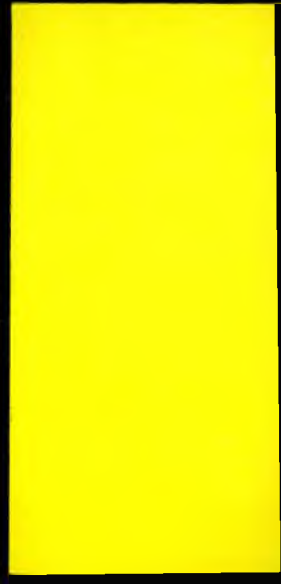




God

With Us

Collegiate Quarterly
April-June 1981





WWC: Not just another pretty college.

Walla Walla College does have a pretty campus. It's located amid rolling hills and golden wheatfields in south-eastern Washington state. Some of our classic, ivy-clad buildings go back almost 90 years; others, like our Industrial Technology Center, were built recently.

But that's not the most important thing at Walla Walla College.

When you come to Walla Walla College, you'll find out that



we're a people campus. You'll find people who are dedicated to our forefathers' search for answers. People who are dedicated to searching for the new and the challenging, to looking for clearer perceptions of our Message, and to making that search an intricate part of their lives.

Our pretty campus is just icing on the cake.

The people campus.
Walla Walla College.



THE *Seventh-day Adventist Church*

800 Thomson Road
Singapore

Dear Sabbath School Members Around The World:

A wonderful bond of fellowship and strength comes by being members of the Sabbath School. Through this heaven-ordained institution, a weekly view of the world church membership, busily engaged in sharing the good news of salvation in Christ, is acquired. Sabbath School provides a grand opportunity to support the world church program through personal gifts of love.

Your Thirteenth Sabbath Special Projects Offering designated for the Far Eastern Division this quarter, will strengthen three specific areas of tremendous need.

Mt. Klabat Girls' Dormitory - Mt. Klabat College is located in a magnificent tropical setting in the eastern part of Indonesia, near the city of Manado. Students there receive a thorough Adventist education, which includes work experience. Many key church leaders, both lay and ministerial, have been trained at this school. However, dormitory space is at a premium. A new girls' dormitory is desperately needed to replace the present, very inadequate, temporary housing facility.

Central Philippine Union College - With two colleges in the Philippines filled to overflowing, a third college is urgently needed. A beautiful location has already been selected and land has been purchased. It is planned that this school will be in full operation soon after the special projects offering is received. Students have been refused entrance into the colleges because of lack of space. This new school provides an answer.

Philippine Barrio Chapels - In a country where the church membership is growing very rapidly, there is an immediate need for additional churches and chapels. A new national highway has been built from the northern part of the Philippines to the south. It is planned that along this highway a new Seventh-day Adventist Church will be erected in most of the small towns and village barrios. The members are anxious to assist with the buildings but they need the help of our church members around the world to provide these church homes.

Thank you for asking the Lord to bless this building program. Could you personally visit the projects you have supported in the past from your generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings, I know you would rejoice to see the results. Please join with me, June 27, in taking advantage of another great opportunity to give for the glorious advancement of God's ever-expanding church.

Sincerely,

Don F. Gilbert
Don F. Gilbert
Treasurer

FAR EASTERN DIVISION

Loma Linda University, Loma Linda Campus



Loma Linda University, Loma Linda Campus, was responsible for obtaining articles for lessons one through six for this issue of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY.

Chaplain: Marvin Ponder

College Editor: Anne Shirley

Weekly Editor: James P. Larsen

Contributing Writers:

Harvey A. Elder	James P. Larsen	Walter Specht	Randy Vipond
Darrell Holtz	A. Graham Maxwell	Charles Teel, Jr.	James Walters
David Johnson			

Columbia Union College



Columbia Union College was responsible for obtaining articles for lessons seven through nine for this issue of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY.

College Editors: Robert Zamora, Tim D. Manning

Weekly Editors: Leonard S. Barnes, Norman Johnson, Bradley O. McIntyre

Contributing Writers:

Leonard S. Barnes	Fenton E. Froom	G. Arthur Keough	Shelley Schurch
J. J. Blanco	Arthur Hauck	Edna Maye Loveless	Sharon Thomas
Norman E. Dellas, Jr.	Stephen Hiten	Bradley O. McIntyre	
Rex D. Edwards	Norman Johnson	John B. Rapp	

Southern Missionary College



Southern Missionary College was responsible for obtaining articles for lessons ten through twelve for this issue of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY.

Chaplain: James Herman

General Editor: Edwin Zackrisson

College Editor: Greg King

Weekly Editors: Sam Miller
Ken Wiseman

Contributing Writers:

Larry Ashcroft	Jenine Fryling	Tarsee Li	Ron Springett
J. Bruce Ashton	Ellen Gilbert	John McVay	Ken Wiseman
Mark Bresee	Greg King	Ronald Pickell	Edwin Zackrisson
Melvin Campbell	Johnny Lazor	Sandra Schiau	

Union College



Union College was responsible for obtaining articles for lesson thirteen for this issue of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY.

Chaplain: Larry McGill

College Editor: Eugene B. Shirley, Jr.

Contributing Writers:

Linda Bowers	Duane Fike	Doug Morgan	David Smith
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**A KALEIDOSCOPE
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Editorial Office:
Union College
3800 South 48th
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506
(402) 488-2331, ext. 231

Staff

Editor: Eugene B. Shirley, Jr.
Editorial Assistant: Linda L. Bowers
Copy Editor: Shelley Schurch
Art and Design: Heidi Klooster
Advisors: Eric Graham
Larry D. McGill
Karl-Heinz Schroeder
Maylan Schurch
Printing: The College Press
Collegedale, Tenn.

**Collegiate Quarterly
Committee**

Thomas Ashlock, *chairman*
Larry D. McGill, *secretary*
Members
Richard Barron
Linda L. Bowers
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Seppo Vartiija
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Karl-Heinz Schroeder
John Waggoner

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is written by faculty, students and friends of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities throughout North America. This is an experimental publication, organized under the Union College board of trustees and published with the approval of the General Conference Sabbath School Department and the North American Youth Ministries Department.

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Special thanks to H. Ward Hill, Ralph and Beatrice Neall, Sieg Roeske and Karl-Heinz Schroeder for their tremendous support, encouragement and advice.

Cover and inside design by Heidi Klooster of Lincoln, Nebraska.

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Facts About The Collegiate Quarterly

- Published with the approval of the General Conference Sabbath School Department.
- Discussion is centered around the same themes as the adult quarterly.
- Special attention is directed toward the expressions and needs of the college and university person.
- An intercollegiate project of the colleges and universities across North America.
- Approximately 200 professors, college students, pastors, church administrators and laymen have contributed articles for the quarterly.
- The international circulation of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY for the first quarter of 1981 reached 19,000.

How To Use The Collegiate Quarterly

1. The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is not designed to be just a supplementary quarterly. It is *the* Sabbath School quarterly for the college and university person—though many in other environments and age-brackets are also attracted to its use. So use it just like you would any other daily study guide or Sabbath School quarterly.
2. The Logos articles of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY have been condensed and rewritten from the corresponding weeks of the adult Sabbath School lessons. As the articles with the greatest Bible base, they most clearly reveal the central theme for each week and around them the other articles center their discussion.
3. Along with each daily discussion, a reference is given of a biblical passage for further Bible study. We encourage you to read these passages—even though some may be lengthy—as this will greatly enhance your study.
4. Do not accept every concept and emphasis made in the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY just because it is in the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY. For it can be dangerous to accept anything as truth, without personal investigation, simply because it has an organizational stamp of approval.

One goal of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is “to aid in developing thinkers and not mere reflectors of other men’s thoughts.” To meet this goal, it is necessary to include within the pages of this quarterly challenging and stimulating material—which inherently may contain something which you disagree with. But that’s OK. Challenge the authors. Think. Prayerfully and critically question the material in each day’s lesson to determine the truth in the material for you.

UNION COLLEGE

LINCOLN, NE 68506 (402) 488-2331

The Chinese have a legend—dating back many years—and it goes something like this.

Once there was a man named Mong who lived in a spacious house and owned many fields and hired many laborers to care for those fields.

Mong was a deeply religious man, and worshiped the great dragon in heaven daily. Well, actually he did not worship the *heavenly dragon*, he worshiped the many pictures and images of the dragon he had placed in crucial areas around his estate.

In the kitchen he placed images of the dragon to keep him from eating and drinking the wrong things. In the barn he painted pictures of the dragon to keep him from owning the wrong kinds of animals. On his wife's bedroom mirror he painted a great big dragon—leaving only tiny bits of mirror space—to keep his wife from putting the wrong kinds of things on her face.

Pictures and images of dragons were found everywhere on the estate. And all of his employees and all of his children and all of the townspeople were convinced that Mong and the great dragon had a very special relationship, one which ordinary people could never hope to achieve.

The great dragon, clever though he was, also assumed that Mong loved him dearly—for he had his images and pictures everywhere. So one day he decided to visit.

Now Mong was unaware that the great dragon was coming to visit. But while he was busy painting dragon-pictures on things people had before thought it would be impossible to paint *anything* on, the dragon appeared.

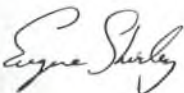
One would think that Mong would have noticed right off the appearance of the great heavenly dragon. But he didn't. Maybe it was because there were so many pictures and images of dragons in the house that he had trouble distinguishing the real dragon from his own creations.

But anxious to fellowship with his friend, the heavenly dragon tapped Mong on the shoulder to get his attention. "Go away you stupid fly." Mong mistook the dragon's soft tap for a fly.

Though not wanting to frighten Mong, but nevertheless eager to commune "as friend with friend," the heavenly dragon let out a little roar.

Terrified, Mong dropped his brushes, knocked over buckets of ink—ruining many of his fine portraits—and wildly ran screaming through the house, out the door and into the fields where he consoled himself by worshipping one of his many dragon-images.

And there the story ends. But if it were to continue, I have a feeling that the great dragon would try to approach Mong again, again be rejected, and finally be hunted down and killed. And then he would return to heaven, awaiting a time when men would worship him, and not their dragon-like creations.



Eugene B. Shirley, Jr.
COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY Editor

The *First Advent – I*

“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”
— John 1:29; NIV



The Nativity — Barocci

by Martin Luther

Behold, the Lamb of God!

This is an excellent and splendid testimony of John regarding the introduction of the new rule and kingdom of Christ. . . . The words are clear and lucid; they tell us what one should think of Christ. John's earlier words (John 1:17), "The Law was given through Moses," can hardly be called praise of Moses. But in this passage John virtually chides him, as if he were saying: "You Jews sacrifice a lamb every Passover, as Moses commanded you. In addition you butcher two lambs daily, which are sacrificed and burned each morning and evening. It is a lamb, to be sure. But you Jews make such a display of it, you praise these sacrifices and boast of them so much, that you eclipse the glory of God, push God into the background, and deprive Him of His honor. Compare the true Lamb with the lamb which the Law of Moses commands you to butcher and eat. One is a lamb procured from shepherds. The other, however, is an entirely different Lamb; it is the Lamb of God. For It has been ordained to bear on Its back the sins of the world. Compared with this Lamb, all the lambs you butcher in the temple, roast, and eat count for nothing. . . ."

This is an extraordinarily fine and comforting sermon on Christ, our Savior. Neither our thoughts nor our words can do the subject full justice, but in the life beyond it will redound to our eternal joy and bliss that the Son of God abased Himself so and burdened Himself with my sins. Yes, He assumes not only my sins but also those of the whole world, from Adam down to the very last mortal. These sins He takes upon Himself; for these He is willing to suffer and die that our sins may be expunged and we may attain eternal life and blessedness. But who can ever give adequate thought or expression to

this theme? The entire world with all its holiness, rectitude, power, and glory is under the dominion of sin and completely discredited God. Anyone who wishes to be saved must know that all his sins have been placed on the back of this Lamb! Therefore John points this Lamb out to his disciples, saying: "Do you want to know where the sins of the world are placed for forgiveness? Then don't resort to the Law of Moses or betake yourselves to the devil; there, to be sure, you will find sins, but sins to terrify you and damn you. But if you really want to find a place where the sins of the world are exterminated and deleted, then cast your gaze upon the cross. The Lord placed all our sins on the back of this Lamb. . . ."

This is the basis of all Christian doctrine. Whoever believes it, is a Christian; whoever does not, is no Christian, and will get what he has coming to him. The statement is clear enough: "This is the Lamb of God, who bears the sin of the world. . . ."

These are clear, plain, and powerful words, strengthened by that splendid and beautiful portrait of St. John pointing to the Lamb with his finger. I was always fond of such pictures. . . . But in the papacy we never understood their true significance. This is the message they really wanted to convey: "Behold, man! According to Law and justice, your sins should rest on you. But the Lamb which I exhibit here bears your sins by grace. This sin has been placed on the Lamb. Now you are holy, righteous, and free of sin; you have been saved for the sake of the Lamb. Therefore you have to know that you are not bearing your own sin. . . . But behold, God has delivered you from your sins and has placed them on the Lamb. And thus you are saved, not for your own sake but for His."

FROM: LUTHER'S WORKS—Volume 22 © 1957 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission. Pages 161-170.

Martin Luther (1483-1531) was the great German Reformer of the sixteenth century.

by Darrell Holtz

Notes

In the beginning (cf. Genesis 1:1) "the Word" (that is, God's thought expressed in a person) already existed, and the Word was in direct personal relationship with God, and in fact, the Word Himself was God. Let me emphasize: He was already in direct personal relationship to God the Father in the very beginning. All things came into existence through Him; not a single thing came into existence apart from Him. He was (and still is) the source of life; that life was the light of men, and the light is eternally shining in the darkness, which could neither understand nor quench it.

A man came, sent from God, and his name was John. He came for the purpose of being a witness; came to testify about the light, so that through him everyone might come to believe. Not that he personally was the light; his purpose was to testify about the light.

"The Word" was the real, authentic light, whose entrance into the world shines the light upon every man. He was in and among men and all their activities (in fact, that "world" was one He brought into being), yet that world neither recognized Him nor responded to Him. He came, in fact, to the very place in the world of men where He most logically and properly belonged, but even there He was not accepted. However, to as many as *did* accept Him, by giving their allegiance to His name, He gave the right to become children of God, children begotten, not in any sense from human desire or by anything that man can do, but by God.

And then the Word came on the human scene, as flesh, and lived among us for a time, and during that time we who accepted Him saw His glory—a glory that is His because He is the unique Son who came from the Father, and (like the Father) is full of grace and truth. John testifies about Him, saying, "This is the one of whom I said, 'The one coming after me takes precedence over me, because He existed before me.'" All of us who believe have received grace and truth from the fullness which is His—our progress is simply from one gracious gift to another. For, although the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. And so, while it is true that no one has ever, at any time, seen God the Father directly, the unique God, the Word, who has the closest possible communion with the Father, has made Him known.

(A personal study paraphrase, based on the Greek, of John 1:1-18.)

selected by Darrell Holtz

Key passage:
John 20:16, 17

Notes

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:16, 17). Jesus refused to receive the homage of His people until He knew that His sacrifice had been accepted by the Father, and until He had received the assurance from God Himself that His atonement for the sins of His people had been full and ample, that through His blood they might gain eternal life. Jesus immediately ascended to heaven and presented Himself before the throne of God, showing the marks of shame and cruelty upon His brow, His hands and feet. But He refused to receive the coronet of glory, and the royal robe, and he also refused the adoration of the angels as He had refused the homage of Mary, until the Father signified that His offering was accepted.

He also had a request to prefer concerning His chosen ones upon earth. He wished to have the relation clearly defined that His redeemed should hereafter sustain to heaven, and to His Father. His church must be justified and accepted before He could accept heavenly honor. He declared it to be His will that where He was, there His church should be; if He was to have glory, His people must share it with Him. They who suffer with Him on earth must finally reign with Him in His kingdom. In the most explicit manner Christ pleaded for His church, identifying His interest with theirs, and advocating, with love and constancy stronger than death, their rights and titles gained through Him.

God's answer to this appeal goes forth in proclamation: "Let all the angels of God worship him." Every angelic commander obeys the royal mandate, and Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain; and that lives again a triumphant conqueror! echoes and re-echoes through all heaven. The innumerable company of angels prostrate themselves before the Redeemer. The request of Christ is granted; the church is justified through Him, its representative and head. Here the Father ratifies the contract with His Son, that He will be reconciled to repentant and obedient men, and take them into divine favor through the merits of Christ. Christ guarantees that He will make a man "more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." All power in heaven and on earth is now given to the Prince of life; yet He does not for a moment forget His poor disciples in a sinful world, but prepares to return to them, that He may impart to them His power and glory. Thus did the Redeemer of mankind, by the sacrifice of Himself, connect earth with heaven, and finite man with the infinite God.

Taken from the *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1150.

"His church must be justified and accepted before He could accept heavenly honor"

"Thus did the Redeemer connect finite man with the infinite God"

selected by Darrell Holtz

Key passage:

Isaiah 53

Notes

It is in the cross that we discover that God *can* accept us, notwithstanding what we have done, and in spite of what we are, because Christ has taken our place. The New Testament uses the word picture of the *practice of law* to illustrate this. It pictures Christ standing in our place before the bar of justice, or before the judge—the holy God. He stands where we should stand, and takes upon himself our rightful judgment. This allows us to receive the judgment that is due to him.

