity of those who claim to be Christians, who claim to believe that the Bible is the word of God; who through repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ are represented as branches grafted into the living vine.

The signs of the times reveal to us that the coming of our Saviour is at hand. We should work with every God-given ability to win souls to Jesus Christ. If self is hid with Christ in God, we shall have no differences to alienate us one from another. If we can fasten the mind upon Christ, in whom our hope of eternal salvation is centered, we shall have that oneness with Christ that he prayed might exist among his disciples; and the burden of our message will be, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (*Mrs. E. G. White—Youth's Instructor*, August 2, 1894)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

By A. T. Jones

The official and “infallible” doctrine of the immaculate conception as solemnly defined as an article of faith by Pope Pius IX, speaking *ex cathedra*, on the 8th day of December, 1854, is as follows:—

“By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we declare, pronounce, and define, that the doctrine which holds that the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and, therefore, is to be firmly and steadfastly believed by all the faithful.

“Wherefore, if any shall presume, which may God avert, to think in their heart otherwise than has been defined by us, let them know, and moreover understand, that they are condemned by their own judgment, that they have made shipwreck as regards the faith, and have fallen away from the unity of the church.”—“Catholic Belief,” p. 2141¹

It may be well to remark in beginning that there is a large number of Protestants as well as other non-Catholics who entertain the mistaken view that the doctrine of the immaculate conception refers to the conception of Jesus by the Virgin Mary. The truth is that it refers not to the conception of Christ by Mary, but to the conception of Mary herself by her mother.

It is true that in the dogma the words are “at the first instant of her conception;” and in strictness of idea perhaps, this form of expression ought to refer to conception on her own part, and therefore to her conception of Jesus. But this is not the idea of the dogma. In the dogma, the sole idea and purport, of the words “her conception” is the conception of her by her own mother. Accordingly, to English readers it would more clearly express the thought to put it in the words, “at the first instant of the conception of her,” etc. For in all the controversy and literature on the subject, there is no thought of applying the phrase “immaculate conception” to anything but to the conception of Mary herself by her mother, whom “tradition” says was Anne.

In these days of the general acceptance of Catholicism as Christianity; and of compromises with the Catholic Church, and apologies for her on the part of “Protestants,” it is well that we should study such things as this that we may know for ourselves what is their real effect upon the doctrine of Christ, and what their consequences, in those who accept the dogma.

The first consequence of it to him who believes this doctrine is to make the Virgin Mary, if not actually divine, then the nearest to it, of any creature in the universe; and this, too, in her human nature. In proof of this we have the following statements of Catholic fathers and saints:—

“The ancient writer of ‘De Nativitate Christi’ found in St. Cyprian’s works, says: Because [Mary] being ‘very different from the rest of mankind, human nature, but not sin, communicated itself to her’

“Theodoret, a father that lived in the fifth century, says that Mary ‘surpassed by far the cherubim and the seraphim in purity.’”

“In the Greek Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, a father of the fourth century. ... the following words are directed to be chanted by the choir during the canon of the mass ‘It is truly meet that we should praise thee, O mother of God, ... thou art the mother of our God, to be venerated in preference to the cherubim; thou art beyond comparison more glorious than the seraphim.’

“Theodore, patriarch of Jerusalem, said in the second council of Nice, that Mary ‘is truly the mother of God, and virgin before and after childbirth; and she was created in a condition more sublime and glorious than that of all natures, whether intellectual or corporeal.’”—*Ibid.* pp. 216, 217.

