

DOCTRINE FOR THE YOUNG

THE KEY TO THE TREASURE CHEST

by the Rev. Kurt P. Nemitz

The rest of the kids in the church hiking group had run on ahead, to see who could get to the top of the mountain first, but not Phillip. He was still thinking about a question that had come to his mind during the church service that morning, and so he stayed close by the side of his minister, who was content to just keep walking steadily up the steep slope and let one of the children get the honor of being first to the top. Finally Phillip said,

“I know that the Lord created this whole world and all of us people, but just *why* did He do it? That’s what I don’t understand. In church this morning you said that the Lord, that God, is infinite and that He can exist without help from anybody. Why did He have to make us then?”

“Because the Lord is love itself,” the minister replied.

Phillip thought about that for a moment, while he was picking his way along a narrow section of the trail almost at the top — a place where you had to use your hands and pull yourself up from one step-like ledge to another. Finally, when they were both standing side by side catching their breath on a level space he said,

“But why does the Lord’s love make Him create things? Does love have to create things?”

“No,” said his minister, shaking his head, “not all love needs to create things. There are some loves, evil loves, that only want to destroy things—like the evil love that gets into some kids when they start breaking and damaging things because it seems fun to them. But good love is not like that.”

“What is good love like?” Phillip quickly asked.

The minister smiled. “You have just asked one of the most important questions a person can ask. Understanding what the Lord’s love is like is, we might say, the key to the treasure chest of heavenly wisdom.”

Looking at Phillip with half a twinkle in his brown eyes he said, “Do you think you can remember three things?”

“Oh yes, anyone could remember three things,” Phillip assured him. “You mean three things about the Lord’s love?”

“Yes, in the Heavenly Doctrine the Lord has told us three things about His love that explain it completely.”

“What are these three things?” Philip asked eagerly.

“Well, the first is that His love doesn’t like to be alone and look after only itself—the Lord’s love wants to love others outside of itself. The second important thing about the Lord’s love is that it wants to be close to the people it loves, it wants to be so close that it is almost one with them. And the third important, essential thing about the Lord’s love is that it wants to make others happy—it wants to make them happy by giving them the good things it has.”

“Oh,” said Phillip, “I think I see what you mean. Do you mean that the Lord created us, not because He needed us to help Him, but because He is love, and His love likes to see people happy—and so He made people, people who could be happy?”

“You’ve got it exactly,” his minister said, putting his arm around Phillip’s shoulder. “The Lord’s love doesn’t like to be alone, it likes to be close to others and make them happy. That is why He created this whole beautiful world we are enjoying so much on this glorious Fall afternoon. This earth and all the plants and animals in it provide a place where He can make people and begin to draw them up close to Himself—those that want to be close to Him, that is—and give them heavenly things that will make them happy forever. This is what the Lord’s love is like.”

“Now can you see why I said that an understanding of the Lord’s love is like a key that opens up a treasure chest of heavenly wisdom?”

“I think I can,” said Philip nodding his head affirmatively. “Knowing about the Lord’s love explains why we are all here, it explains why we were created. And it explains why we have to try to stay close to the Lord by living according to the laws of His kingdom, because if we aren’t close to the Lord then we can’t reach out and receive those heavenly gifts He wants to give us.”

With these words, feeling like a person does when he has finally found and put in the key piece in a big picture puzzle, Phillip turned and started running up the last seventy feet to the end of the trail and to the top of the mountain and the rest of his friends in the hiking group.