Sometimes when this picture is used, the emphasis is upon the fact that Christ has taken our place and accepted what we deserve. In dying for us, he took upon himself the “curse” that our rebellion against God has rightfully brought upon us. He has “become a curse *for us*”; or he was “made sin *for us*” (Gal. 3:13 and II Cor. 5:21). This would bring to the mind of the early Christians the well-known picture in Isa., ch. 53: “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” When he hung upon the cross he took our place, taking upon himself our judgment and condemnation.

At other times when this picture is used, the emphasis is upon our receiving what *he* deserves. He stands before the judge “in our stead,” so that we might receive the sentence that *his* life merits. The judge pronounces upon us the judgment that *he* deserves, rather than the judgment that we deserve, because he has taken our place.

Paul is suggesting this picture when he says that if we are “in Christ,” God “justifies the *ungodly*.” He does so not because he is tricked, or because we have in some way made ourselves “godly,” but because our life is “hid with Christ in God.” Paul repeats again and again that we are “justified,” and that this “justification” is the door to new life. The word is a legal term, which, when it is used in this word picture, means that we are pronounced righteous by the judge—even though we are *not* righteous—because Christ has taken our place at the bar of judgment. Thus we find ourselves in a new relationship to God, an astounding *guilt-free* relationship, because “one man’s act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men” (Rom. 5:18). . . .

These New Testament word pictures do not “explain” the meaning of the cross. The cross, beyond all else, can be “understood” only as we “stand under” it, or only as—and in so far as—it becomes an ever-present reality in our deepest experience. But these pictures, and the key words with which they are painted, are essential because they keep before us the fundamental fact of our faith: that Christ died for our sins.

“The cross can be ‘understood’ only as we ‘stand under’ it”

From THE MEANING OF CHRIST, by Robert Clyde Johnson. © MCMLVIII by W. L. Jenkins. Used by permission of The Westminster Press. Pages 59-61.

by Darrell Holtz

Could we agree that the gospel is the center of our faith as Christians? (I hope so—if not, our differences are much too basic to resolve with one lesson.)

If we agree on that, then we must note that, according to the New Testament writers, the story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection *is* the gospel. There simply is no instance of a man saying, "I think I'll write a gospel," and then writing, "I was converted when I was 15. The Lord gave me some wonderful victories, and. . . ." No—the books called "gospels" focus on the story of Jesus, because the story of Jesus *is* the gospel (cf. also Romans 1:1-4, I Cor. 15:1-8).

But there's a potential problem here. The story of Jesus happened 2,000 years ago. Can we *really* build a vibrant, living faith on a 2,000 year-old series of events? Can "the old, old story" come alive for us today?

I believe that it will, if we will take the following steps.

1. Read the Bible, regularly. The Bible contains both simple narrative accounts of the *facts* of Jesus' life (Matthew, Mark and Luke), and profound theological reflections on the *meaning* of Jesus' life (John and Romans are noteworthy, and Matthew and Luke subtly address this area also). If we're serious about the heart of our faith, there's just no substitute for regular contact with these original source documents.

I have found the *New International Version* a readable, alive and trustworthy translation. Maybe for you it will be *Today's English Version* or *The Living Bible*. Or even a beautiful, resonant piece of translation known as the *King James Version*. In any case, for this kind of reading, choose the Bible version that brings the story to life for you.

2. Augment your understanding from other sources. Ellen White's *The Desire of Ages* beautifully and movingly presents the cosmic, "great controversy" significance of Jesus' life. A good Bible dictionary will define many terms and customs that are unfamiliar to you. A map of biblical Palestine will help bring the setting of Jesus' travels to life. Many excellent books can help you explore the meaning of Jesus' parables, the characters of the twelve apostles, the Sermon on the Mount and other specific aspects of Jesus' life. Why not ask a Bible teacher or pastor to suggest a couple of favorite titles?

3. Practice the discipline of meditation. How you do this will vary widely, depending on your personal tastes and mind-set. Some people simply spend some quiet time thinking analytically about the implications of a Bible passage. Others may find benefit in closing their eyes and visualizing a gospel scene; still others are blessed by extending their imaginations to picture Jesus talking to them about their specific problems. The real concern is not one of techniques; you'll need to experiment to find what fits you. The real point is that you make your study of Jesus' life personal. It is vital that you think yourself into His life, and Him into yours.

Key passage:

Romans 1:1-4;

I Corinthians 15:1-8

Notes

by Darrell Holtz

Key passage:
Romans 5:6-8

Notes

Does Christ achieve our redemption by revealing God's love to us, or does He reveal God's love to us by achieving our redemption?

There is a continuing, usually friendly, but deeply significant argument among Christians about the purpose and meaning of Jesus' life and death. R. W. Dale has been quoted as summarizing the argument in these terms: One view says "Christ achieves our redemption by revealing God's love to us," the other that "he reveals God's love to us by achieving our redemption." Our study this week has dealt with much of the raw material needed in any consideration of this argument. The question is, Which of these approaches most clearly reflects the Bible's teaching?

The Bible, as I read it, stresses first of all that our human problem is not simply the lack of awareness that God loves us. Our problem, according to Scripture, is that we are born sinners and are actively rebellious against God (Romans 5:19; 8:7; John 3:19; Psalm 51:5).

The Bible further teaches that our sinfulness does not simply blind us to God's love, but makes us unacceptable to God. This gap between us and God is often discussed in Scripture in terms of God's "wrath." And this is one of the flash points of the whole argument. Some argue that God, being love, would never be found wrathful, and dismiss talk of God's wrath as a pagan concept. Whether we find it palatable or not, however, the concept is thoroughly biblical. While the Bible writers clearly do not mean that God loses His temper and gets red in the face, they do emphasize that a holy God can never accept sin, and that His wrath against sin is such that we, as sinners, must be saved *from* it (Romans 1:18-20; 5:9; Isaiah 63:1-6; Matthew 25:41-46).

In this context, the Bible consistently presents Jesus as a Savior who died for our sins, who took our place and bore God's wrath for us. It seems clear to me that the Bible writers are telling us that Jesus does reveal God's love to us, but only in and through His actions for our salvation. We read that "Christ died *for* the ungodly," not "to enlighten the ignorant." Since our fundamental problem is sinfulness, rather than ignorance, the *focal* point of Jesus' ministry was redemption rather than revelation. The Scriptures insist that things *changed* in the universe because of Jesus' life and death (Mark 10:45; Romans 5:6-8; II Cor. 5:14-21; I Cor. 15:17, 18; I John 3:16; 4:10).

As I read the biblical evidence, I agree with the conclusion of David Wells:

"Our redemption is not achieved by Christ's revealing God's love to us; rather, Christ reveals God's love to us by achieving our redemption. . . . The simplest message of the evangelist and the profoundest message of the theologian are the same: Christ bore our sins, mediating between the estranged parties. There was no other gospel known in the early Church; there should be no other gospel known in ours."¹

But, you may ask, does it really matter *what* we think about this? I would answer that it does, because our understanding of Jesus' work shapes our response to Him. We must remember that he did not tell people, "Be enlightened, for the truth about God is near you." Jesus' message was, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15; RSV). We need more than accurate knowledge. It is in *repentance* for our sin, and *trust* in our perfect Substitute, that we can find the door to the kingdom of heaven.

"The focal point of Jesus' ministry was redemption rather than revelation"

"Our understanding of Jesus' work shapes our response to Him"

¹ "The Cross in Modern Thought," by David F. Wells. *Christianity Today*, April 9, 1976. © by Christianity Today 1976. Used by permission.

1. Were there any genuine risks involved for Jesus entering human existence? Explain.
2. John called Jesus "the true light that gives light to every man who comes into the world" (John 1:9, margin; NIV). How is it that Jesus gives light to "every man" in the world?
3. Some have seen the sacrificial death of Jesus as an event important to primitive thinking but unnecessary and inappropriate for religious understanding among modern men. Others tend to disregard the sacrificial aspect of the first advent as this bases Christianity upon a very violent and bloody act.

How do you relate to such views?
4. The Logos article for this week states concerning "the Word": "He was in and among men and all their activities." What does this statement suggest to you concerning Christian involvement in the world?
5. Concerning Christ's "acceptance ceremony" with His Father immediately following His resurrection, Ellen White writes: "In the most explicit manner Christ pleaded for His church, identifying His interest with theirs, and advocating, with love and constancy stronger than death, their rights and titles gained through Him."

In view of this passage, how active do you think Christians today should be in pleading for the "rights and titles" — civil rights, human rights, etc. — of all men upon this earth?

The First Advent – II

“For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

— Isaiah 9:6; NIV



Christ Before Pilate — Rembrandt

by St. Athanasius

[The] incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. In one sense, indeed, He was not far from it before, for no part of creation had ever been without Him Who, while ever abiding in union with the Father, yet fills all things that are. But now He entered the world in a new way, stooping to our level in His love and Self-revealing to us. He saw the reasonable race, the race of men that, like Himself, expressed the Father's Mind, wasting out of existence, and death reigning over all in corruption. He saw that corruption held us all the closer, because it was the penalty for the Transgression; He saw, too, how unthinkable it would be for the law to be repealed before it was fulfilled. He saw how unseemly it was that the very things of which He Himself was the Artificer should be disappearing. He saw how the surpassing wickedness of men was mounting up against them; He saw also their universal liability to death. . . .

The Word perceived that corruption could not be got rid of otherwise than through death; yet He Himself, as the Word, being immortal and the Father's Son, was such as could not die. For this reason, therefore, He assumed a body capable of death, in order that it, through belonging to the Word Who is above all, might become in dying a sufficient exchange for all, and, itself remaining incorruptible through His indwelling, might thereafter put an end to corruption for all others as well, by the grace of the resurrection. It was

by surrendering to death the body which He had taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from every stain, that he forthwith abolished death for His human brethren by the offering of the equivalent. For naturally, since the Word of God was above all, when He offered His own temple and bodily instrument as a substitute for the life of all, He fulfilled in death a that was required. Naturally also, through this union of the immortal Son of God with our human nature, all men were clothed with incorruption in the promise of the resurrection. For the solidarity of mankind is such that, by virtue of the Word's indwelling in a single human body, the corruption which goes with death has lost its power over all. You know how it is when some great king enters a large city and dwells in one of its houses; because of his dwelling in that single house, the whole city is honoured, and enemies and robbers cease to molest it. Even so is it with the King of all; He has come into our country and dwelt in one body amidst the many, and in consequence the designs of the enemy against mankind have been foiled, and the corruption of death, which formerly held them in its power, has simply ceased to be. For the human race would have perished utterly had not the Lord and Saviour of all, the Son of God, come among us to put an end to death.

From *St. Athanasius on the Incarnation*, trans. & ed. by A Religious of C.S.M.V. (London: A. R. Mowbroys & Co., Ltd., 1963), pages 33-35.

by editors

Notes

The first chapters of the book of Genesis tell us of the fall of man, the resulting curses upon the earth and the beginning of the reign of death.

But likewise from the earliest writings come prophecies foretelling a time of redemption and restoration—of a coming Savior and the reasons for His coming. The first of these prophecies was given by God Himself in conversation with the sin-bearing serpent: **“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel”** (Genesis 3:15; NIV).

Later, when upon his bed of death, Jacob prophesied: **“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes and the obedience of the nations is his”** (Genesis 49:10, margin; NIV).

Isaiah prophesied: **“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”** (Isaiah 9:6; NIV).

And later Isaiah said, **“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed”** (Isaiah 53:3-5; NIV).

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the prophet Balaam declared: **“A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel”** (Numbers 24:17; NIV). “Wise men” from “the east” recognized in an unusual star above the vicinity of Bethlehem a fulfillment of this prophecy. Thus, they **“came to Jerusalem and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him’ ”** (Matthew 2:2; NIV).

King Herod, hearing of a supposed rival for his throne, was troubled by the news of the birth of Jesus. After futile attempts to locate the young child, he ordered the slaughter of all boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years of age or younger. Thus, the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled: **“A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more”** (Jer. 31:15; NIV).

The first advent brought with it great calamity for the residents of Bethlehem. But the time had come for the Suffering One to appear and inaugurate an age which would culminate in the restoration of all things. By redeeming souls from the clutches of sin, Jesus could begin the work which had been His sole object in coming to the world—to establish the kingdom of God.

Thus, in response to His efforts, Christians everywhere can repeat with Paul: **“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me”** (Gal. 2:20).

selected by Walter Specht

At a point in history nearly two thousand years ago, God entered into human existence. The sovereign Creator of the universe took upon Himself the humility and limitations of the created in order to accomplish His purposes.

But what were His purposes? Below I have collected and labeled significant quotations from the writings of Ellen White discussing the reasons for the first advent of Christ.

1. To reveal the character of God. "What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words, His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. . . ."¹

2. To unveil the character of Satan, God's adversary. "Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character is unveiled."²

"When Christ bowed His head and died, He bore the pillars of Satan's kingdom with Him to the earth. He vanquished Satan in the same nature over which in Eden Satan obtained the victory. . . ."³

3. To conquer sin in human nature. "Christ alone had experience in all the sorrows and temptations that befall human beings. Never another of woman born was so fiercely beset by temptation; never another bore so heavy a burden of the world's sin and pain. Never was there another whose sympathies were so broad or so tender. A sharer in all the experiences of humanity, He could feel not only for, but with, every burdened and tempted and struggling one."⁴

"As one of us He was to give us an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experience."⁵

4. To die on the cross. "Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which he had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we have no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His."⁶

"Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart."⁷

5. To show the possibilities in a human being. "In His life and character He not only reveals the character of God, but the possibility of man. He was the representative of God and the exemplar of humanity. He presented to the world what humanity might become when united by faith with divinity."⁸

"To reveal this ideal as the only true standard for attainment; to show what every human being might become; what through the indwelling of humanity by divinity, all who received Him would become—for this, Christ came to the world. He came to show how men are to be trained as befits the sons of God; how on earth they are to practice the principles and to live the life of heaven."⁹

¹ *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1131.

² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 26.

³ *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1108.

⁴ *Education*, p. 78.

⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 752.

⁸ *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 349.

⁹ *Education*, p. 74.

Key passage:
John 18:37

Notes

"What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father"

Christ "bore the pillars of Satan's kingdom with Him to the earth"

". . . that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we have no share"

"He presented to the world what humanity might become"

by editors

Thomas a' Kempis (c. 1380-1471) was a German priest and educator and reputed author of *The Imitation of Christ*. Instructed by the Brethren of the Common Life, he entered a monastery at the age of twenty and there he remained until his death at ninety-two.

Below are excerpts from a' Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* in which he discusses the importance of the person Jesus to the Christian. In these passages we may see most clearly why the first advent was important to this fifteenth century monk.

"When Jesus is with us, all is well, and nothing seems hard; but when Jesus is absent, everything is difficult. When Jesus does not speak to the heart, all other comfort is unavailing; but if Jesus speaks but a single word, we are greatly comforted. . . .

"What can the world offer you, without Jesus? To be without Jesus is hell most grievous; to be with Jesus is to know the sweetness of Heaven. If Jesus is with you, no enemy can harm you. Whoever finds Jesus, finds a rich treasure, and a good above every good. He who loses Jesus, loses much indeed, and more than the whole world. Poorest of all men is he who lives without Jesus, and richest of all is he who stands in favour with Jesus. . . .

"Love all men for Jesus' sake, but Jesus for Himself."¹

To Thomas a' Kempis, fellowship with Jesus—as a friend and constant companion—was the foundation, indeed, the very essence, of his existence. Thus, the first advent was important to him because it provided him with this divine fellowship.

But God's entrance into human existence was also important to Thomas a' Kempis because it provided him with a pattern for self-denial and obedient Christian living. And in the Incarnate One, he found his way to the Divine.

"CHRIST. My son, you will be able to enter into Me in so far as you are prepared to forsake yourself. And as the absence of craving for material things makes for inner peace, so does the forsaking of self unite man's heart to God. I wish you to learn perfect self-surrender, and to accept My will without argument or complaint. Follow me, who am the Way, the Truth and the Life. Without the Way, there is no progress; without the Truth, there is no knowledge; without the Life, there is no living. I am the Way you must follow; the Truth you must believe; the Life for which you must hope. I am the imperishable Way, the infallible Truth, the eternal Life. I am the most noble Way, the ultimate Truth, the true Life, blessed and uncreated. If you remain in My Way, you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free, and you shall lay hold on eternal life."²

"Is it so hard for you, who are dust and nothingness, to subject yourself to man for God's sake, when I, the Almighty and most high, who created all things from nothing, humbly subjected Myself to man for your sake? I became the humblest and least of all men, that you might overcome your pride through My humility. Learn to obey, you who are but dust; learn to humble yourself, earth and clay, and to bow yourself beneath the feet of all. Learn to curb your desires, and yield yourself to complete obedience."³

Key passage:
Galatians 2:20

Notes

**"Love all men
for Jesus' sake,
but Jesus for
Himself"**

**"Without the
Way, there is
no progress;
without
the Truth,
there is no
knowledge;
without the
Life, there is
no living"**

¹ From Thomas a' Kempis: *THE IMITATION OF CHRIST*, trans. by Leo-Sherley Price (Penguin Classics, 1952). Copyright © Leo-Sherley Price, 1952. Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd. Pages 76, 77, 110, 174.

² *Ibid.*, p. 174.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

by James P. Larsen

Key passage:
I Corinthians 15:21,
22

Notes

Other than scholars or lay-theologians who just enjoy studying that sort of thing, most people don't get too excited over theological issues—for example, the incarnation.

But the lesson this week seems to have looked at this issue of the incarnation in a rather good way—discussing the *reasons* for the first advent. This makes the theological topic much more meaningful, but I'd like to try to make this subject even more practical.