Lest these statements should seem too ancient for “Protestants” we present a passage from our own times. In the “Manual of Devotion to Good St. Anne De Beaupre [pronounced boo-per], in the province of Quebec, and bearing the imprimatur of E. A. Cardinal Taschereau, present Archbishop of Quebec, it is said of Mary, that she—

“Is purer than angels, holier than the Archangels, higher than the Thrones, more powerful than the Dominations, more enlightened than the cherubim, more inflamed with the divine love than the seraphim.”—p. 72

These statements show that in the view of the Catholic Church and of the dogma of the immaculate conception, the nature of Mary was so “very different from the rest of mankind,” so much “more sublime and glorious than that of all natures” and “surpassed by [so] far the cherubim and seraphim” as to be “beyond comparison more glorious than” they, and therefore to be venerated “in preference” to them. This, then, puts the nature of Mary infinitely beyond any real likeness or relationship to mankind.

Having this clearly in mind, let us follow to the next step. And here it is in the words of Cardinal Gibbons:—

“We affirm that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word of God, who, in his divine nature is, from all eternity, begotten of the Father, con substantial with him, was in the fullness of time again begotten, by being born of the virgin, thus taking to himself from her maternal womb, a human nature of the same substance with hers.

“As far as the sublime mystery of the incarnation can be reflected in the natural order, the blessed virgin, under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, by communicating to the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, as mothers do, a true human nature of the same substance with her own, is thereby really and truly his mother.”—*Faith of Our Fathers*, pp. 198, 199.

Now put these two things together, First, we have the nature of Mary defined as being not only “very different from the rest of mankind,” but “more sublime and glorious than all natures;” thus putting her infinitely beyond any real likeness or relationship to mankind as we really are.

Next, we have Jesus described as taking from her a human nature of the same substance as hers.

It therefore follows as certainly as that two and two make four, that in his human nature the Lord Jesus is “very different” from mankind, is in a condition more sublime and glorious than all natures, is beyond comparison farther from us than are the cherubim and the seraphim, and is therefore infinitely beyond any real likeness or relationship to us as we really are in this world.

We know the answer that “the Church” makes to this—that Mary and Anne and Joseph and Joachim especially, and all the other eleven hundred and fifty saints, intercede with Him for those who have his help, and that through these he is enabled to reach mankind though he himself is so far beyond us. Even as the “Manual of Devotion to Good St. Anne” says further of Mary, that she—

“Is the ladder to heaven, the anchor of the shipwrecked, the star of the mariner, the bridge whereby God crossed the abyss which separated us from him,”—p.73.

But this is as great a fraud as is all the rest of the scheme. For the Virgin Mary, and Anne, Joseph, and Joachim and all the rest of the Catholic saints are dead, and cannot intercede for anybody. For the word of God says plainly that “the dead know not anything.” Eccl. 9:5. And “in death there is no remembrance of thee.” Ps. 6:5. And Jesus said to his disciples, “Whither I go ye cannot come.” John 13:33.

The situation then as presented by the dogma of the “Immaculate Conception” is this: By it Jesus, even in his “human” nature, is put so far from sinful men that we cannot reach him nor approach him except through the intercessions of Mary, and Anne, and the other Catholic saints. But Mary, and Anne, and the other saints are dead and so know nothing at all about anybody, and therefore can do nothing whatever for anybody. Therefore with Jesus so far away that we cannot find him without the intercessions of these saints, and with Mary and Joseph and the other Catholic saint all dead, and consequently unable to intercede for anybody, it is certain that the dogma of the immaculate conception puts Jesus Christ infinitely beyond the reach of mankind; as far from us indeed, as though he had never offered himself at all, and robs the world of the Saviour to the extent that that dogma is received.

But it is true that the Lord Jesus, in his human nature, was made lower than the angels, and took our nature of flesh and blood just as it is, with all its infirmities. The Scriptures are plain as anything can be on this point, and are worthy to be set down here against this papal invention of the immaculate conception. Having found that the papacy puts Christ as far away from men as possible, it will be well to know how near to men he really is.

In the first chapter of Hebrews, Jesus the Son of God is presented in his divine nature as equal with God and as God and as God indeed, the Creator and Upholder of all things, as “so much better than the angels,” that he has “a more excellent name than they,” and as so much higher than the angels that “all the angels of God worship him.”

