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Questions Youth Are Asking Today

C. Mervyn Maxwell
Andrews University

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Recommended Citation

Maxwell, C. Mervyn, "Questions Youth Are Asking Today" (1971). *Faculty Publications*. 3882.
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questions youth are answered by mervyn maxwell asking today

KEEPING THE SABBATH

Please get down to the nitty gritty. My mother, sister, and I want to keep the Sabbath. In fact we were recently baptized as Seventh-day Adventists. But my father isn't interested in the least. On Friday nights he watches wild shows in the living room, with the volume turned up loud. How can we keep the Sabbath holy in a situation like this?

As the sun goes down and the Sabbath begins (Leviticus 23:32), let the three of you gather in some other room, even a bedroom, for family worship. This will get you off to the right start.

Come to supper with clean clothes and make a special effort to keep the meal happy. Use your better dishes. Plan an extra treat. Help your dad enjoy the meal. Do all you can to help him see that Friday night, as part of the Sabbath, has become a special time in his home.

Until bedtime you might study together in that other room. You might invite a high school friend who is interested to come and join your Bible study. Sometimes you might go to another family's home to study and read together with them.

And be sure to do this: Let your dad see the difference that Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, has made in your life. Mow the lawn on Friday afternoons without being asked. Wash the car. Be polite and

respectful. It has happened many times that under such persuasion fathers have decided to ask God to change them too. If this occurs in your home, your whole family will keep Sabbath together—and the problem you write about will be delightfully solved.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

Would you like to ask Mervyn Maxwell to help you find an answer? If so, send your question to

Mervyn Maxwell
"Signs of the Times"
1350 Villa Street
Mountain View, California 94040

INSTANT HELL?

If you Adventists are correct about our burning in the final punishment only until we no longer exist, what really is so bad about hell? Once I am burned to nothing, I will be in a position where no one can harm me. Maybe that will be heaven.

The reward of those who love and serve the Lord Jesus is to be far greater than merely freedom from harm. It is also to be joy without end in an eternal, vigorous, creative life lived in the light of God's smile. Isaiah 65, Revelation 21, 22.

To lose the pleasure of heaven and the presence of Jesus for all eternity! Who could describe such a loss? Who, in his right mind, would choose it?

Such a loss, even without an instant of destructive fire to introduce it, would surely be a punishment to avoid, don't you think?

BEDTIME STORIES

When I saw an advance notice that the new editor, Lawrence Maxwell, is a son of the Arthur S. Maxwell who has edited "Signs" for so many years, it dawned on me that you, too, must be one of his sons. This means that you are a son of the author of "Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories"! Mother read them when she was a child, and she brought me up on them. I just know some of the stories must be about you. In fact, I've picked some out. Do tell me if I'm right.

Some of the *Bedtime Stories* are about me—and Lawrence. You can read about the dear little darlings who fed the family's chickens in "When Jack Was Tired" and who shared their footwear in "Tom's Slippers." And you can read about the not-so-dear little darlings who fussed over the fuel in "Filling the Coal Scuttle" and quarreled over their bicycle in "The Twins' Bicycle." There are several others, but I spare you.

And myself!

Incidentally, if you remember sometime to enclose your selected list, I'll be able to grade it for you.

WATER TURNING TO BLOOD

I am intrigued by the Seventh-day Adventist emphasis on the second coming of Christ and end-of-time events. My church, too, believes that Jesus is coming soon. I am wondering about the seven last plagues of Revelation 16. Do you think they will be fulfilled literally? For example, in the second plague the waters of the sea are to become "as the blood of a dead man" and "every living soul" in them is to die. Is it possible that the oceans will actually turn into blood?

You should notice that the verse you quoted says that the water will become "as" the blood of a dead man.

I wonder if it is possible that we are witnessing a foretaste of this condition already? The most important characteristic of the blood of a corpse is its inability to sustain life because it lacks oxygen and has become contaminated with toxic wastes.

Many of the world's waterways are even now polluted with poisons, clotted with human refuse, and coated with oily scum. Lake Erie, we are told, produced millions of pounds of commercial fish only sixteen years ago, but today it is irredeemably "dead."

In an important sense, Lake Erie has become "as the blood of a dead man," and "every living soul" in it, except a few hardy, mutant fish, has died.

ALL-NIGHT BOYFRIEND

What do you do when you're out with a Christian boy who's supposed to be a pious member of your own denomination, and he wants to keep you out all night on your first date? What does he think I am anyway?

What does he think you are? The same kind of hypocrite he is.

What should you do with him? Show him you're not.

Let him go. Ask God to forgive him, then hang out your "Help Wanted" sign again.

CHEERS!

I just want to tell you that I like your column. It often gives me a lift just when I need it.

Thank you!

Now please tell someone else about the column.

Pray for it too.

The people who don't like it may need it worse than you do!

IS GOD REAL?

How can I know if God is real, like people? Sometimes He seems real to me, but mostly He seems way out, different, as if you could never really relate to Him like a person.

The Bible portrays Jesus as being a real Person who made friends, answered questions, told stories, helped people when they needed help, and got tired, hungry, and thirsty.

Jesus said once, "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father." John 14:9, NEB. He did not mean that He was the same identical Person as the Father (didn't He pray to His "Father in heaven"?), but that He was so similar to Him that if you knew Jesus you'd instantly recognize the Father. In fact, Jesus came to "reveal the Father," so we could know what He is like.

Jesus was a real Person; therefore God must be too. When you think about God, try thinking about Jesus too. I'm sure it will help.

LOVE MY NEIGHBOR?

I've got this thing about one of the other girls in my class. Probably I know her too well. We've been next-door neighbors all our lives. When we were small we were playmates, but now we seem to bicker and quarrel any time we are together. I've asked God to help me to be at least courteous to her, but it doesn't seem to do any good. What's wrong?

As you have discovered, it is quite possible to ask God to help you be good and then to forget all about it just the same.

Your approach to your problem is superficial. You're asking God to help you put a mask on so you can play a game. You're tying peaches

on a wild thistle, and you're the wild thistle.

Christ's prescription is, "You must be born again." See John 3. That is, you must have an entirely new basic attitude toward your friend, and then your remarks and responses when you are with her will be basically new and different—naturally.

Jesus can help you think of your friend as a person; as a person who has a right to be herself, to be wrong, to be different; as a person with aspirations; as a person who needs your friendship and understanding. Ask God to help you admire her for at least something that she does; and of course, to help you think of her as someone whom God loves.

I can already see you sharing a banana split with her and giggling about the guys.

SUCCEED AS AN EPILEPTIC?

My trouble is that I am an epileptic. It discourages me terribly. I know that even if I graduate from high school I'll never be able to get a good job. Who wants somebody working for him who may have a seizure at any unexpected time? I don't think you can do me any good, but I just felt like I had to sit down and say this.

One of the best things you can do for yourself is to remind yourself that at present many thousands of epileptics in the country hold reasonably good jobs. Epilepsy does not close all the doors in your face.

Another good turn you could do yourself is to tear off your own homemade label and tie another one around your neck on a long string, so you can turn it up and look at it frequently. Don't call yourself "an epileptic." Call yourself a normal, intelligent, average person who happens to have a problem with epilepsy. (After all, everybody has one problem or another.)

It may be true that many businessmen would hesitate to employ an "epileptic," but few would hesitate to employ a young man of reasonable intelligence and capability who, even in his late teens, had learned how to put his biggest problem into a pigeonhole instead of putting himself into one.