The first advent—the incarnation—what significance does it have on everyday life?

1. Because of the incarnation of Christ, we need not be handicapped by our own numerous defense mechanisms when approaching God.

Now, what do I mean by that?

Whether it's repression,¹ projection,² regression,³ denial⁴ or whatever, each of us employs at least one or more of these mechanisms every day in order to cope with life. But the interesting thing about these defense mechanisms is that all of them are devices by which we attempt to justify ourselves—not only in our own eyes, but also in the eyes of others.

Because of the incarnation, we can be honest with ourselves concerning ourselves—as honest as was the publican in Jesus' parable who would not so much as lift his eyes toward heaven. We need not *project* our faulty characters on others; we need not *repress* our forbidden wishes and force them to flee to our subconscious. Because of the incarnation, we may look at our lives honestly—with an almost cruel honesty—and plead our only plea: "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Because of the advent of Jesus Christ, the baggage of defense mechanisms that has wearied our lives may be lifted away. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

2. Because of the incarnation of Christ, we Christians may know Jesus as both our example—to show us deficiencies in our characters—and as our substitute—supplying the demands necessitated by those deficiencies.

Some people have real problems in deciding if Jesus was primarily an example for the human race in character development, or if He was primarily a substitute in the scheme of divine justice for the sinful lot. It may be difficult to know exactly which view is most accurate, but I take a middle-of-the-road position, believing that Jesus was both an *example* and a *substitute* for the sinful race.

As our example, He shows us what we *ought* to be. In looking at His life and comparing it with ours, we very quickly understand just how far we really fall in our feeble attempts to attain righteousness. Jesus as the example does not solve the Christian's dilemma of not being what he should be.

Therefore, we also need Jesus as our *substitute*. God, in the person of Jesus, has assumed the guilt of the human race. This means that we don't have to approach God with anxiety or behind the facades of various defense mechanisms. We can approach Him the way we truly are—sinners in search of redemption—and know that *because of our substitute*, we are acceptable.

¹ Repression: To force (painful ideas, etc.) into the unconscious.

² Projection: To attribute to others what is actually within oneself.

³ Regression: To revert to a chronologically earlier or less adapted pattern of behavior.

⁴ Denial: To refuse to recognize or accept.

by editors

Key passage:

John 15:4;

Matthew 11:29-30;

16:24

Notes

The story of Job is intriguing to me. There is no doubt that in the Old Testament, material prosperity and the favor of God are seen in direct correspondence. A psalmist promises, "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours" (see Psalm 128:1-4; NIV).

Although Job lived many years before this psalm was first penned, this relationship between serving God and material prosperity was a commonly held philosophy in his day.

And yet Job, an honorable and upright servant of the Lord, was stripped of almost every earthly possession—his children, his home and his holdings—and even his own person was attacked.

But Job did not fellowship with God for the purpose of being prosperous; he fellowshiped with God simply for the joy of His fellowship alone. Thus, regardless of his trials, his friendship with God remained constant.

Likewise, the story of Roger—a twenty-two year old from Missouri—is intriguing to me. There is no doubt that in the New Testament, victory over sin and the favor of God are seen in direct correspondence. The apostle John promises, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God" (see 1 John 3:9, 10).

And yet Roger, a person who truly desires to serve God, is often stripped of his ability to overcome certain sins. For him, Christian victory is sometimes as elusive as a desert mirage.

But Roger does not fellowship with God for the purpose of being victorious; he fellowships with God simply for the joy of His fellowship alone. Thus, regardless of his failings, his friendship with God remains constant.

In the philosophies of both Job's and Roger's times, personal gain is directly connected with the religious life. For Job it was more of an attitude of, "Be religious and you'll become prosperous." For Roger it is the idea of, "Be religious and you will find the strength to overcome every sin." In their experiences, however, both found that it just doesn't always work that way. But while victory, as well as prosperity, is not always the Christian's lot, divine fellowship is a constant.

"But," you may say, "didn't Christ come to give us victory?" Well, yes. But more than prosperity, more than victory, He came to offer fellowship.

Thomas a' Kempis, a fifteenth century author and priest, writes of fellowshiping with Jesus simply for the sake of His fellowship—not in order to be prosperous or to overcome sin, but for the sake of Jesus' company alone: "Oh how powerful is the pure love of Jesus, free from all self-interest and self-love! Are they not all mercenary, who are always seeking comfort? Do they not betray themselves as lovers of self rather than of Christ, when they are always thinking of their own advantage and gain? Where will you find one who is willing to serve God without reward?"¹

Job lost his prosperity, Roger his victory, but both maintained their fellowship with Jesus—fellowship, not for what He could give them, but for the sake of His fellowship alone.

Hence, we see the reason for the first advent: to provide more than prosperity, even more than victory—to provide man with divine fellowship.

"While victory, as well as prosperity, is not always the Christian's lot, divine fellowship is a constant"

¹ From Thomas a' Kempis: THE IMITATION OF CHRIST, trans. by Leo Sherley-Price (Penguin Classics, 1952). Copyright © Leo Sherley-Price, 1952. Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd. Page 83.

1. Throughout the Christian era much discussion has been given to the events of the first advent of Christ. These discussions have created both orthodox creeds and heretics.

Do you feel that the "particulars" of the first advent (the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, etc.) are of themselves important enough to warrant great discussion and divisions within the Christian church? Explain.

2. Why do you think Jesus was born to poor, probably uneducated parents? Why wasn't He born into a rich, influential family? Could He not—as the perfect God/man—have had the same influence on the world coming from a rich family as He did coming from a poor one?

Would Christ and His message have been the same as we know them today if He had been born into a different environment than He was? Explain the implications of your answer.

3. Some have said that the *primary* reason for the first advent of Christ and His consequential sacrificial death was to overthrow Satan's charges against the character of God. Do you agree? Or do you believe that Christ's *primary* purpose was to save mankind, regardless of whether or not the loveliness of God's character was unveiled? Explain the implications of your answer.

4. If the first advent had not yet occurred, how would the world be different today? List three important differences below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

The Promise Of Christ's Second Coming

"It is not that the Lord is slow in fulfilling His promise, as some suppose, but that He is very patient with you, because it is not His will for any to be lost, but for all to come to repentance." — II Peter 3:9; NEB



Rembrandt

by A. Graham Maxwell

When I was a boy I used to accompany my father as he traveled around England to preach in the different churches. Almost always he would preach about the nearness of the end. And he would do this with such characteristic fervor and conviction that I grew up with a vivid sense of the imminence of the return of Christ.

But here we still are in 1981, and if anything we speak less now of the nearness of the end than we did when I was a boy.

Thirteen years ago the members of my college graduating class met at Pacific Union College to celebrate our twenty-fifth anniversary, and we shared the sobering thought that we were closer to sustentation than graduation. Is there still a chance the Lord will come before we retire?

My Bible teachers always spoke of the end as if it were just around the corner. I shall never forget my class in Daniel and Revelation more than forty years ago. We had just come to Revelation sixteen and the subject of Armageddon. War was soon to break out over in Europe, and I can still hear the earnest words of our respected teacher: "Young people, if war should come, it will be Armageddon. We've had our little time of peace. The next war will be the end." We walked very solemnly from the room that day.

The men and women who founded this denomination to which we proudly belong believed with all their hearts that the second coming was very near. How this conviction motivated those young people to accomplish the things we now so wonder at and admire!

In fact, they were so sure that the

Lord was coming soon that they put their conviction in our denominational name—Seventh-day Adventist. Every time we post this name outside our churches we are publicly declaring our continuing conviction that Jesus is coming soon.

Or must we concede now that perhaps we've been wrong? Were the pioneers wrong? Have our parents been wrong? When today Adventist preachers venture to announce that the end is near, are they telling the truth? When as faithful Adventists we say, "Oh, yes, we still believe that the end is near," what do we mean by "near"? If near can mean a hundred years, could it mean a hundred more? Actually, how near is near?

Peter warned that "in the last days there will come men who scoff at religion and live self-indulgent lives, and they will say: 'Where now is the promise of his coming? Our fathers have been laid to their rest, but still everything continues exactly as it has always been since the world began.'"

The apostle went on to explain, "It is not that the Lord is slow in fulfilling his promise, as some suppose, but that he is very patient with you, because it is not his will for any to be lost, but for all to come to repentance. But the Day of the Lord will come: it will come, unexpected as a thief."

Then Peter referred to Paul's advice in Romans 2:4: "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience with us is our salvation, as Paul, our friend and brother, said when he wrote to you with his inspired wisdom" (II Peter 3:3, 4, 9, 10, 15; NEB.).

by A. Graham Maxwell

Notes

Before Jesus left this earth to return to His heavenly Father, He told His disciples that He would come back soon. "How soon?" they asked. **"Tell us, when will this happen? What will be the signal for your coming and the end of this world?"** (Matthew 24:3; Phillips).

"Even the angels do not know the exact time," Jesus replied (see Matthew 24:36). **"[But] set your troubled hearts at rest. Trust in God always; trust also in me. . . . I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where I am you may be also"** (John 14:1, 3; NEB).

One day as they sat together on the Mount of Olives Jesus told His disciples of many signs by which they could tell when the end is near. He spoke of alarming disturbances on the earth and in the sky, of growing distrust between the nations, the rise of false religious leaders. He especially warned of those who would teach that His second coming was to be in secret. **"Don't believe it,"** Jesus said; **"for the Son of Man will come like the lightning which flashes across the whole sky from the east to the west. . . ."**

"And all the peoples of earth will weep as they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. The great trumpet will sound, and he will send out his angels to the four corners of the earth, and they will gather his chosen people from one end of the world to the other" (Matthew 24:26, 27, 30, 31; TEV).

This is hardly the description of some invisible event. On the contrary, as John predicts, when Jesus returns, **"every eye will see him"** (Revelation 1:7).

Not everyone will weep to see the Son of Man return. The ones He calls His chosen people will be glad to see Him come. As Isaiah wrote so long ago, **"It will be said on that day, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation' "** (Isaiah 25:9).

But as Revelation 13 describes, most of the world will have turned against God. And when lost sinners look into the face of their spurned Redeemer—though He comes back in His human form (see Revelation 14:14)—they will flee from Him in terror, **"calling to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb' "** (Revelation 6:16).

Peter and Judas looked at that same gentle but majestic face. One was moved to repentance and the other to take his own life. Our Lord is not two-faced. The difference is in us. Those who have welcomed the good news will be ready to see Him—even in His glory—and yet not be afraid. But those who have despised the truth will look at the One who died for them and, like Judas, be driven to suicide.

John taught that when a person comes to know and accept the truth about God, he no longer is afraid. He even anticipates the day of judgment without fear! **"God is love, and whoever lives in love lives in union with him. Love is made perfect in us in order that we may have courage on the Judgment Day; and we will have it because our life in this world is the same as Christ's. There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment"** (1 John 4:16-18; TEV).

Moses rejoiced in the truth about God. Although he always approached Him with deepest reverence and awe, he was not afraid, and the Lord could speak to Moses **"face to face, as a man speaks to his friend"** (Exodus 33:11).

by A. Graham Maxwell

Revelation seven pictures the four angels about to release the four winds that represent the closing events of human history. But another angel comes with the urgent message, "Hold, God's people have not yet been sealed."

What does it mean to be sealed? In harmony with her understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit of truth, Ellen White explained that to receive the seal of God does not mean to receive "any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved."¹

How can people be settled into a truth they have never heard? This is why the gospel must go to all the world before the end can come. We could have predicted that God would wait for this to happen. Our gracious God would never expect anyone to pass through the final time of trouble without sufficient opportunity to prepare.

More than a hundred years ago Ellen White gave this explanation for God's patient delay: "The long night of gloom is trying; but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason for so long delay."² She wrote of this "long delay" in 1868!

How could it be said that Seventh-day Adventists are not yet settled into the truth? Is there not essential agreement around the worldwide Adventist circle that our most recently published statement of beliefs is the truth? Then why any further delay? What still remains to be done?

Back in eternity, when the great controversy began, there was only one issue, only one fundamental question that gave rise to all other questions—What kind of person is our God? Soon the controversy will end, just as it began, on this one central issue—the truth about God.

Through the years the adversary has enjoyed incredible success in blackening the reputation of our God before the human race—just as he had previously before the angels—and much of his support has come from the pulpit, perhaps sometimes even from our own.³ At some length Ellen White describes the inestimable damage that has been done by the "heresy of eternal torment" in supporting Satan's charge that God is a "vengeful tyrant" to be feared rather than trusted and loved.

Repeatedly Ellen White explains that this is why Jesus came to our world. "The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes." He came to remove "the erroneous ideas Satan had been the means of creating in the minds of men." The enemy had represented God as "severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. . . . The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth." The "whole purpose" of His mission on earth was "to set men right through the revelation of God." And just before His crucifixion He announced that He had "finished the work" His Father had given Him to do—"The character of the Father was made manifest to men."⁴

The gospel, the plan of salvation, the message and mission of the church are all to be viewed in the light of this great controversy over the character of God. This understanding is Ellen White's greatest contribution—and she found it in all sixty-six books of the Bible.

What does it mean for us to finish the work that God has given us to do? Have we ourselves been settled into the truth?

Key passage:
Revelation 7:1-4;
see also
**"The Reason for the
Delay,"**
Evangelism,
pp. 694-697.

Notes

**"What
does it
mean to
be sealed?"**

**"Soon the
controversy
will end, just
as it began,
on this one
central issue—
the truth about
God"**

¹ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1161.

² *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194.

³ *The Great Controversy*, p. 536.

⁴ *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890.

by A. Graham Maxwell

Key passage:
John 14:6-9;
16:25-27

Notes

More than a century ago Seventh-day Adventists announced their acceptance of the commission to join with God's loyal believers everywhere in spreading the good news to every nation under heaven, that the end may come. Like the early Christians we too felt confident that the task could be completed in a short space of time.

What has kept us from fulfilling our commission for so long? Is it lack of ministers or money that is responsible for so long delay? Or is it possible that we may not fully have been telling the good news?

In 1981 what is it that we Seventh-day Adventists are trying to say about God? Is it the truth? Is it really good news? Are we using the best ways of saying it? In spite of our best efforts, what are people actually hearing? Are there perhaps better ways to say it? I believe that these are the most important questions facing us today—for our own salvation and in order to fulfill our mission to the world.

It cost heaven an infinite price to bring us the good news and confirm it with evidence that would stand for eternity. No wonder Paul was moved to speak so strongly in its defense. Just like the loyal angels, Paul was jealous for the character of God. To him it was unthinkable that some of his fellow ministers would in effect lend their support to Satan's charges by attributing even the slightest trace of arbitrariness to our gracious God.

It was this same perversion of the good news that stirred Jesus most deeply. He was gentle with the worst of sinners. But when some of the religious leaders, the respected teachers of the people, denied the good news and echoed Satan's lies about God, Christ uttered those awful words, "You are of your father the devil" (John 8:44).

There was no disagreement between Jesus and those teachers as to which day was the Sabbath, or as to the existence of God, or the authority of the Ten Commandments. Their disagreement was about the character of God. Jesus came to bring them the good news, a picture of God that would enable them to go on doing many of the same things but for a different reason—a reason that would make it possible for them to be obedient and free at the same time. But they killed Him—then hastened home to keep another Sabbath!

There is nothing more diabolic than to suppress and pervert the good news about God. And this can be done even while apparently presenting Christian doctrine. As God is represented in some pulpits, the prospect of spending eternity with such a deity would be forbidding.

There are explanations of the death of Christ and His intercession in our behalf that put God in a most unfavorable light, less gracious and understanding than His Son. Such subjects as sin, the law, destruction of the wicked, and requirements for salvation, sometimes leave the people with precisely the picture of God that Satan has been urging.

I wish that our church were known, more than anything else, for the truthfulness and effectiveness of its witness to the good news about God. It is our desire to be counted among God's loyal people described in Revelation as obedient to His commandments and faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus. But if in our eagerness to obey we may have left the impression that we worship a legalistic and arbitrary God, then we have not witnessed well to the good news. And if by our teaching or our way of life we may have led some to think of God as the kind of "Person" Satan has made Him out to be, we have not shown ourselves to be trustworthy friends, either of them or of God.

by A. Graham Maxwell

Key passage:
Hebrews 5:11-6:3;
Ephesians 4:11-14.

Notes

When Jesus returns He will come to a generation of believers who have experienced Satan's last supreme attempt to deceive and destroy God's people. They will have accomplished what one-third of the brilliant angels failed to do: They will have refused to be turned against God by Satan's lies. They will have been able to say with Paul, "If anyone—even an angel from heaven—should bring a different version of the everlasting good news, he is wrong and we will not believe it!"

The generation of those who welcome the second advent may be described as:

1. Grown-up believers. These are not babes in the truth. They meet the Hebrews 5 description of Christian maturity: they have "their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5:14; RSV). They have not only the teachable faith of a little child, which still needs much protection, but like Job they can stand alone. Though their faith be severely tested, they will never let God down.

2. Sealed and settled. They have welcomed the Holy Spirit, the Teacher of love and truth. He has sealed and settled them so firmly in the truth that they cannot be moved. (See John 14:16, 17, 26; 16:8; Eph. 4:30.) To be filled with the Spirit of love means to be filled with the Spirit of truth. The loving Christian is not weak. He is a person of strong conviction, and He speaks with the authority of truth.

3. Loyal believers. In Revelation John describes the marks of God's true people who endure the time of trouble and welcome Jesus when He comes. Above all, they trust in God and are loyal to His Son. They have accepted the testimony Jesus bore about His Father. They believe that God is just as gracious as His Son. This everlasting good news is what has won them back to faith.