In the second chapter of the same book, he is presented in his human nature as “lower than the angels,” even as man himself.

Thus it is written: “One in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man that thou visitest him! Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels.”

Thus, instead of his human nature being “beyond comparison” higher than angels, cherubim, and seraphim, it was made as much lower than they as man himself was made lower.

Nor is it only as man was lower than the angels before he sinned. It was not as man was lower than the angels in his sinless nature, that Jesus was made lower than the angels in his human nature; but as man is lower than the angels in his sinful nature, as he is since he by sin became subject to suffering and death. For so it is written: “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, . . . that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by all things, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.”

Thus, as man in his sinless human nature was made a little lower than the angels, and then by sin stepped still lower to suffering and death; even so Jesus, that he might bring man back to the glory of God, in his love followed him down even here, partakes of his nature as it is, suffers with him, and even dies with him as well as for him in his sinful human nature. For “he was numbered with the transgressors”—he died as a malefactor between two malefactors. This is love. This is Jesus our Saviour, for he comes to us where we are, that he may reach us and lift us up from ourselves unto God.

Yet this blessed saving truth is even more plainly stated, thus: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.” Heb. 2:14. He, in his human nature, took the same flesh and blood that we have. All the words that could be used to make this plain and positive are here put together in a single sentence. See: The children are partakers of flesh and blood. Because of this he took part of the same flesh and blood as the children have. Nor is this all: he also himself took part of the same flesh and blood as we. Nor yet is this all: he also himself likewise took part of the same flesh and blood as man.

The spirit of inspiration so much desires that this truth shall be made plain and emphatic that he is not content to use any fewer than all the words that could be used in the telling of it. And therefore it is declared that just as, and just as certainly as the children of men are partakers of flesh and blood, he also, himself, likewise took part of the same flesh and blood as we have in the bondage of sin and the fear of death. For he took this same flesh and blood that we have, in order “that through death he might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

Therefore, instead of its being true that Jesus in his human nature is so far away from men, as they really are, that he has no real likeness nor relationship to us, it is true that he is in very deed our kin in flesh and blood relation—even our Brother in

blood relationship. For it is written: “Both he which sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren.” Heb. 2:11

This great truth of the blood-relationship between our Redeemer and ourselves is clearly taught also in the gospel in Leviticus. There was the law of redemption of men and their inheritance, or himself had been brought into bondage, there was redemption provided. If he was able of himself to redeem himself or his inheritance, he could do it. But if he was not able of himself to redeem, then the right of redemption fell to his nearest of kin in blood-relationship. It fell not merely to one who was near of kin among his brethren, but to the one who was nearest of kin who was able. Lev. 25:24-28, 46-47; Ruth 2:20; 3:12, 13, 4:1-12.

Thus there has been taught through these ages the very truth which we have found taught here in the second chapter of Hebrews: the truth that man has lost his inheritance and is himself also in bondage. And as he himself cannot redeem himself nor his inheritance, the right of redemption falls to the nearest of kin who is able. And Jesus Christ is the only one in all the universe who is able. He must also be not only near of kin, but the nearest of kin. And the nearest of kin by blood relationship. And therefore he took our very flesh and blood, and so became our nearest of kin. And so also, instead of being farther away from us than are the angels and cherubim and seraphim, he is the very nearest to us of all persons in the universe.

He is so near to us that he is actually one of us. For so it is written: “Both he which sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.” Heb. 2:11. And he and we being one, he being one with mankind, it is impossible to have a mediator between him and men, because he and mankind are one and “a mediator is not a mediator of one.” Gal. 3:20. And as certainly as Jesus Christ is one with mankind and “a mediator is not a mediator of one,” so certainly this truth at once annihilates the “intercessions” of all the Catholic saints in the calendar, even if they were all alive and in heaven instead of being all dead. He is so near to us that there is no room for anybody and much less for from one to eleven hundred and fifty people to come between him and us. He is so entirely one with us and of us—of our very selves, our very flesh and blood—that it would be impossible to get the Virgin or a single one of the other saints between us, even if they were alive. No, he is on of us ; and as a mediator is not a mediator of one, it is impossible that there could be a mediator between Christ and men—even sinful men.

