

A Meditation on Becoming a Self

by George MacDonald

Selected Readings from C. S. Lewis, *George MacDonald: An Anthology* (New York: Macmillan, 1947)

15 *The White Stone* (Revelations 2:17)

The giving of the white stone with the new name is the communication of what God thinks about the man to the man. It is the divine judgment, the solemn holy doom of the righteous man, the “Come, thou blessed,” spoken to the individual . . . The true name is one which expresses the character, the nature, the *meaning* of the person who bears it. It is the man’s own symbol—his soul’s picture, in a word—the sign which belongs to him and to no one else. Who can give a man this, his own name! God alone. For no one but God sees what the man is. . . . It is only when the man has become his name that God gives him the stone with the name upon it, for then first can he understand what his name signifies. It is the blossom, the perfection, the completeness, that determines the name: and God foresees that from the first because He made it so: but the tree of the soul, before its blossom comes, cannot understand what blossom it is to bear and could not know what the word meant, which, in representing its own unarrived completeness, named itself. Such a name cannot be given until the man *is* the name. God’s name for a man must be the expression of His own idea of the man, that being whom He had in His thought when he began to make the child, and whom He kept in His thought through the long process of creation that went to realize the idea. To tell the name is to seal the success—to say “In thee also I am well pleased.”

16 *Personality*

The name is one “which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” Not only then has each man his individual relation to God, but each man has his peculiar relation to God. He is to

God a peculiar being, made after his own fashion, and that of no one else. Hence he can worship God as no man else can worship Him.

17 *The Secret in Man*

For each, God has a different response. With every man He has a secret—the secret of a new name. In every man there is a loneliness, an inner chamber of peculiar life into which God only can enter. I say not it is *the innermost chamber*.

18 *The Secrets in God*

There is a chamber also (O God, humble and accept my speech)—a chamber in God Himself, into which none can enter but the one, the individual, the peculiar man—out of which chamber that man has to bring revelation and strength for his brethren. This is that for which he was made—to reveal the secret things of the Father.

19 *No Massing*

There is no massing of men with God. When he speaks of gathered men, it is as a spiritual *body*, not as a *mass*.

20 *No Comparing*

Here there is no room for ambition. Ambition is the desire to be above one’s neighbor; and here there is no possibility of comparison with one’s neighbor: no one knows what the white stone contains except the man who receives it . . . Relative worth is not only unknown—to the children of the Kingdom it is unknowable.

21 *The End*

“God has cared to make me for Himself,” says the victor with the white stone, “And has called me that which I like best.”