4. Loving witnesses. Because of their trust in God, they gladly keep His commandments. That is, they love each other and they love their heavenly Father. Moved by the same Spirit who inspired the prophets, it is their greatest delight to join with every friend of God in bearing witness to Jesus Christ. (See Rev. 14:12; 12:17; 19:10; John 5:39.)

It is the mission of the Christian church to help produce such people. As Paul explains, "He [Christ] appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ [a symbol for the Christian church]. And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature. Then we shall no longer be children, carried by the waves and blown about by every shifting wind of the teaching of deceitful men, who lead others into error by the tricks they invent. Instead, by speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ, who is the head" (Eph. 4:11-14; TEV).

There is no closer unity than this oneness that is inherent in our faith. Growing up together in love and admiration for the same Christ and the same God, we are bound together by the very truth that sets us free!

God's true church is made up of individuals who in the highest sense of freedom choose to band together for mutual encouragement and for greater efficiency in spreading the gospel to all the world.

by A. Graham Maxwell

Key passage:
Job 42:7, 8.

Notes

God still waits for His children to grow up, as Paul explained. He needs better spokesmen than Jonah proved to be. Reluctant teachers of the truth, moved only by fear or obligation, are themselves a sad denial of the content of the good news. God waits for loyal people who, like Paul, are proud of the good news, who look "eagerly for the coming of the Day of God and work to hasten it on" (II Peter 3:12; NEB).

It is true that time has continued much longer than early Adventists expected. The signs that stirred them to announce the nearness of the second coming are now well over a hundred years old. Last year we observed the bicentennial of the first of Jesus' signs! But, like Jonah, are we ashamed that our gracious God has been willing to wait? Are we concerned about *our* reputation or *His*?

The good news is not about us. It is about God! If by our failure to complete our task we may have contributed to the delay, then we deserve to be ashamed. But the longer God waits the more gracious He looks. His delay only confirms the good news!

How much longer do you think God will have to wait? We can trust Him to wait so long as there is hope for anyone. But we can also trust Him not to wait forever. The One who reads our every thought will know when the work is done, when the gospel has gone to all the world and all final decisions are made. "So then," Jesus advised His disciples, "you also must always be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you are not expecting him" (Matt. 24:44; TEV).

Each passing year adds further evidence that God is not the kind of person Satan has made Him out to be. Our heavenly Father is an infinitely powerful but equally gracious "Person" who values nothing higher than the freedom, the dignity, and the individuality of His intelligent creatures, that our love, our faith, our willingness to listen and obey, may be freely given. Such things as this are not produced by force. And so God waits.

If, like Jeremiah, we feel deeply honored to know the good news about God (see Jer. 9:24), and we worship God for His infinitely wise and gracious ways, this will greatly effect the way we live, the way we treat each other, and the way we represent Him. Our admiration for God will show in all we say and do. Like Abraham and Moses, who were called the friends of God, we shall be jealous for God's reputation. We shall want the world to see Him as He really is. And we shall covet as the highest of all commendations the words of God about Job: "He has said of me what is right" (Job 42:7).

I believe that it is the distinctive mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to join with the loyal angels in telling the truth about God and telling it more clearly than it has ever been heard worldwide before. Thus we shall call to God's people everywhere and with them move on to greater faith and knowledge of the Son of God—until we all come to the unity that is inherent in that faith.

Then the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be fulfilled. And then the end will come.

"Are we concerned about *our* reputation or *His*?"

REACT

1. Do you expect Jesus to return before you retire? Does your expectation of the nearness of the end have more or less influence in your life than it used to?
2. In all gratitude and modesty, do you consider yourself settled into the truth, "both intellectually and spiritually," so you "cannot be moved"? How could one tell if this is happening?
3. What is this truth into which some will be so settled? Is it the same as the gospel?
4. How would you answer the questions at the beginning of the Evidence section? What is it that we Seventh-day Adventists want to say about God? In the light of so much publicity of late in the newspapers, in *Newsweek*, *Christianity Today*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and several books, apparently what is the world actually hearing?
5. Some have expressed concern, sometimes very strongly, that the emphasis on the character of God in the setting of the great controversy is too narrow a message, for it fails, they say, to deal with the nature and results of sin and the perpetuity of God's law. Do you agree?
6. How would you interpret this comment by Ellen White, written in *Signs of the Times*, Dec. 22, 1914: "Through the plan of salvation, a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated."
7. Some time ago the very winsome pastor of my home church at Loma Linda, Elder Louis Venden, asked me to prepare a brief description of the most important things Adventists believe. If suitable, he wanted to use it in our church bulletin—especially for our non-Adventist visitors.

I gave his assignment a lot of thought, and in the light of this week's lesson, you can imagine what I wrote. But more important, if your pastor asked you to do the same, what would you choose to write?



Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem — Rembrandt

“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.”

— II Thessalonians 2:8; NIV

Man And The Second Coming

by Harvey A. Elder

Is Christ's second coming in power, thereby surprising those who know Him as Love? Or, is Christ's second coming in love, thereby surprising those who know Him as Power?

During the history of Planet Earth, God's power has never been in question. Satan, the loser expelled from heaven, has never argued that he left quietly. So if it is agreed that God is the strongest, what then is the nature of the great controversy? Why does God not end this misery and finish His work?

As you view your own life, your multiple experiences—success and failure and failure, joy and sorrow and sorrow—would you be happier if the issue really were God's power? If you served God, predictably He would use His power to prevent your failures and remove your sorrows—what bliss!—what a nightmare! On what basis can you trust power? If an all-powerful being could be made to like you by the way you behaved, who then is god? The all-powerful or you, who can so easily manipulate him?

The central issue in the great controversy is God's character. Satan's attacks on God are two logically incompatible claims: 1) God is unfeeling, arbitrary in power, and His justice demands vengeance against every misbehavior, and 2) God is afraid or unwilling to act powerfully—He sounds brave but is easily manipulated by "sweet talk." When troubles occur, Satan's first claim argues that God is upset because you didn't follow the rules. God's law demands punishment for all disobedience. Contrariwise, Satan argues that God is unable to confront. He is the Creator of an

uncontrolled earth. His actions are unpredictable. If He gets upset, then mindlessly enraged, He destroys. Life is lawless irrationality.

But the second coming specifically answers Satan's charges about the character of God. It is another in a series of demonstrations showing that God deserves to be trusted. All humans will have had adequate opportunity to know and experience God's character before the second advent. But many will have accepted Satan's arguments in spite of more than adequate contrary evidence. Their intelligences will be surprised when confronted by reality. They will see that the returning Christ, the King of kings, is indeed Love and has always deserved their trust; but they will hate Him for this, seeing that He is unable to fit into their lives. These people want a powerful god they can manipulate, one who will solve problems. They will seek to hide from the One who loves them. They will prefer death.

Others, however, will have accepted the view of God revealed by *all* sixty-six books of the Bible. Their lives will have been lived in the reality of His presence and they will have daily experienced His love. Life will have been a growth of trust in God's loving care and goodness. They will have trusted Him even though He did not exercise His strength to prevent their pain. He, their Savior, comes at the second advent. Their God, whose loving care they experience, will save them by His power. Surprised? Not really. They know that the all-powerful God is trustworthy. In love, they will bow, praising and worshiping Him.

by editors

Notes

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

In order to complete His work of redemption, save the world from self-destruction and bring man into the closest possible fellowship with the Father, Christ must come the second time to gather His people out of this world. The Bridegroom will not leave His bride waiting at the altar. Sin cannot be permitted as an eternal presence in the universe. There can be no peaceful co-existence with evil. Christ must come!

"In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment" (Psalm 102:25, 26; NIV). One reason why Jesus must come is that the earth, "wearing out like a garment," will not always remain habitable. As the exploitation of peoples, societies and the natural world continues, the judgment of God is seen in the earth as it reels **"to and fro like a drunkard" (Isaiah 24:20).**

A look at future events through the eyes of Adventist teachings, however, not only shows the distresses of nature, but also describes the people of God experiencing perilous times and great persecution. The writer of the Apocalypse describes it this way: **"He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark . . . so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark . . ." (Rev. 13:15-17; NIV).** Jesus said, **"For then there will be distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again" (Matthew 24:21; NIV).** Thus, **"If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:22; NIV).** Indeed, the second coming of Christ is the necessary deliverance and justification for the oppressed people of God.

For, at the second coming, **"the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of His coming" (II Thess. 2:8; NIV).** The Lord will complete His work of total redemption. And the redeemed saints will praise the Lord singing, **"Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages" (Rev. 15:3; NIV).**

by Randy Vipond

Key passage:
I John 4:16

Notes

Ellen White begins her five-volume history of the great controversy with the words, "God is love."¹ The last volume of this history concludes with the same phrase, "God is love."² In the first chapter of vol. 1, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, she further discusses this theme. "The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the eradication of sin is also a demonstration of God's unchanging love."³

When a malignancy is discovered in the human body it is best to eliminate it as soon as possible. But God has chosen to deal differently with the disease of sin. For, had Satan "been immediately blotted out of existence, some would have served God from fear rather than from love. . . . For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond all question."⁴

In his treatment of Christ the character of Satan was best illustrated, and he thus "uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings."⁵ Let the controversy be continued even after this convincing demonstration, for some did not yet understand. "Men as well as angels must see that contrast between the prince of light and the prince of darkness."⁶ God accomplishes this enlightenment by giving "them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles."⁷ Then "all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion. Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people."⁸

When the issues of the conflict are decisively answered, the time will come that "from the minutest atom, to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."⁹

¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 33.

² *The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

³ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 33.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 761.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 761.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 764.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 763.

⁹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

by Harvey A. Elder

Why is the earth destroyed at the second coming? Satan urges that it is because God is angry and vengeful, and His irrational hostility is finally unleashed.

A basic human drive is the fear of death. Man, who can envision eternity, weigh the earth and visit the moon, is dying. Man—part of infinity—comes to dust. This dichotomy between man's vision (of eternity) and what he is (dying) stimulates his basic drive to overcome death and become immortal. To be remembered by memorials or through children is to share in eternity: this is to be significant. This is the drive for success and the cause for anxiety. This dichotomy dominates our personality and rationality. We seek to bridge the chasm between transience and immortality in one of two ways: 1) We can be so strong, so important, that we affect eternity and are "immortal" because of our strength, beauty, intelligence, political power, etc. ("smaller" mortals can affect eternity by being part of a group, following "immortal" leaders), or 2) we can know the absolute necessity of trust in Someone who inhabits eternity, who is creator, who is good and caring, who experiences our pain and sorrow. We can have such faith. But those who look to man's greatness for immortality have a major problem that is also their major fear: Man is fallible, thus, he continually reveals his mortality.

In my attempts to have power because I am beautiful, sexy, brilliant, great and good, I tremble lest you discover my fallibility. The denial of mortality is, of course, a denial of reality and is irrational. It is living the lie. To strive for enough power so that I can achieve enough significance to merit "immortality" demands that I live this lie while exploiting all within my grasp—people, society and the earth—to extract personal power that I might become significant and deny my imperfection. Thus, we recognize the pilferage of planet earth as exploitation for personal or group power. And indeed, no one cares.

But society, political structures, national integrity and the earth itself cannot survive this frenzied demonic exploitation, this panicked passion for power, this ceaseless striving for significance and "immortality"

Thus, the destructive signs of the second coming can be replicated by exploitative man. That is to say, God does not wreck vengeance on man or the rebellious planet; rather the destruction of mankind, civilization and Planet Earth results from human attempts to achieve significance. This will be recognized by all, including those who cause the destruction. Man's attempts to achieve significance are flawed and fail. And he destroys everything.

At the second advent, Christ comes to rescue all who have trusted Him. Those who have sought significance in human exploits will even then hate and reject the God who does not reward their grasp for self-powered significance. But those who live the reality of God's acceptance know that they are significant because they are His family. They recognize their Elder Brother, and bow low in loving adoration and worship. They praise Him.

Key passage:
Revelation 6:15, 16

Notes

**Man's basic drive:
To be immortal**

But man continually reveals his mortality

But society cannot survive this ceaseless striving for "immortality"

by Harvey A. Elder

Key passage:
John 14:6

Notes

The doctrine of the second advent is not so much about the advent. Biblical teaching about the second coming has little to do with time or coming. The central, critical, all-consuming, encompassing issue is, "Who is coming?" For both the lost and the saved will be ready for this coming, and both will be awaiting their saviors.

Pilate's question, "What is truth?" (John 18:38), is as relevant today as it was twenty centuries ago. Not waiting for an answer to his question, however, but trusting the power of Rome, Pilate ignored truth and killed God. And indeed, Pilate is every person. We too are guided by how we relate to truth. If—instead of embracing and practicing the whole truth—we ignore parts of it, then our bodies, minds, emotions and social and spiritual relationships will be distorted. Unable to cope we will, as Pilate, trust power as our substitute for truth. We too will "kill" God—in our experience.

Let me explain. If my integrity does not expose and eliminate my broken relationships, the inadequacy of my own hopes and my emptiness as a person; if by denying my integrity I accept as good my capricious power-seeking behavior; if the critical questions for my life are denied, then I live the lie and I will settle into an irrationality, worshiping power as if it were truth. And all who live this lie, as Pilate, will "kill" God, not because God is Himself bad ("I find no fault in Him"), but because any god who will not make his power available for manipulation is perceived as being bad. Those who believe that power is ultimate await the coming of a powerful support for their avarice.

In direct contrast is the trusting person of integrity, who disavows power and manipulation. This person is significant because of his relationship with a personal, trustworthy God who is with him and communicates with him. The truth-seeker's reality is made manifest by trusting, caring relationships with other people, and by his stewardship of God's creation. This person looks forward to the second advent of the God who cares.

Every act of my life settles me into a truth. Either my act is of faith and further affirms God's infinite trustworthiness, or the act depends upon my power and leads me to trust myself, and to desire more power so that I may achieve greater accomplishments and thereby achieve "immortality" and "significance." To illustrate:

1. I can take the risk of trusting, caring and showing vulnerability to another without defensiveness, or I can protect my role and territory and defend myself from all attack.
2. I can care for and with other people, or I can engage in a struggle for domination.
3. I can utilize God's gifts to make beauty an occasion for praise to Him, or I can hoard and exploit for my gain.
4. I can use my time as an occasion to serve God and reveal Him to others at home and at school, or I can use my time to maximize my class-standing, even if this is at the expense of others.

The only preparation for the second advent is to settle into truth—the truth we have chosen. Either by personal aggrandizement, buttressed by power to support a fragile ego, we await a powerful savior who will crown with "significance," or by exploring and experiencing God's love and trustworthiness, we participate in His healing, and await the coming of complete restoration.

"Unable to cope we will, as Pilate, trust power as our substitute for truth"

Harvey A. Elder

Key passage:
John 14:6, 7

Notes

The second advent will occur when planet earth is free to participate in this great event. God is strong enough to come when and how He chooses. But because the issue involved is God's trustworthiness and not His power, God is not free to manipulate the human beings by an omnipotent's spectacular return. Not until the inhabitants of earth are settled into what they choose to believe as truth is God free to come.

If God were to reappear before each person had settled into his truth, then the advent itself would be manipulative and destroy all possibility of present or future freedom. "What else could a human do?" but acknowledge God. If God came early, He would document the truth of Satan's claim that God is severe and arbitrary. Forever the question, "Can God be trusted—really trusted?" would be answered, "Most of the time!" The *choice* of the righteous would be an illusion.

If God were to reappear, long after each person has been settled into his truth, then Satan's second charge would be documented: God offers man freedom because of His bumbling ineptness. Those who choose Satan's lies would be prevented from experiencing the results of their choices after they had been settled into their truth. Similarly, the righteous would be prevented from experiencing the results of their choices.

Note carefully that if God were to come either early or late, the choice of the righteous regarding God's trustworthiness would be shown to be a mirage, a phantom and not reality. But God is neither early nor late. He will come at the precise time when each mindful human is settled into his truth. Those who opt for Satan's lies will be marshalling power to support their manipulative exploitation. Those who trust God will be offering themselves as caring persons who seek to preserve both human relationships and God's creation.

When all who want healing are healed, then those who trust God are only fodder for the destructive avarice of power-seeking humanoids, and at this time the healing God will come to save. To the powerseekers who are settled into their belief that power is ultimate, God's love—which places ultimate value on freedom—is terrifying. Having chosen power and denied freedom all of their lives, they are settled in their truth. God's love is anathema to them! They would rather die than experience this love, and their wish is granted. But to those who are settled into the truth that God can be trusted, their Savior has come. They have chosen freedom, and in freedom and trust they have lived in close relationship with God. In walking with Him they have experienced His immanence; now they experience His transcendent splendor. They are free, and in freedom worship their Lord. The God they have known by knowing the Truth, their Lord, is the KING OF GLORY.

REACT

1. You obey the "powerful one" because you fear punishment. What kind of relationship will this fearful obedience produce? If you obey out of fear, can you be trusted to obey?

2. Think of the principles that are the basis for interpersonal relationships. Other than pure trust, do all principles have coercive elements and thus depend upon power for control? Defend your answer with examples.

3. Success (your success) brings anxiety and only temporary confidence. Have you observed this? Why might this be true? Why does success demand continuing success?

4. Was it fair for the author to link Pilate's behavior when he ignored truth to his participation in the murder of God? Defend your answer.

5. Picture eternity with a god whom you know can be trusted most of the time. How do you feel about such a "heaven"? Describe your feelings when you realize that the situation would never end.

