

that it really does belong to that day of the creation of the fowl and fish. I remembered teaching the children of the "birds and bees and butterflies." In God's inscrutable wisdom He provided the insect world to be the food for His fish and fowl.

Somehow I cannot keep my mind off that butterfly. Then a light came on in my soul. The butterfly (which is only a worm with wings) must be a peculiar picture story of some human characteristic and future exper-

ience. Then I mused that it tells of the metamorphosis of our mortal bodies into one of great splendor and beauty. Then, no longer hampered by our butterfly-worm-like bodies, we will be freed from all restrictions to be "free as the bird of the air" (another picture word). Then I thought "How I wish I could see and read more of those nature picture stories which so graphically speak of my ultimate deliverance from sin and death!"

Oh God, how great Thou art!

Dear Miss Koole,

QUESTION:

"Realizing this comes at a late date, I hope you will consider this correspondence for your rubric in the summer issue.

"Let me begin by these remarks:

"1. 'Dear Miss Koole' is a welcome and necessary addition to the magazine.

"2. We now have our own authoritative 'Ann Landers' in the field of educational expertise. The winter issue of 1988, introducing the new rubric in the *Perspectives*, relates your vast experience and knowledgeable teaching background. That indicates two things: a. You have dealt with many, many children and numerous parents, boards, etc. b. You are a senior citizen—

plus some years. This should also prove valuable in answering, or at least shedding light on, this perplexing problem which has vexed me for a long, long time — since school days.

"A little background would be helpful, methinks. I had two older sisters who excelled in all levels of study and book learning. They were recognized by achievements and awards. The problem was that I was the slow learner and achiever. Still today I carry a complex of inferiority and an attitude of being unsuccessful in this area of life.

"I often thought, while living as a common laborer all my life, that if only I too had been smarter, what a different work-world would have been my lot!

How nice it would be if I were not the flunky!

"Am I wrong in being envious of my two brighter sisters? How must I shed this yoke of guilt?

"Let me say this in closing: all is not despair. I do feel successful and content with my God-given lot in other areas of life. Maybe, just maybe, I've answered my own question. What do you think?

Sincerely yours,
I.M. Sane"

ANSWER:

Your concerns echo those of many of God's children. The feeling of inferiority is much more prevalent than you or I can imagine. I really believe that every living person has this feeling in some measure. What matters is how we respond to it. Some will cope by withdrawing; others will display aggressive or disruptive behavior; most adolescents will conform; and thousands will make the best choice by compensating for their inadequacy. I'm sure you experience as I do that, as one grows older, the things that were so desirable in our youth — such as beauty, brains, physical strength and agility, or peer approval — have lost their importance. Slowly one is led to a clearer understanding and acceptance of what you call your "God-given lot" in ALL areas of life. We are able to see and to confess with gratitude

that "e'er our days began, our life in all its perfect plan" was ordered by our Father in heaven.

This contentment usually does not come easily nor early in life. Some of the agony of feeling inferior or being rejected in our earlier years can still be felt in our old age. Why should one of God's precious children need to experience rejection by parents, or teachers, or their peers? Dr. J. Dobson in his book *Hide or Seek* (which I would recommend for everyone's reading) condemns vigorously the unjust and unbiblical value system that measures a person's worth in terms of beauty or intelligence. It's my opinion that, after childhood, athletic prowess and wealth might well top the list of today's criteria.

I do not want to discuss in detail Dobson's book, but I do feel it is urgent that each God-fearing parent and teacher understand the devastating effect of undermining the self-esteem of one of God's children. Children are cruel to children. You've heard that saying, and it is true. A child must be taught from babyhood on to be kind. Many kindergartners learn part of Ephesians 4:31: "... Be ye kind one to another. . ."; but this admonition needs constant reinforcement. Parents and teachers should insist that kindness characterize all relationships their

