

LOOKING BEYOND SELF AND THE WORLD

BY BILL HALL

How easy it is to become greatly immersed in the activities of oneself and the world. This immersion may become so obsessive that we come to doubt the existence of anything beyond self and the world.

In our daily lives of activities with others, we may reach a stage where we only long to go our own way and not to care about the lives of those around us. However, as we read in the Writings, we are always interacting with others. Even when we are completely alone in the physical sense, our minds are receiving input from spirits in the spiritual world. Every thought we have is from the spiritual world: good thoughts from heaven and evil thoughts from hell (See *Word Explained* # 1147, 943).

Our lives are not really our own in the sense that we did not create them ourselves. As Dr. Hugo Odhner so clearly explains, we do not live from ourselves (*Spirits and Men*, p. 14). Our lives are made up of countless influences, many of which we are completely unaware. However, no matter where our thoughts have originated, we always have the power to examine our thoughts and to determine if they are from heaven or from hell. We are never without help from a higher source of life. Our lives are never completely isolated. Even if we went to the moon on a space flight, every bit of understanding and longing that we experience on the earth would still be manifest on the moon. Of course, there would be changes, but the big point is that we would still be receiving life. We are never the originator of life. Life is always a ceaseless gift from the Lord and via the neighbor.

How do we become more closely linked or adjoined to our neighbor, to our community? What does it take to be a member of a closely-knit community? How do we become a person who

works for the common good of all humanity? Can we, in all sincerity, work for the common good of all humanity?

With the TV we can explore foreign nations such as Brazil or China. We can learn what it is like to live in these nations. We can see how the people live and what some of their problems are. If our occupation is foreign journalist, our understanding can be put to good use. If we live in a relatively small city, it is unlikely that we shall contact people from these countries.

Our role in life is to do what we can in the present moment for the welfare and happiness of those around us. Certainly we need to wish well to all humanity, to all brothers and sisters of the human family, for are we not told that we all have one Father and that the one God has created all of us? “Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?” (Malachi 2:10).

When we look out at our brothers and sisters on the planet, what do we see? We see continuous examples of human beings, some old, some young, some with a glow of perfection and others with imperfections. Yet, as we look at our brothers and sisters, do we not feel that we are one with them, one and all? Our lives are made up of small segments. Yes, we hope our aim is to be useful to our neighbor, to be of service in whatever field of endeavor we have been trained . As we reach out to our human family, to our fellow citizens, let us recall with humility and gratitude that our fellow citizens, just like ourselves, receive all benefits of life from the Lord and the neighbor.

Therefore, we come to perceive and to feel that our lives are not isolated from the stream of human society. In our endeavors and in our dreams we feel a oneness with all humanity, which enables us to reach out to all others from the love we have received from the only source of love, the Lord. As we contemplate the world around us, we see the earth and the sky, we see people, plants, animals, and architecture, all of which impinge upon our senses. According to the training we have

received, we are able to interpret what we experience from our contemplation of our world. If our state of life is angelic, we will be gifted with the wish to be of service to our fellow brothers and sisters. The choice is always ours as to what we decide to do with our contemplation.

The Lord gives us the freedom and the power to lift our hearts and minds to the Him, to be thankful to the Him for this present opportunity to be useful to our fellow brothers and sisters. What does it mean to be free to follow the Lord's wishes? It means giving up our own selfish wishes in order to follow the Lord's wishes. It means reaching out to others from humility and love. The big change that comes to us as we reach out to others from humility and love is that we perceive from the heart and the will that the Lord is perpetually guiding our steps, thoughts, and feelings. The Lord is with us as our Eternal Anchor. The Lord beholds us and leads us to act with humility and love to all our fellow citizens and to acknowledge from the heart that He is always our Redeemer and Savior, the one and only Lord who can lead us to heaven and away from hell.