6. List two ways the second coming reveals God to be caring, loving and trustworthy.

1. _____

2. _____



Christ Healing the Sick — Rembrandt

“When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

— Luke 21:28; NIV

Hope Of The Human Race

by James Walters

Hundreds of thousands of faithful, God-fearing Jews perished in the Holocaust. One such Jew was Yossel Rakover, of the devout Hasidic sect. Whether Rakover left a script of his final thoughts is not actually known. However, Zvi Kolitz reconstructs what Rakover's final testament might have been and suggests that it was found in a small bottle in the ruins of Warsaw.

Yossel Rakover's wife and children were already dead. Rakover's ghetto was engulfed by flames on April 28, 1943, as he wrote: "It will not be long before this house too . . . will become the grave of its defenders and tenants."

The final words written by this devoted Jew are an appeal to his God:

"I trust in God, the God of Israel, even though He does everything to destroy my trust. I have trust in His statutes, although I cannot justify His deeds. . . . I bow my head before His greatness, but His staff with which He castigates me I shall not kiss. . . . I cannot praise You for the deeds that You tolerate: but I bless You and praise You for Your very existence, for Your awesome greatness that seems to be so mighty that whatever is happening now in the world is like nothing in Your eyes. However, just because You are so great and I so small, I ask You, I warn You for Your name's sake: stop emphasizing Your greatness by

countenancing the torment of the unfortunate. . . . I die peacefully but not satisfied; beaten, but not despairing; trusting, but not pleading; in love with God but not a blind Amen-sayer of His. . . . And these are my last words to You, my God of anger: nothing will avail You! You have done everything that I deny You, that I shall not trust You. Yet, I die as I lived—with rocklike *emunah* [trust] in You."¹

The Holocaust still smolders today as a deep-cutting challenge to the belief of numerous Jews—and many Christians. Some Jews, such as religion scholar Richard Rubinstein, have given up the faith as a result of Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Many Jews have deepened and broadened their faith in God to make allowances even for the evil of Hitler's death-camps.

What is the Christian answer to the Holocaust? If God didn't intervene to prevent the Holocaust, is nuclear catastrophe out of the question for the human race? Just how much personal mass tragedy will our God allow before He establishes His kingdom? The question is not merely whether God holds the #1 trump card, but how many tricks He will allow to the opponent before the last hand is played.

¹ "Rakover's Appeal" cited in Eliezer Berkovits, *With God in Hell: Judaism in the Ghettos and Death-camps* (New York: Sanhedrin Press, 1979). Pages 128-131.

by James Walters

Notes

The enduring trust which the prophets and apostles invested in their God runs as an important thread throughout the Bible. This trust stood by the Bible luminaries in rain as well as in sunshine. Their relationships with their God had such depths that when gloom dimmed their hope they didn't hesitate to share their frustrations with their divine partner.

Listen to Jeremiah's lament over the difficulties of his prophetic calling: **"O Lord, thou hast deceived me. And I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and thou hast prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me."** Yet in the next breath, Jeremiah is quoting from a liturgical hymn of assurance: **"Sing to the Lord: praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hands of the evildoers"** (Jer. 20:7, 13; RSV).

Similarly Job felt a security in his relationship with God which allowed him to almost blasphemously blurt out his frustration: **"Behold, I cry out, 'Violence!' but I am not answered; I call aloud, but there is no justice. He has walled up my way, so that I cannot pass, and he has set darkness upon my paths. He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone, and my hope has he pulled up like a tree"** (Job 19:7, 8, 10; RSV).

Yet Job's bedrock trust in His God was intact: **"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him"** (Job 13:15).

Thus, the contemporary Christian, locked arm in arm with great biblical figures of the past, can be realistic about his personal problems and social threats. He can and should straightforwardly acknowledge the difficulties that sometimes fall his lot. In fact, the Christian's relationship with his God is undermined by the mouthing of heartless platitudes.

Nevertheless, the Bible writers reach a crescendo in the New Testament in trumpeting the good news of the ultimate triumph of the kingdom of God. And in the expectation of this triumph every Christian may share.

"It will be said on that day, 'Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him: let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation'" (Isaiah 25:9; RSV).

"And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18; RSV).

"But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon had poured from his mouth" (Rev. 12:14-16; RSV).

"Then I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads" (Rev. 14:1; RSV).

by James Walters

Key passage:
Romans 8:28-39

Notes

“You will be given opportunity to say, ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust him’ ”

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed” (I Peter 4:12, 13; RSV).

“The Lord permits circumstances to come that call for the exercise of the passive graces. . . . You know something of what it means to pass through trials. These have given you the opportunity of trusting in God, of seeking Him in earnest prayer, that you may believe in Him, and rely upon Him with simple faith. It is by suffering that our virtues are tested, and our faith is tried. It is in the day of trouble that we feel the preciousness of Jesus. You will be given opportunity to say, ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him’ (Job 13:15). . . . With us, everything depends on how we accept the Lord’s terms. As is our spirit, so will be the moral result upon our future life and character. . . .”

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39; RSV).

“Though Paul was at last confined in a Roman prison—shut away from the light and air of heaven, cut off from his active labors in the gospel, and momentarily expecting to be condemned to death—yet he did not yield to doubt or despondency. From that gloomy dungeon came his dying testimony, full of sublime faith and courage that has inspired the hearts of saints and martyrs in all succeeding ages. His words fitly describe the results of that sanctification. . . . ‘I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing’ (II Tim. 4:6-8).”²

¹ *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 117, 118.

² *Sanctified Life*, p. 96.

by James Walters

In 1974 a bombshell exploded in the American intellectual community. It came from the respected economist Robert L. Heilbroner's new book, *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect*. The book begins with this paragraph: "There is a question in the air, more sensed than seen, like the invisible approach of a distant storm, a question that I would hesitate to ask aloud did I not believe it existed unvoiced in the minds of many: 'Is there hope for man?' "¹

Toward the end of the book, Heilbroner reflects: "If then, by the question 'Is there hope for man?' we ask whether it is possible to meet the challenge of the future without the payment of a fearful price, the answer must be: No, there is no hope."² Heilbroner does not believe human nature will rise to meet the challenge of the irreconcilable conflict between the modern person's unleashed private consumerism—the culprit—and humankind's social necessities. Heilbroner predicts a new Dark Ages as the boomerang effect of contemporary modern life. He predicts a totalitarian world in which corporate values reign and individual intelligence and conscience and freedom of action are a relic of the past.

One theologian, in reacting to this book, sums up the meaning of this society-buster: "The dream of modern humanist—and many theologians, too—that creative invention and the waxing power to manipulate, to transform, and to produce will enrich, secure and bless future generations has evaporated, having, like Frankenstein, begun to destroy the human being who created and lived by that dream. For, says Heilbroner, the only chance our race has to survive is to precisely abandon this dream and to reverse this process of scientific, technological, and industrial development and to create another entire cultural gestalt, as different from the goals and hope of the Enlightenment as is conceivable."³

Heilbroner, unfortunately, does not even mention the hope offered by Christianity—or, for that matter, any other religion. The closest he comes to mentioning religion is in derogatory reference to "tradition," "ritual" and "authoritarianism." Politics takes the place of religion in the book, and politics itself comes out lacking the power to convert the shortsighted egoism of the human heart.

Yes, the Adventist Christian can easily—perhaps too easily—offer the hope of the second coming of Christ, for this is a clear teaching of the New Testament. But is this belief merely "pie in the sky by and by"? What about Christianity's power to save a person here and now from his self-obsession and point him to more ennobling social, even cosmic, goals? Isn't history replete with compelling examples of Christianity's power to alter sinful trends in society? Is the problem merely that Heilbroner has done faulty homework on Christianity? If Christ "devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching,"⁴ and Christians live lives that make a difference in *this* life, why doesn't Christianity get better press?

¹ *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect* by Robert L. Heilbroner. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. 1974). Used by permission. Page 13.

² *Ibid.*, p. 136.

³ "Robert L. Heilbroner's Vision of History," by Langdon Gilkey. *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, Volume 10, Number 3, September 1975, page 218. Used by permission.

⁴ *Ministry of Healing*, p. 19.

Key passage:
Matthew 24:29-31;
25:31-46

Notes

Without the
payment of a
fearful price,
there is no
hope

"Why doesn't
Christianity
get better
press?"

by James Walters

Key passage:
Revelation 21:1-4

Notes

Modernist: Frankly, the potential of nuclear annihilation scares me! Already Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Which city will be next to go—or will it be a country or a whole continent? Where is God in all this? How far will He let it go?

Traditionalist: You modern Christians get so involved in your questioning of the faith and in your attempt to understand God's actions. Why don't you just trust in God's sufficiency to save you and stop worrying about world affairs?

Modernist: You make it so simple! I just don't buy the notion that God is only concerned with me and Himself and our private love affair—or a love affair with a few church members. "For God so loved the world. . . ." And He still loves the world, and that is why the Adventist church is rightfully so involved in extensive hospital work, in SAWS, and other humanitarian work. And because God loves the world, we must concern ourselves with other humanly important issues—such as nuclear war.

Traditionalist: So we usher in the kingdom of God by our own Christian social action, do we?!

Modernist: Well, it will only come to us individually as we *do* meaningfully serve our brother. Remember the judgment scene of Matthew 25? There the faithful showed their true colors by unknowingly serving Jesus through concrete social action.

Traditionalist: I must grant you your point about the need for Christianity to be outfitted in modern working clothes. And yes, sometimes, I tend to make God too small and concerned only for *my* salvation. Nevertheless, it seems that so many of you modern religious thinkers are focusing on this world to the neglect of the world to come.

Modernist: But I am burned out on the predictions of Christ's coming in x-number of years, and the charts of last day events! I will let God handle the future; I just want to be faithful here and now.

Traditionalist: You are making a good point. But aren't you missing something vital in your haste to contend for Christian social action? Hear me out. This temporal world is not all there is to life. To focus on this temporal world without an accompanying emphasis on the eternal world to come is to finally shortchange the true significance of this very world. It is the return of Christ which will fulfill and validate all that is right and beautiful in this world—that toward which all the Christian social action is pointed. If there is not a final eternal world to come we are all like so much flotsam momentarily emerging on the sea of life and then disappearing forever. Really, the message of the second advent vaildates this world in a radical way. This world is worth God's interest in redeeming it—that's the message of the second advent.

Modernist: Good point. I hadn't thought of the final hope of the world exactly in that light before. But still, remember that Jesus not only taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come," but also, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

Traditionalist: What can I say? Yes, vital principles of God's heavenly will can even now begin to be implemented on earth through us. But still I do not want to lose the Adventist emphasis—that the fullness of the kingdom is yet in the future and can only be brought about by God's supernatural intervention.

by James Walters

"Enough of gloom and doom!" you shout.

"All I hear about is world food crises, energy crises, population crises, international money crises, nuclear crises, and now the crisis of modern consumerism. Shall we each turn chicken-hearted, fall over and die?"

Nonsense! The 1980's offer great challenges but even greater opportunities for the involved young Christian. You are living in the age of the kingdom of God—a kingdom which began 1900 years ago. For Jesus declared to the seventy disciples, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven," (Luke 10:18; RSV), and shortly before His death Jesus announced, according to John, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out" (John 12:31; RSV).

Allow me to use a couple of uncommon terms to demonstrate the sense in which ours is the age of the kingdom. The first word is *immanence*. This means that God has not given up on the world, but is pervasively, inherently present in our modern world, working for the realization of His kingdom.

The seeds of God's kingdom were cast long ago, and the apostle Paul bears witness to the fact when he declares: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28; RSV). Yet, only since the days of my great-grandmother have we Christians in this country ceased the inhuman practice of slavery. And today, thanks to the immanent Spirit of God, slavery is a prohibited practice in every civilized country in the world.

Another example of the activity of God in our modern world—of His immanence—may be seen in the efforts put forth for equality of the sexes. When my mother was born, in the second decade of this century, no woman in the country had the right to vote in political elections. Today, in every country of the modern world—with the exception of a few Muslim states—universal suffrage is considered a basic human right.

The benefits of living in a modern society are considerable. The principles of the kingdom revealed in Jesus Christ and made effective through the immanence of God throughout history have made a dent in things. Yet still "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Thus, the fullness of the kingdom of God will never be realized without a cataclysmic intervention of God into human history. And this brings us to the second term which describes the relation of God's kingdom to our age: *transcendence*. Our transcendent God is independent of this world and "wholly other" than what we can touch or hear or even conceive.

The fragmentary victories of the kingdom of God, the Bible teaches, will give way to ultimate victory in the second coming of Christ. Today God enters history from "below." At the second coming He enters from "above." This is the final hope of the human race.

Key passage:
Luke 21:28

Notes

"God has not
given up on
the world"

"God is
independent
of this world
and 'wholly
other' "

1. Relative to the Introduction for this week's lesson: How could such heights of anti-Semitism be reached in a leading 20th century Western (Christian) nation, such as Germany?

Is it possible that temporal evil could conceivably fit into a larger, totally meaningful scheme of life? How?

2. After considering the Logos article for this week, describe your definition of blasphemy.

Think about your own relationship to God:

- ___ Is it genuine at its core?
- ___ Are there artificial elements?

3. Could God allow the developed world to decline into a "new Dark Ages"? Explain.

How could the notion of a "new Dark Ages" fit into the Adventist view of last things—or could it?

4. Seventh-day Adventist involvement in the social arena is basically limited to the areas of medical work, temperance, religious liberty and Dorcas-type activity. Why?

5. Rank the following concepts according to how you judge their importance:

- ___ Personal salvation at the last day.
- ___ A justice for all in the present world.
- ___ God struggles with the underprivileged in today's world.
- ___ Heaven and eternal life.
- ___ In spite of evil, earthly life is fundamentally good and to be enjoyed.

Eschatology *And Ethics*

“When shall these things be and what shall be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?” — Matthew 24:3



An Apostle in Prayer — Rembrandt

By Charles Teel, Jr.

Tribute To Brother Augustus Newman*

I

Seminarian and beasts
 Lions and leopards
 and many-headed beasts
 and beasts which control multitudes
 Great and terrible beasts
 Beasts which wing through the air
 and shoot up from the water
 Conquering forces of Babylonians
 and Persians and Grecians and Romans

II

Inner-city pastor and beasts
 Add roaches and rats
 and many-faced politicians
 and absentee landlords
 Great and terrible beasts
 Add the SST
 and the Polaris
 Add manipulative forces of Jim Crow
 and racism and poverty and despair

III

Seminarian and prophets
 Daniel the interpreter
 and John the revelator
 To foretell
 of visions and dreams
 and times and seasons
 Time charts and dates
 that total 1844
 First comings
 and second comings

IV

Inner-city pastor and prophets
 Add Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah
 and Martin, jailed pastors, and Augustus
 To forthtell
 of righteousness and justice
 and widows and aliens
 Add time charts and dates and numbers
 that total 1968
 Add meaning to first comings
 and hope to second comings

—Atlanta/April 1968

* A seventy-year-old elder in the author's church whose store-front mission has served the residents of Boston's South End for a score of years.

by Charles Teel, Jr.

Notes

es.cha.tol.ogy (eskə 'taləjē) | a. The study of last things or final events; future. e.g.: The disciples pose a question of *eschatology* to Jesus in asking Him the question: "**When shall these things be and what shall be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?**" (see Matthew 24:3).

eth.ics ('ethēks) | a. The study of moral duty or obligation; present. e.g.: Jesus' answer to the eschatological question admonishes the disciples to be no less concerned about *ethics* (the duty and obligation of the disciple while the master is away) than about eschatology (the final events that herald the master's return) (see Matthew 24, 25).

"When will you come?" was the question posed by the disciples at the outset of Matthew 24. The question followed on the heels of Jesus' woes against the Pharisees and His reference to returning as the Son of Man. The awkward silence which followed had been first broken by an irrelevant observation of the disciples regarding their beautiful church buildings. Jesus' cryptic comment that these buildings would end as ruins led the disciples cautiously to advance the two-pronged question, "When will the temple be destroyed, and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?"

The person with but a nodding acquaintance with Seventh-day Adventism knows that Matthew records an eschatological response. Most sophomore "Bible Doctrines" students can tick off the signs mentioned: wars, rumors of wars, false prophets, famines, pestilence, false Christs, signs in the heavens, persecution and earthquakes in "divers" places. (Like myself, you may have been thirteen years of age before you realized that Matthew wasn't referring here to underwater earthquakes!) These signs, I think, are presented less as predictors for *when* the kingdom is coming than as assurances *that* the kingdom is coming. This list offered no less of an eschatological hope to Augustine, Aquinas and Luther, than it did to our denominational forebears, such as Bates, Andrews and the Whites. The remnant which peoples history can thus find in this part of Jesus' answer an affirmation which rings with assurance: "In spite of wars, persecution, deception, famines, false prophets . . . the kingdom will triumph. Don't give up hope."

Jesus then tacks on a series of "mini-parables" at the end of this list of signs: two men in the field, two women at the well, a thief who surprises the owner of a house. To the eschatological question asking when the kingdom is to come, the answer is a blunt, "You don't know."

But most of us are aware that Jesus continues to respond to the disciples' answer non-stop through Matthew 25 in telling the parables of the bridesmaids, the talents, and the sheep and goats. Here Matthew deftly steers his readers away from a sole preoccupation with the eschatological question and focuses on the ethical question.

The parable of the bridesmaids notes that five members of the wedding party emphasized *when* the bridegroom would come while five others emphasized *that* the bridegroom would come. The latter five were found "ready." Therefore: "Be prepared for the kingdom whenever it comes."