But the Scripture does not stop even yet with the statement of this all-important truth. It says further: “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.” “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Heb. 4:15. Being made in his human

nature, in all things like as we are, he could be, and was, tempted in all points like as we are.

As in his human nature he is one with us, and as “himself took our infirmities” [Matt. 8:17], so he could be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” And so also, he can help and save to the uttermost all who will receive him. As in his flesh, and as in himself in the flesh, he was as weak as we are, and of himself could “do nothing” [John 5:30], when he bore our grief’s and carried our sorrows” [Isa. 53:4], and was tempted as we are, by his divine faith he conquered all by the power of God which that faith brought to him and which in our flesh he has brought to us. “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Heb. 2:10.

And thus “what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh” did. The law could not bring us to God, nor could it find in the flesh the righteousness which it must have, because the flesh had fallen away from God and could not reach him again. But though the sinful flesh could not reach God, yet God in his eternal power and infinite mercy could reach sinful flesh. And so “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth.” [John 1:14], even “sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Rom. 8:3, 4.

This is Christianity. To deny this, to deny that Jesus Christ came not simply in flesh, but in the flesh, the only flesh that there is in this world, sinful flesh,—to deny this is to deny Christ. For “every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is not of God.” the Catholic Church does not confess this; but on the contrary declares it to be “shocking to Christian minds” and the “revolting consequences” of denying the immaculate conception.—*Catholic Belief*, pp. 217, 218. Therefore this is the spirit of antichrist, “where of ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” But, “every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.” “Hereby know ye the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” 1 John 4:2, 3, 6.

O, his name is called Immanuel, which is “God with us.” Not God with him in eternity, and could have been with him even though he had not given himself for us. But man through sin became without God, and God wanted to be again with us. Therefore Jesus became us, that God with him might be God with us. And that is his name because that is what he is.

Therefore and finally, as certainly as in his human nature Jesus Christ is one with us. and as certainly as God with him is God with us, so certainly the nature of the Virgin Mary was just like that of all the rest of us, and so certainly the dogma of the immaculate conception is an absolute fraud; and the doctrine a ruinous deception.

O! then, receive Him. He stands at the door and knocks; let him in. No ladder is required to reach him, for he himself is the Ladder which reaches from the earth where we are, to the highest heaven; and by which alone we can reach the presence of God. No bridge is needed. There is no abyss between us and him, for he is of ourselves as we are on the earth. And “with his

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divine arm he grasps the throne of God and with his long human arm he gathers the sinful, suffering human race to his great heart of love,” that we may be one with God.

Confess to him your sins: he will never take advantage of you. Tell him your grief’s: he has felt the same and can relieve you. Pour out to him your sorrows: “he hath carried our sorrows,” he was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” he will comfort you with the comfort of God. (A. T. Jones—The Religious Liberty Library, No. 25, 1894.)

Endnote:

1. “Catholic Belief,” is “a short and simple exposition of Catholic doctrine,” by the Very Rev. Joseph Faa Di Bruno, Rector-General of the pious Society of Missions: Church of S S mo Salvatore in Ouda, Ponte Sisto, Rome, and St. Peter’s Italian Church, Hatton Garden, London, E. C. Author’s American Edition, ideated by Rev. Louis A. Lambert, author of “Notes on Ingersoll,” etc., etc. One Hundred Thousand. Benziger Brothers, printers to the Holy Apostolic See, New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago.” Imprimatur, John Cardinal McCloskey, Archbishop of New York, June 5, 1884; and Imprimatur, Heuticus Eduardus, Carn. Archiep, Westmonast, Die 19 Julii 1983.

*“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
(Romans 5:8)*

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