The parable of the talents inveighs against the person who proclaims an eschatological hope at the expense of living out an ethical obligation. The master in the story is not impressed by the one-talent person who is armed with prophetic charts and heads the reception line as he returns. Rather praise is reserved for those servants who have rolled up

The eschatological question: "When will you come?"

Answer #1: Signs "The Kingdom will triumph."

Answer #2: Mini-parables "You don't know the time."

Answer #3: Bridesmaids "Be prepared."

their sleeves, dirtied their hands, and invested themselves in the business of life.

The final answer to the disciples' question regarding the advent emanates from the parable of the sheep and the goats, a parable that is truly cosmic in scope. Everyone is there: Adam, Abraham, Ruth, Baalam, Amos, Nero, Attila, Peter, Paul and Mary. And in precisely such a setting the essence of the gospel is articulated. Sheep and goats are not differentiated on the issue of eschatology ("Did you recognize the signs in the sky?") but on the issue of ethics ("Did you recognize Christ in the dispossessed?"). The goats are confused and the sheep are surprised. But "*Readiness*" is contingent less on knowing the eschatological chart than on living the ethical imperative.

An ethical works trip? Social gospel? Or salvation history? The latter. Table one of the Sinai covenant calls for an affirmation of that God toward whom history moves. Table two calls for the remnant people to put into practice this affirmation of God in ethical relationships with humankind. The tension between eschatology and ethics is never lost in the rugged Old Testament prophets.

Indeed, the covenant calls for personal piety to be transformed into public policy. Individual ethics by definition must be incorporated into social ethics. Why? Because the God who brought salvation to a band of poor, orphaned, widowed and alien slaves will in turn stand in judgment at the eschatological Day of the Lord. Old Testament sages from Moses to Malachi repeatedly cite treatment of four groups as the litmus test for determining covenant faithfulness: is justice happening for the poor, the widow, the orphan, the resident alien? These covenant admonitions form the basis of Jesus' first recorded sermon as He quotes from Isaiah in Luke 4. And the same theme is sounded in Matthew 24/25, one of His last recorded sermons.

Is Jesus saying to the disciples something like the following? "I'm glad you asked Me the eschatological question, for the kingdom will indeed triumph. So let this hope inform your life. But I wish you might also have asked Me the ethical question: 'What is the disciple to be about in the master's absence?' For the faithful disciple disciplines his ethical action in light of his eschatological hope. And until we meet face to face at end-time, I will meet you in the persons of the dispossessed. Let your manner of waiting witness to the nature of that kingdom for which you wait. *Let your eschatology inform your ethics.*"

Matthew 25

At the inevitable climax
At the last trump
When the nod is given
And you step forward
Alone
Your answers rehearsed
To anticipate the questions
Yes Lord I have kept the law
I have labored in Your service
I have prayed for the unconverted
Will you be surprised when He asks
In loving disappointment
About open housing?¹

— Joe Mesar

¹ Joe Mesar, "Matthew 25" in *Spectrum*, January, 1973.

Answer #4:
Talents
"Be prepared
by investing
yourselves."

Answer #5:
Sheep and goats
"Invest your-
selves on
behalf of the op-
pressed."

Let your
eschatology
inform
your ethics.

by David Johnson

The great controversy theme which undergirds the writings of Ellen White emphatically attests to her eschatological world view. God's kingdom is not to be equated with the Emancipation Proclamation, the New Deal, the New Frontier, or the Great Society. Rather, God's ultimate kingdom is the blessed hope which breaks in upon history.

So for Ellen White, eschatological concern is a given. But what about ethical concern? Is it legitimate that the disciple who looks forward to the coming kingdom be concerned about issues of social ethics in the present order? Excerpts from her writings on slavery, abolition and reconstruction suggest some answers.

On slavery. "God is punishing the North, that they have so long suffered the accursed sin of slavery to exist; for in the sight of heaven it is a sin of the darkest dye."¹

On abolition. "When the laws of men conflict with the word and law of God, we are to obey the latter, whatever the consequences may be. The laws of our land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master, we are not to obey; and we must abide the consequences of violating this law."²

On reconstruction. "For many years I have borne a heavy burden in behalf of the Negro race. My heart ached as I have seen the feeling against this race growing stronger and still stronger, and as I have seen that many Seventh-day Adventists are apparently unable to understand the necessity for an earnest work being done quickly.

"One of the difficulties attending the work is that many of the white people living where the colored people are numerous, are not willing that special efforts should be put forth to uplift them. When they see schools established for them, when they see them being taught to be self-supporting, to follow trades, to provide themselves with comfortable homes instead of continuing to live in hovels, they see the possibility that selfish plans will be interfered with, —that they will no longer be able to hire the Negro for a mere pittance; and their enmity is aroused.

"Much might have been accomplished by the people of America if adequate efforts in behalf of the freedmen had been put forth by the government and by the Christian churches immediately after the emancipation of the slaves. Money should have been used freely to care for and educate them at the time they were so greatly in need of help. But the government, after a little effort, left the Negro to struggle, unaided, with his burden of difficulties. Some of the strong Christian churches began a good work, but sadly failed to reach more than a comparatively few; and the Seventh-day Adventist Church has failed to act its part.

"Noble efforts have been put forth by some Seventh-day Adventists to do the work that needed to be done for the colored people. Had those who were engaged in this work received the cooperation of all their ministering brethren, the result of their work would now be altogether different from what it is. But the great majority of our ministers did not cooperate, as they should have done, with the few who were struggling to carry forward a much-needed work in a difficult field."³

The Advent pioneers, no less than Ellen White, also viewed the blessed hope as God's answer to the need of humankind. Editor and hymn-writer Anne R. Smith eloquently attests to this fact in the words of a simple hymn:

Key passage:
Exodus 3:9;
22:21

Notes

For Ellen White eschatological concern is a given

But what about ethical concern?

Slavery is "a sin"

Abolition is fostered through a call to civil disobedience

Reconstruction of economics and social structures is a legitimate concern . . . of government, of churches, of the SDA Church, of the SDA laity and ministry

For the pioneer eschatological concern was a given

I saw one weary, sad, and torn,
 With eager steps press on the way,
 Who long the hallowed cross had borne,
 Still looking for the promised day;
 While many a line of grief and care,
 Upon his brow was furrowed there;
 I asked what buoyed his spirits up,
 "O this!" said he — "the blessed hope."⁴

Subsequent stanzas in this hymn relate experiences in the pilgrimage of faith which Adventist tradition has associated with events in the lives of key leaders of the Advent cause.

James White, J. N. Andrews and Uriah Smith, Anne's brother, stand as chief among the leaders which she extolled. These men wrote forcefully in the pages of the *Review* on the eschatological subject of the second coming. Yet, beside such articles appear scores of entries on the ethical issue of slavery.

James White. "[The United States] professes to guarantee to every man liberty and the pursuit of happiness. . . . Yet about four millions of human beings are held by the Southern States of this nation in the most abject and cruel bondage and servitude, and the theological bodies of the land have adopted a creed-power, which is as inexorable and tyrannical as is possible to bring to bear upon the consciences of men. Verily with all its lamblike appearance and profession, it has the heart and voice of a dragon; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."⁵

Uriah Smith. "[Lincoln], following his present conservative, not to say suicidal, policy . . . has to stand up against the 'enthusiasm for freedom' which reigns in nearly twenty millions of hearts in the free North, and against the prayers of four millions of oppressed and suffering slaves. If he continues to resist all these, in refusing to take those steps which a sound policy, the principles of humanity, and the salvation of the country, demand, it must be from an infatuation akin to that which of old brought Pharaoh to an untimely end."⁶

J. N. Andrews. "This sin [of slavery] is snugly stowed away in a certain package which is labeled 'Politics.' They deny the right of their fellow men to condemn any of the favorite sins which they have placed in this bundle: and they evidently expect that any parcel bearing this label, will pass the final custom house, i.e. the judgment of the great day—without being examined. Should the all-seeing judge, however, inquire into their connection with this great iniquity, they suppose the following answer will be entirely satisfactory to Him: 'I am not at all censurable for anything said or done by me in behalf of slavery; for O Lord, Thou knowest, it was a part of my politics.' Will this plea be offered by any reader of this article?"⁷

What about ethical concern?

In many cases we cannot legitimately separate eschatology and ethics any more than we can legitimately separate religion and politics.

¹ *Testimonies*, vol 1., p. 359.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 201, 202.

³ Excerpted from *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 205.

⁴ Anne R. Smith, "The Blessed Hope."

⁵ James White, "Thoughts on Revelation," *Review*, November 11, 1862, p. 188.

⁶ Uriah Smith, editorial comment, *Review*, September 28, 1862, p. 130.

⁷ J. N. Andrews, "Slavery," *Review*, October 25, 1864, p. 172.

by Charles Teel, Jr.

Our Adventist forebears held eschatology and ethics in tension. John Byington (who was later to become the first General Conference president) led a walkout of fellow Methodist clergy because he felt that his denomination had insufficiently pushed for abolition. The co-founder of our community of faith, Joseph Bates, helped organize an abolitionist society in his home town. A leader in the publishing work, John Preston Kellogg, operated a station on the "underground railroad." Ellen White called for civil disobedience with regards to the Fugitive Slave Law. And writers in the *Review* granted sanctuary to no one who was not sufficiently abetting the abolitionist cause. James White criticized the government in general; Uriah Smith lashed out against the President as well as the Christian clergy; and J. N. Andrews took on members of Congress. Further, Andrews openly chided those readers who imagined that they could "sit out" the issue of race by claiming the race question to be a merely "political" matter.¹

Precisely ten decades following Andrews' editorial—at the outset of the tumultuous 1960's when our country once again faced the issue of race and social change—a *Review* editorial title inveighed against churches "Meddling in Politics."

"Seventh-day Adventists are of the firm conviction that political questions not directly involving religion or matters of conscience are strictly out of bounds for churches and church agencies. The increasing tendency of the major religious bodies in the United States to take a public stand on strictly secular matters and to attempt to influence public policy with respect to them, prostitutes their moral authority to affairs that Christ significantly omitted from the gospel commission. The apostles were instructed to teach and to baptize, not to discuss politics or to lobby in congress, lest they blunt their witness to the truth of heaven by becoming involved in controversial matters of an earthly nature." The editorial concludes: "When religious organizations and leaders take up the cudgels of public policy in strictly secular matters, they enter on a task the Lord Jesus Christ never assigned them."²

Whereas the earlier editorial protested the relegation of moral issues to the realm of politics, the later editorial begs the church "not to discuss politics." Whereas Andrews advocated that religion must inform politics, the later editorial contends that involvement by religious groups on public policy "prostitutes their moral authority." Whereas Uriah Smith called on Congress and the President to pursue a "less conservative" stance and J. N. Andrews labeled Congress a perpetrator of an "act of infamy" through its passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, this later editorial admonishes churches "not to discuss politics or to lobby in Congress lest they blunt their witness to the truth of heaven by becoming involved in controversial matters of an earthly nature." Whereas Ellen White soundly scolded the Seventh-day Adventist Church in general and its ministers in particular for not taking a more active part in the reconstruction of social and economic structures, the later editorial specifically prohibits this type of involvement.

¹ See Roy Branson, "Ellen G. White—Racist or Champion of Equality?" *Review*, April 9, 16, 23, 1970.

² Editorial, *Review*, July 29, 1965, p. 12.

Key passage:
Matthew 5:13

Notes

The Adventist pioneers held eschatology and ethics in tension

by editors

As you have read the material presented in this week's lesson so far—and anticipate the Opinion section for tomorrow—certainly you have been challenged to social action. This involvement with society is not based on the pretense that there will be no eschatological fulfillments; but precisely because the Christian awaits the end-time events he should be challenged to social involvement.

So what specific things can the Christian do?

1. He can be informed. This is a simple suggestion, but most important. The Christian who feels a responsibility to society must keep abreast of local, national and world events. It is imperative for him to know what is happening in his world in order for him to be able to act in a responsible and productive way.

Aside from laying a foundation for responsible social involvement, however, the Christian should remain well-informed of important events for the simple fact that as a part of this planet, he should be interested in it. A world which God created and his four billion brothers and sisters inhabit is a world worthy of his interest and concern.

2. He can become involved with environmental concerns. The Christian's eschatology predicts the end of life on this planet. Ultimately, the world as we know it is finished. But until Planet Earth shuts down, as it were, the Christian has a responsibility to it. For there is a sacredness about God's creation. It is home. It is worthy of the Christian's attempts to preserve it.

Unfortunately, however, Christians have often let Darwinistic ideas of survival of the fittest influence their ecological outlook: "If species can't adapt to our modern world, then let them 'pass on.'" But according to Scripture, it is man's duty to nurture the weak, relieve the oppressed and to generally help alleviate all suffering.

3. He can become involved with peace movements. In an age of nuclear weapons, there is no option available for the Christian than complete opposition to any further development and procurement of nuclear weapons. In fact, it is incumbent for the Christian to work for the abolishment of these devilish weapons, as they are potential instruments to completely destroy human life as we know it today.

Indeed, if one wishes to talk about an eschatological test, he should talk about the complete reliance in faith on the power of God and not the might of man to solve the "unsolvable" military/political questions of our day and of the future. Let the Christian trust completely in God, and not in MX missiles.

For there is no alternative for peacemaking other than using peaceful means.

Key passage:
Revelation 11:18b;
Matthew 5:9

Notes

by Charles Teel, Jr.

To pose the problem in stark terms: The 1864 *Review* editorials mince no words in admonishing readers that the issue of race is an ethical/moral issue demanding the attention of those who proclaim the blessed hope. The 1965 *Review* editorials, in contrast, view these social/political issues as out of bounds for the remnant people precisely because they affirm the blessed hope. As pastors were jailed for refusing to obey Jim Crow laws which deprived persons of life chances merely by virtue of their color, the 1965 editorial admonished: "If we understand rightly the spirit and objectives of the Advent Movement, we cannot go along with what is now a dominant objective of most Christian bodies, to take a major part in trying to reform the world in its secular aspects. . . . Ours is a task to prepare men for a better world, which we believe is soon to come."¹

So what has happened to James White's spiritual offering? Where our forebears kept the eschatological question and the ethical question in creative tension, their children's children have lost this tension.

How come?

Is it because we have become quite comfortable as a part of the warp and woof of contemporary culture? Is it because the eschatological issues can be dealt with by words alone whereas the ethical issues require deeds? Are we expressing a commitment to that Christ who comes in the sky as an alternative for becoming involved in the sticky business of discerning where the Christ might be found in our midst? Have we become adept in separating our eschatology from our ethics?

If in our quietest moments we experience some dissonance as we answer these questions in the affirmative, the Spirit may be nudging us to re-read Matthew 24 and 25. And if we meet our Lord in that encounter, we will be called to prepare to meet Him in the present no less than we will be called to meet Him at end-time. Our eschatology will then be informing our ethics.

¹ Editorial, "The Church and Social Reform," *Review*, April 15, 1965, p. 15.

Key passage:
Matthew 24 and 25

Notes

Have we become quite comfortable as a part of the warp and woof of contemporary culture?

1. Charles Teel, in the Logos article for this week, admonishes Adventists to let their eschatology inform their ethics. By this he encourages Adventists to become involved in social action. Adventist eschatology, however, teaches that society will inevitably become more and more degraded until the close of the age. Thus, the Adventist's responsibility to his society is often described only in terms of direct evangelistic outreach.

But what do you think? How involved should the Christian be in working for social reforms in light of his eschatological hopes?

2. Ellen White fostered the cause of abolition through a call to civil disobedience (see the Testimony article for this week). If she had been alive during the 1960's what role do you believe she would have played in the struggle for civil rights? Would she have at this time issued another call to civil disobedience?

3. Charles Teel, in the Evidence article for this week, quotes a June 29, 1965, *Review* editorial as saying, "Seventh-day Adventists are of the firm conviction that political questions not directly involving religion or matters of conscience are strictly out of bounds for churches and church agencies."

For what reasons do you believe the writer of this editorial differentiated between political questions involving matters of religion and those political questions more "secular" in nature? Does this imply that Adventists are egocentric (self-centered) in their approach to the problems of the world?

4. Many have feared that if the church and its members become involved in political matters, the uniqueness of our message will be relegated to second place—that the church will become more interested in the energy crisis than in preaching the third angel's message.

But how may the Adventist church balance the challenges to meet both its responsibility to secular society and to the souls of men?

5. Do you basically agree with the ideas Charles Teel has presented in this lesson? Be prepared to defend your position.

The Millennium



The Last Judgment — Leyden

“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

— Revelation 20:4; NIV

by Shelley Walther Schurch

I can't remember anything he said, but I'll never forget how he said it.

After ten years of public schooling, I was at long last attending academy, listening to my Bible Doctrines teacher on the first day of class. More in ignorance than arrogance, I expected this course would simply be a review of all the Sabbath School lessons I'd studied since my Cradle Roll days.

Wrong. Peering back through the fog of fourteen years, I think Elder Brandt talked about the plan of salvation that day. What I do remember clearly is the awesome feeling that I had just heard forty minutes of eternal truth, simply and beautifully stated. The freshness and importance of it all hit me with such force that I stayed after class while everyone else scrambled for the door [and a good place in the cafeteria line.]

Coming out of my daze enough to realize that the teacher might be wondering about my reluctance to vacate the room, I picked up my books and shuffled out. It had been a long day for me, hundreds of miles from home and sweaty-palm shy. And yet, as I walked by Elder Brandt's desk I conquered my shyness, trying to tell him how his words had given the old Bible stories such amazing newness.

A pattern had been set. Time after time I listened wide-eyed (and wide-eared?) as Elder Brandt led us through the Bible. Although I learned to jostle my way out of the classroom with the rest of the herd, I often paused at the teacher's desk to comment on the day's discussion.

And then one day we discussed the millennium. All went well as we talked about the who, what and where. It was talking about the why that brought us trouble.

As Elder Brandt presented it, one of the main reasons for the millennium was to give the saints an opportunity to research why certain individuals weren't in heaven.

"But, Elder Brandt," someone countered. "I thought we wouldn't remember anything sad once we got to heaven. Remembering all the people you know who aren't there and finding out why will be really sad."

"Yes," Elder Brandt said quietly, sensing the concern of the class. "Our tears won't be wiped away until the new earth. The millennium will not be a happy time."

"But I don't want to spend a thousand years being unhappy!" wailed one of my friends.

How Elder Brandt responded to that cry of despair escapes me now, but I remember walking out after class in a dismal mood, not stopping to comment.

How would you have responded to my friend's despair?

The millennium is in many ways still a mystery to me. In thinking about it lately, two truths have surfaced as both obvious and reassuring.

The first fact is that the millennium is closer now than when I first contemplated it in Elder Brandt's class.

My husband underlined the second truth for me when I asked him what he thought was the most important thing about the millennium.

"Being with Christ," he answered. I like that. I believe that. With that in mind, I don't mind exploring the mystery of the millennium this week.

by Leonard S. Barnes

Notes

Millennial ideas and interpretations are about as numerous and diverse as the religious (and secular) organizations that proclaim them.

There would be no millennial doctrine at all if it were not for the twentieth chapter of Revelation. As for taking such Old Testament passages as Isaiah 24:1, 3, 6 and Jeremiah 4:23-27; 25:33 and seeing in them a secondary reference to a millennial state of uninhabited desolation here on earth, this would be impossible without Revelation 20:1-3. And the ideas as to when the millennium will begin and as to whether its thousand years are to be literally or symbolically understood has produced several branches of what is called "millennialism."

Amillennialism asserts that Revelation 20 is teaching spiritual truths in symbolic language and regards the millennial period as stretching from the ascension of Christ to His second advent. *Premillennialists* understand Christ's second coming to precede the thousand years. *Postmillennialists* believe that Christ's return will follow a literal thousand years or some indefinite period of time.

Seventh-day Adventists are classified as premillennialists. This is partly because they see the last four chapters of the book of Revelation as being in a chronological sequence with the description of Christ's second advent in chapter nineteen, followed by the introduction of the millennial period in chapter twenty and the "new earth" in chapters twenty-one and twenty-two.

But there is a uniqueness about the Seventh-day Adventist millennial teaching in that during the millennium, no living humans will be on earth. This fact is arrived at by a comparison of the following scriptural passages: I Thessalonians 4:16, 17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2:8; Revelation 20:5, 6. A review of these passages shows that: 1) the righteous dead are resurrected; 2) the righteous living are translated at the second coming of Christ and spend the millennial period with Him in heaven; 3) the wicked living are destroyed by the brightness and glory of the victorious Jesus at His appearance (*parousia*); and 4) the wicked dead remain so until their own separate resurrection at the end of the millennium to stand before the judgment throne of God and meet their end in the cataclysm of fire that cleanses the earth and prepares it for its surface re-creation (Rev. 20:7-14).

What of the saints in heaven during the millennium? Revelation 20:4 suggests that among other things (like living and reigning with Christ) they will be engaged in judging both wicked men and fallen angels (I Cor. 4:5; 6:2, 3). For them it is not only a case of judgment being done (the prerogative of God), but of seeing judgment done. (After all, wouldn't you want to know why a friend or relative had not been resurrected with the just?)

According to the latter verses of Revelation 20 and the opening verses of chapter 21, the millennium closes with the resurrection of the wicked (see also Isaiah 24:22) which automatically brings to an end the "binding" of Satan. The holy city, described by John in Revelation 21 as having descended from heaven to earth, arouses in the heart of Satan and the resurrected wicked an intense desire for its overthrow. But this is Satan's Waterloo. The war is lost and Revelation 20:7-15 and Malachi 4:1 paint the bitter end of one who once stood guardian at the throne of God. Fire reduces all to ashes. The holy city rides out the storm and emerges with the saints to behold its Creator—the Lord Jesus Himself—calling forth anew a world of Edenic beauty and perfection.

by G. Arthur Keough

Key passage:
Isaiah 24:1, 3, 6

Notes

What a privilege was Mrs. White's, to see past and future events with the penetrating eye of a prophet. In the book, *Early Writings*, Sister White records some prophetic scenes which God had presented to her.

In one part of the book, she vividly describes the condition of the earth during the time of the millennium:

"My attention was again directed to the earth. The wicked had been destroyed, and their dead bodies were lying upon its surface. The wrath of God in the seven last plagues had been visited upon the inhabitants of the earth, causing them to gnaw their tongues for pain, and to curse God. The false shepherds had been the signal objects of Jehovah's wrath. Their eyes had consumed away in their holes, and their tongues in their mouths, while they stood upon their feet. After the saints had been delivered by the voice of God, the wicked multitude turned their rage upon one another. . . .

"The earth looked like a desolate wilderness. Cities and villages, shaken down by the earthquake, lay in heaps. Mountains had been moved out of their places, leaving large caverns. . . . Large trees had been uprooted, and were strewn over the land. Here is to be the home of Satan with his angels for a thousand years. Here he will be confined, to wander up and down over the broken surface of the earth, and see the effects of his rebellion against God's law. For a thousand years he can enjoy the fruit of the curse which he has caused. Limited alone to the earth, he will not have the privilege of ranging to other planets, to tempt and annoy those who have not fallen. During this time Satan suffers extremely."¹

Meanwhile, Ellen White saw the condition of the saints as being entirely different:

"I heard shouts of triumph from the angels and from the redeemed saints, which sounded like ten thousand musical instruments, because they were to be no more annoyed and tempted by Satan, and because the inhabitants of other worlds were delivered from his presence and his temptations.

"Then I saw thrones, and Jesus and the redeemed saints sat upon them; and the saints reigned as kings and priests unto God. Christ, in union with His people, judged the wicked dead, comparing their acts with the statue book, the word of God, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then they meted out to the wicked the portion which they must suffer, according to their works; and it was written against their names in the book of death. Satan also and his angels were judged by Jesus and the saints. Satan's punishment was to be far greater than that of those whom he had deceived. His suffering would so far exceed theirs as to bear no comparison with it. After all those whom he had deceived had perished, Satan was still to live and suffer on much longer.

"After the judgment of the wicked dead had been finished, at the end of the thousand years, Jesus left the city, and the saints and a train of the angelic host followed Him. Jesus descended upon a great mountain, which as soon as His feet touched it, parted asunder, and became a great plain. Then we looked up and saw the great and beautiful city, with twelve foundations, and twelve gates, three on each side, and an angel at each gate. We cried out, 'The city! the great city! it is coming down from God out of heaven.' "²

"The saints reigned as kings and priests unto God"

¹ *Early Writings*, pp. 289-29

² *Ibid.*, pp. 290-291.

G. Arthur Keough is the associate director of the Department of External Studies at Columbia Union College.

by G. Arthur Keough

Referring to Revelation 20:1-6, the Wycliffe Bible Commentary says: "We now approach one of the most debated passages of the Word of God." It goes on to quote, with approval, a statement of C. J. Vaughan: "Never did we need more the help of God than in entering upon the interpretation of the chapter now before us."¹

L. Berkhof in his *Systematic Theology* says: "Some of those who expect a millennium in the future hold that the Lord will return before the millennium, and are therefore called *Premillennialists*, while others believe that His second coming will follow after the millennium, and are therefore known as *Postmillennialists*. There are large numbers, however, who do not believe that the Bible warrants the expectation of a millennium, and it has become customary of late to speak of them as *Amillennialists*."²

But Seventh-day Adventists, as we have discovered this week, believe that the second advent of Christ precedes the millennium, and are therefore classified as *premillennialists*. The *SDA Bible Commentary* says: "That the second advent precedes the millennium is clear from the fact that the narrative of Rev. 19 and 20 is continuous. The second advent is symbolically portrayed in ch. 19:11-21, and the narrative is carried on without a break into ch. 20, which discusses the millennial period. The continuity of narrative is clearly demonstrated by the interrelation of events."³

Many among the premillennialists believe that the millennium will be a period of righteousness, peace and prosperity *on earth*. But in doing so they ignore the fact that at the second coming all the wicked are destroyed (cf. Rev. 19:19-21), and that Satan's activities are brought to a halt because there is not one on earth that he can deceive (cf. ch. 20:3). At the same time, the righteous have been taken to be with their Lord after the first resurrection (cf. I Thess. 4:17; I Cor. 15:51), and all who have a part in this resurrection are said to be "Blessed and holy . . . on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

Against those who would allegorize or spiritualize away the doctrine of the millennium, Alford, in his *New Testament for English Readers*, says: ". . . it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of consensus which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion."⁴

Berkhof warns against a form of premillennialism that is wedded to dispensationalism. He says: "In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, a new form of Premillennialism was introduced under the influence of Darby, Kelly, Trotter, and their followers in England and America, a Premillennialism wedded to Dispensationalism. . . . They really present a new philosophy of history of redemption, in which Israel plays a leading role and the Church is but an interlude. . . . In reading their descriptions of God's dealings with men one is lost in a bewildering maze of covenants and dispensations, without an Ariadne thread to give safe guidance."⁵

Key passage:
Revelation 20:1-6

Notes

¹ *The New Testament and Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, (New York: Iversen-Norman Associates, 1971), Pages 1094-1095.

² *Systematic Theology* by L. Berkhof. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965). Used by permission. Pages 708-710.

³ *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. VII (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 1957), p. 885.

⁴ Alford, *New Testament for English Readers*, in *The New Testament and Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, (New York: The Iversen-Norman Associates, 1971), p. 1095.

⁵ Berkhof, *Op. Cit.*, p. 710.

by Norman E. Dellas, Jr.

Key passage:
John 14:27

Notes

The popular concept of the millennium is that it will be a time of peace and plenty upon the earth. It is thought to be an evolutionary trend toward an earthly utopia when the people "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4). It will be the result of the application of man's increasing knowledge and technology, the end of an evolutionary process.

Scripture, however, pictures the saints in *heaven* during this millennial period. It is a time when the righteous will experience complete Edenic peace, as Adam and Eve did before the Fall. There can be no more temptation since Satan is bound to this earth and has no access to heaven (Rev. 20:2). There is no more death (1 Cor. 15:53, 54) since "death has been swallowed up" in the victory provided by Jesus Christ (vs. 54, 57). All things will be for the saved as they originally were.

It is indeed our blessed hope for Christ to return so that we can begin experiencing this perfect peace during the millennium in heaven, and to see it continued for eternity on this earth.

But we don't have to wait until the millennium begins to get a taste of this peace. You and I can begin experiencing it here and now. And it isn't hard! God in His word tells us how in simple steps.

1. Accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Paul tells us in Romans 5:1 that if we are justified by our faith in Christ, we shall have—or, be at—peace with God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And to be justified ("saved"), all we must do is "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16:31). For "now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ" (Romans 3:21-23; NIV).

2. Trust in Christ completely. This belief in Christ must not be just an intellectual belief or "head knowledge," but must be experiential. Isaiah says that God will keep us in "perfect peace" when our minds are "stayed" on Him, when we trust in Him (Isaiah 26:3). This peace is available to us; Christ has left it here for us (John 14:27). Indeed, when we trust in Him, this means that we give to Him our complete selves, not just parts but all (see Romans 12:1); not just on Sabbath, but every second of every day of the rest of our lives.

"Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal" (Isaiah 26:4; NIV).

3. Come to Christ every time you fall. And certainly we will fall, experiencing guilt which drives away our peace. So when temptation strikes and we succumb, we are to bring our sins to Christ, who is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

"My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One." (1 John 2:1; NIV).

by Myrl Manley

We have been made aware in our study this week of three different postures taken with regard to the millennium, namely, amillennialism, postmillennialism and premillennialism. Seventh-day Adventists hold that Christ's personal second advent will precede the millennial period (*premillennialism*, but only in the literal, chronological meaning of the word).

The boundaries or "time extremities" of the millennium are marked by two events similar in their happenings (Christ bringing two resurrection experiences to Planet Earth), but diametrically opposed in their purposes (resurrection for eternal life versus resurrection prior to eternal death). The one thousand year period begins with a depopulated earth and ends with the earth being repopulated. But the question for our study is, Why is all of this important? Why should Christ come to this earth twice to implement two resurrections separated from each other by one thousand years? Could there not be a resurrection of the righteous combined with the destruction of the wicked? And why have one thousand years between the two events, especially when there are no wicked living during this period and the "saved" have already departed for heaven?

Another interesting question arises: Must one understand the concept of the millennium to be saved? My answer to this is, "No." However, since it is a simple fact taught in Scripture and an event with a fundamental relationship to the return of Jesus, it does have an exciting relevance for anyone who wishes to understand end-time events.

Although an understanding of the millennium is not required for salvation, the millennium *per se* is a necessity for the redeemed. Why? The millennial period provides opportunity for the redeemed to join with the Judge of the universe in a judgmental review (Rev. 20:4, 6) of the lives of all who have refused the salvation offered by Christ. It will also provide a time for the saints to judge Satan and the other fallen angels.

This review will convince every redeemed man and woman of the justice of God in the destruction of the wicked. Such a conviction is a necessity for the new heavenly dwellers in order to provide security for all eternity. "It will be demonstrated that the divine decrees are not accessory to sin. There was no defect in God's government, no cause for disaffection."¹

Someone has pointed out that the millennial phase of the judgment will provide an opportunity for the *redeemed* to be fully satisfied with all of God's acts in dealing with the sin problem, just as the investigative phase will satisfy the *unfallen universe*.

The executive judgment which takes place during the millennium affords every saint an opportunity to audit the heavenly records and consequently to understand why the wicked (possibly one's own loved ones) had been deprived of the heavenly home. Yes, the millennium, the understanding of which is not a prerequisite for salvation, is a necessity for those who are saved because what takes place during that period establishes for all eternity God's credibility in dealing with the sin problem. And the judgmental review helps insure that the earth, soon to be recreated and then reinhabited by a mass influx of men and women, will maintain the purpose, joy and thrill of God's original creation.

¹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 58.

Key passage:
I Corinthians 6:2

Notes

"This review will convince every redeemed man and woman of the justice of God"

Myrl Manley was president of Union College at the time of this writing.

1. Someone has said that in the Bible the doctrine of the millennium is not so much heard as it is overheard. If this is true, then should a church allow its conception of the millennium—whether amillennialism, postmillennialism or whatever—to be a point of separation between it and other churches? Explain.
2. Adventists teach that during the anticipated one thousand year period, Satan will be “bound” to this earth to contemplate the results of his work. Why is this necessary? Certainly Satan understands by now that the sin which he introduced has not been for the benefit of the universe. Why then the millennial contemplation?
3. The idea is proposed that during the time of the millennium the saints will review the judgment books in order to be assured that God was just in His dealings with their fellow men. As the saints, however, have learned throughout their entire lives to totally and completely trust God and to take Him at His word, why must they “check up on Him,” as if their faith has to be more firmly established?
4. At the end of the millennium Adventists teach that the dead will be resurrected to face damnation. Why must this be? What is the purpose of retributive justice?
5. The most important question regarding the millennium is, Where do we plan to be during this time?

The Meaning Behind Existence

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

— Ecclesiastes 12:13; NIV



The Entombment — Titian

by Arthur Hauck

I was seated in the main lobby of the Campus Center, trying to focus on some necessary reading, when my concentration was jostled by the unexpected enthusiastic greeting of a friend, "Hi, Art! How are you?" I instinctively formulated the conventional retort and was about to phrase the "Fine! How are you?" at what I had presumed to be a disappearing figure, only to lift my head and find myself staring into a pair of inquiring eyes.

Startled by the somber fact that I was possibly supposed to give a real answer to what I had initially surmised to be a mere verbal stroke, I stifled my return and impulsively countered, "Bob! Who are you?"

This abruptly terminated that momentary encounter with the parting rejoinder, "Art, you're always trying to play games!"

Not willing to allow him the last word, I muttered after him, "But at least I was more biblical."

He countered with a final, withering stroke, "Goodbye," then vanished through a doorway.

The more I thought of it, the more I became convinced that I really had been more biblical. Very biblical. Let me try to explain my cryptic personal parable in the context of each individual's incessant quest for the meaning and purpose of life.

It is more the "who he is" rather than the "how he is" that haunts man's troubled game of life, confounded by the perplexing paradox that he seems to be at - once - running - away - from - and - looking - for himself. This pervasive sin condition, the loss of and search for his true identity, is the biblical description of man.

Thus, in principle, the Genesis account of the first man and woman is the story of every person. As a

consequence of their chosen estrangement from God, and thus from their whole real selves, Adam and Eve went hiding behind some bushes, masking their inauthenticities from each other under fig leaves labeled "his" and "hers." That first startling greeting, as God gazed deeply into their troubled eyes, "Adam! Eve! Where are you?" still echoes from Eden and gives design and purpose to man's existence.

When Jesus retold the story of "every man," he was the prodigal son who severed his relationship with his Father and sought the far country. His futile flight and furtive search brought him to the pig pen in order to find himself. But he had to come home in order to be himself. When the loving Father asked the human family to share in the discovery and recovery, the elder brother chose not to be there. He was hiding behind his church-shaped bushes, too busy playing God. Thus, not only the far country but even churches may be man's hiding places where the weary prodigal may have no one to meet him but a committee of elder brothers.

In phrasing and framing "the meaning of it all," that tender story also proffers the awesome disclosure of the end of man. Twice the Father declared, "My son who was dead is alive again." To choose not to be who you were made to be, is to choose not to be. In the final end, even that choice will be granted. Those who choose to stay behind the bushes or in the far country, those who fail to respond to the echo from Eden, "they shall be as though they had not been."² Heaven, eternity, is available only for those who are.

On second thought, maybe Bob did win the game. "Goodbye" is simply a contraction of "God be with you."

¹ Education, p. 17.

² Desire of Ages, p. 763.

by editors

Notes

There are millions who walk the earth with no clear view of the meaning of life. They have no sense of origin or purpose or destiny, and therefore no understanding of the present. While no man can penetrate the inscrutable infinity of Divine Wisdom, there is enough light revealed in the divine record to provide some insights into the plans and purposes of God for those created in His image.

On the last day of the creation week, the Bible tells us that **“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31; NIV)**. To a child, “very good” means to stay within *most* of the lines of a picture in a coloring book. To an adult, “very good” means to do something with few—if any—noticeable mistakes. But to an omnipotent, omniscient God, “very good” is a higher standard of quality than we can even realize. Thus, after surveying all that He had made and proclaiming it to be “very good,” God was in essence saying, “It is perfect, indeed!”

But, **“the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (Genesis 3:1; NIV)**. And you know the rest of the story. When faced with the option of choosing good or evil, the first man and woman—just days earlier pronounced by God as being “very good”—chose evil. The omnipotent One could have forced or coerced them into doing righteousness, but freedom of expression is very important to God—more important to Him than the life of His own Son.

Thus, man has experienced ever since the Fall the results of his early choice. **“I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children,”** God said to Eve. And to Adam: **“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you. . . . By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken” (Genesis 3:17-19; NIV)**.

And so the entire world has experienced the results of mankind's sins: thistles and thorns, trials and temptations, and perplexities regarding the origin, purpose and destiny of the race.

Yet, even though in Adam the human being is doomed to face the frustrations and complications of living, in Christ his sin-originated life experiences a new and transforming birth, giving him a different perspective to live by. Paul says that we are dead **“to what once bound us”** and set free by **“the Spirit of life” (Romans 7:6; 8:2; NIV)**. **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (I Cor. 5:17; NIV)**.

This new birth which the Christian experiences has the power to eliminate many of the perplexities of this present age. The questions of life—Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? How can I face life, myself and God? What is the meaning behind this human existence? —are answered as the Christian finds his identity in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christians are called to be **“Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us” (II Cor. 5:20; NIV)**. For God has committed to men the work of proclaiming reconciliation and restoration—and an understanding of “the meaning of it all.”

by Bradley O. McIntyre

Key passage:
Romans 8:12-17

Notes

"When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. 'God created man in His own image,' and it was His purpose that the longer man lived, the more fully he should reveal this image, —the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase. . . . Had he remained loyal to God . . . he would have continued to gain new treasures of knowledge, to discover fresh springs of happiness, and to obtain clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God. More and more fully would he have fulfilled the object of his creation, more and more fully have reflected the Creator's glory.

"But by disobedience this was forfeited. Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated. . . . Yet the race was not left without hope. By infinite love and mercy the plan of salvation had been devised, and a life of probation was granted. To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized,—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life."¹

"He [God] has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature, and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator.

"God might have committed the message of the gospel, and all the work of loving ministry, to the heavenly angels. He might have employed other means for accomplishing His purpose. But in His infinite love He chose to make us co-workers with Himself, with Christ and the angels, that we might share the blessing, the joy, the spiritual uplifting, which results from this unselfish ministry."²

¹ *Education*, pp. 15, 16² *Steps to Christ*, p. 79

The object of life:
"To restore in man the image of his Maker"

by editors

There are probably as many different philosophies of life as there are people in this world. The answers to the most fundamental questions concerning human existence are unique to each individual. And yet, one may arrange all philosophies of life into four basic representative classifications—which is important to do for purposes of study and discussion. These four are briefly explained below.

Cosmic Purpose. The idea here is that “man is most fully man when he perceives himself for what he really is—a finite creature who is loved by God and is called by Him to play a unique role in the working out of His will for His creation.”¹ The ultimate source of meaning in life then is to be found in participating in the divine will.

Thus, those who identify with this philosophy find four things worth living for:

1. To praise and worship God.
2. To love others.
3. To reverence all forms of life.
4. To make responsible use of the material resources available to them.

5. **Nihilism.** Nihilism is the view that human existence is totally meaningless. The universe is indifferent to man; man’s existence has no meaning or purpose in the universe. Therefore, there are no imperatives, no “oughts,” and no guilt. One’s lifestyle is prescribed by habit and society. One does whatever he desires. Life is but a comedy.

The Nihilist finds purpose in life, however, in living to defy the universe and refusing to be subdued by it. He says in effect, “Yes, life has no meaning, no purpose, but I’m going to live in spite of it and thereby conquer my part of the universe.”

Immanent Purpose. To those who hold this view, meaning in life comes when one invests some part of his life in something he believes to be worthy of the investment. Life is meaningful when it is lived in the service of those values he believes to be worthy. Thus, life has meaning only for those who are actively involved with it.

These values which such a person serves “emerge out of the depth of our lives, out of that dimension of ourselves in which we are in touch with the eternal.”² They include such basics as truth, beauty and goodness, and incorporate cultural and uniquely personal values as well.

Temporal Purpose. The philosophy of Temporal Purpose is based upon the idea that without man the earth would be valueless, for man creates value by positing future possibilities which he then works to achieve. People, it is taught, find meaning in life in striving to bring into being the values, ideas and visions they have. Thus, it is by his imagination that man is saved from purposelessness.

What then should one live for? Whatever is full of value and meaning for one. “Every human being is an artist, and the life he lives is a unique work of art.”³

Key passage:
Genesis 1:27

Notes

“Meaning in life is to be found in participating in the divine will”

“The Nihilist finds purpose in life in living to defy the universe”

“Life has meaning only for those who are actively involved with it”

“Man creates value by positing future possibilities which he then works to achieve”

William H. Halverson, *A Concise Introduction to Philosophy*. Copyright © 1976 Random House, Inc. Pages 421, 434, 442.

¹ Halverson, p. 421.

² Halverson, p. 434.

³ Halverson, p. 442.

by Sharon Thomas

Key passage:
I Kings 19:9b-13a

Notes

Always caught up in my studies, at times there hasn't seemed to be another purpose in life than to succeed scholastically and eventually occupationally. So what brought me to this religious weekend retreat, I didn't know. How would I get my studying done for Monday? And now it was the quiet meditation hour, and I found myself sitting against a tree and listening to a rippling stream close by. I was to spend this whole hour with God. I had gotten A's in religion classes, but that didn't fill the emptiness within me—for I didn't know God.

Uneasily I fumbled with my Bible and opened it to Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The words startled me as I began to comprehend their reality. Parts of *The Great Controversy* swept across my mind and I was hit with the fact that I had been ignoring true reality. I realized that I had been busy building a phony, man-made world, where the meaning of my existence was self-exaltation. I trembled and in quietness I opened myself up to God—my Creator.

Throughout that hour, God's Spirit worked with me, helping me to understand my divine origin, my purpose for being born into this world and my heavenly destiny. My eyes were opened to view the meaning behind my human existence.

In what seemed like just a few moments, I left that place of quiet meditation with reverence, tears and joy. The entire world seemed re-created, for I was seeing it through newly opened eyes.

In the hustle of getting schoolwork done, in the "busy-ness" of an occupation, in dealing with the all-consuming "cares of this world," surely you too have wondered about the meaning of it all. When such times come and it seems as if you have lost your perspective on life, why not try the following:

1. Take time to be with God. Only by spending time with Him will you be able to gain the perspective needed to view your existence and understand life relative to its true meaning. Spend time with God daily, for otherwise it is too easy to get caught up in your own make-believe world where God plays no role. Meditate on His Word, the Bible, and talk to Him. Try to find time in the morning for this—at least an hour. And don't be afraid to call on Him throughout the day. God created this world, and He will help you find the meaning behind it.

2. Live according to the revelation God has given you. That is, once God reveals to you the meaning of human existence, act accordingly. You need not worry about things that most people worry about because you have a different outlook on life. You may be at peace when the world is at war. You may know happiness when the world is mourning. You may have confidence when the world is going down. God's revelation of the meaning behind life makes all the difference.

by John B. Rapp

In his *Confession*, Leo Tolstoy wrote concerning the hopelessness he felt before his conversion: "There was a period in my life when everything seemed to be crumbling, the very foundations of my convictions were beginning to give way, and I felt myself going to pieces. There was no sustaining influence in my life and there was no God there, and so every night before I went to sleep, I made sure that there was no rope in my room lest I be tempted during the night to hang myself from the rafters of my room."¹

When we are devoid of hope, we are most susceptible to emotional illness. The emotionally disturbed usually, above all other characteristics, have no hope of anything being better in their lives or in the world than they are at that time. This absence of hope is often closely associated with psychological and emotional problems because uncertainty and hopelessness about the future impairs one's ability to adjust and to be effective. Hopelessness quickly turns into a type of disease, stifling us from becoming all that God intends.

Sensing that there is nothing in which to hope, a "good ol' days" attitude may control one's mind, convincing him that the more he lives the worse life gets—the best has surely passed. Father Time is seen in an executioner's garb, chopping life off when there is always much more to be done. When that which is before us seems bleak and futile, we tend to live in the past.

But Christianity never lives in the past. Sure, biblical history is important because it is the rational base on which hope is built. The concrete facts of history anchor and strengthen our hope (see Romans 15:4): But a major emphasis in Christian teaching is the hope that the full manifestation of the kingdom is yet to be. Total reality is not mirrored in the past or in the present, but in the future. Thus, the Christian's hope for the future is the basis for him understanding his identity and the meaning behind his existence, and such has a profound effect upon his priorities and outlook on life. The Christian's hope is a powerful guide giving him purpose and direction in his daily activities.

A theology of hope is easily extracted from the thinking of New Testament writers. All throughout the New Testament, hope is central in the actualization of human potential and a key factor in motivating to action (see Col. 1:4, 5; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Acts 24:14, 15).

And today, among those who work with hurting people, there is a new awareness of the power of hope to bring meaning and purpose to one's life. For instance, there is a futuristic psychological movement developing which simply offers people *hope* in an attempt to heal broken lives.

So what does Adventism have to uniquely offer in this quest for hope? Our theology of the great controversy, which is unique to most all of Christendom, can indeed be a fostering agent for this hope among mankind. With our insight into the often frightening political and social events of the world, as well as our insight into human suffering, we can promote hope, and thereby meaning, by carrying to the world the message that God is sovereign of the universe and that in the end justice will prevail. Adventists can indeed be pillars of hope, pointing toward the future where meaning is ultimately found.

Tolstoy lived a useful, meaningful life, incarnating the gospel, because his was a life of hope. Certainly, as Adventists, ours can be too!

Key passage:
I Cor. 15:51-54

Notes

"Hopelessness stifles us from becoming all that God intends"

"The Christian's hope for the future is the basis for him understanding his identity"

"Adventists can be pillars of hope, pointing toward the future where meaning is ultimately found"

¹ Quoted in STRENGTH TO LOVE by Martin Luther King, Jr. Copyright © 1963 by Martin Luther King, Jr. Used by permission of Joan Daves. Page 141.

1. In his closing statement, Arthur Hauck, in the Introduction for this week, said, "On second thought, maybe Bob did win the game. 'Goodbye' is simply a contraction of 'God be with you.'" What does he mean by this statement?
2. Consider the four different philosophies of life presented in the Evidence article for this week. In which of these can you find ideas which you consider to be worthwhile? Or does your philosophy of life align with *only* one of them?
3. The philosophy of Cosmic Purpose contains the idea that "The ultimate source of meaning in life . . . is to be found in participating in the divine will." What does it mean to "participate in the divine will"?
4. Someone has scoffingly said that God's chief business is to provide man with meaning in life. Do you agree? Explain.
5. Write a brief summary of your philosophy of life, speaking to such areas as: 1. Man's place in the universe. 2. The meaning of life. 3. Principles of action (On what basis should one decide what to do?).

Enemies Of The Church

“Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.”

— I John 2:18; NIV



The Burning of the Bones of John the Baptist — Sint Jans

selected by Anne Shirley

Across the Crystal Range the town of Thade lay sleeping. Like Varge she had refused the Mark of Elan and the counsel of his peace. Her houses were walled in stone and roofed in slate, instead of thatch. She dared to hope this double favor might protect her from the fiery fate of Varge. But flying reptiles screamed just ahead of dawn and fire fell everywhere.

The entire city died.

Fear stalked the living cities. Elan won the praise of men. Desperate children sang in terror.

"Where have the little cities gone?

The shadow of the Vollkons passed.

The flaming air denied the truce,

The flying dragons have let loose.

The very soil is poisoned where

The fire once hung in Elan's air."

Terror brought submissiveness. The planet filled with sheep. The armies now met frail replies and thousands every dawn received the chain of fear. Singerians alone refused the glass. Many hastened to the glistening new capital of Ellanor, the City of Man.

Only in the center of the Empire were they safe from Elan's fiery wrath. Everywhere in Ellanor the Prince of Mirrors preached the doctrine of the glass and sang The Hymn of Man.

Dreamer knew it was not safe to stay within the mines. Mass arrest of all Singerians was coming and he had been more vocal than the rest. He knew he had to flee the mines and seek the enclave of the capital.

He knew he had to hurry; his disaffection for the chain and glass would not be tolerated long. So he prepared to leave.

His journey would be a desperate flight up a thousand feet of icy shafts that passed the Vollkons' lairs. Once outside the caves of death the air would be so cold that even brief exposure would be fatal. Seven days through icy crags and narrow ledges would he travel to the Steppes of Varge and Thade whose ashes inspired fear.

"Oh, Singer, prayed the Dreamer,

"May your sacrifice

Protect me from the Vollkon's fire

And shield me from the Empire's ice."

Taken from *The Finale* by Calvin Miller. © 1979 by Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of the USA and used by permission of InterVarsity Press. Pages 66-67.

by editors

Notes

The Bible has quite a lot to say about the evil forces that harass God's people. Throughout its sojourn on earth, the church has had to contend with these forces, and apocalyptic writers tell us that such will be the situation until the Lord comes. But the enemies of the church need not prevail over Christians individually or the church collectively, as God is the refuge for His chosen ones.

One enemy of the church figures prominently in the writings of the authors of Daniel and Revelation. This power, traditionally recognized by the Adventist church as the papacy, is characterized below.

"And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name" (Rev. 13:1; NIV). The first characteristic of those whom the Bible describes as enemies of the church is blasphemy. It may not be so much what people, powers, or institutions say, but what they do that identifies them as blasphemous. Those who fail to live by the Sermon on the Mount, as well as by the Ten Commandments, may find an identity in the beast power.

"He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time" (Daniel 7:25; NIV). In this text, Daniel first emphasizes the blasphemous nature of the beast, but then he discusses three other characteristics of this persecuting power:

1. *Persecuting God's people.* God never identifies with a people or institution that achieves its objectives by pressure, intimidation, or other means of coercion. "In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. . . . To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle."¹

2. *Changing God's laws.* The moral laws of the universe are as immutable and everlasting as the character of their Creator. Thus, the enemies of God and His church are those who attempt to place man-made laws above the law of God. They are those who attempt to place their surmisings, habits, and traditions above the principle of love.

3. *A persecuting power for "a time."* Here is a paradox, difficult to understand, about Christianity: God—the avenger of the oppressed—allows His people to be persecuted for "a time." Rather than physically deliver His people, He allows their harassment. Well might the Christian feel like expressing with Christ, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

But although the religious man might prefer for God to reach down and deliver him out of all of his troubles, the God of the Bible calls man to "plunge into the godless world and share the sufferings of God."²

Though the Christian church faces enemies of a decidedly cruel nature, **"God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. . . . The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress" (Psalm 46:1-3, 7; NIV).**

¹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 77.

² William E. Hordern, *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology*, rev. ed., (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., Inc., 1968), p. 218.

selected by editors

Key passage:
Psalm 22:19, 20

Notes

**In the hour
of utmost
extremity,
God delivers
His people**

When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof.

The people of God—some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and mountains—still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men, urged on by hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death. It is now, in the hour of utmost extremity, that the God of Israel will interpose for the deliverance of His chosen. Saith the Lord: "Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth . . . to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel. And the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones." Isaiah 30:29, 30.

With shouts of triumph, jeering and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God's covenant and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness.

By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, "Look up," and lifting their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise. The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted, and like Stephen they look up steadfastly into heaven and see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne. In His divine form they discern the marks of His humiliation; and from His lips they hear the request presented before His Father and the holy angels: "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am." John 17:24. Again a voice, musical and triumphant, is heard, saying: "They come! they come! holy, harmless, and undefiled. They have kept the word of My patience; they shall walk among the angels;" and the pale, quivering lips of those who have held their faith utter a shout of victory.

It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: "It is done." Revelation 16:17. . . .

"Look up"

"It is done"

Taken from *The Great Controversy*, pp. 635, 636.

by J. J. Blanco

Historically, the Adventist church has feared a time in the future when the Roman papacy would control world societies. And this is certainly a justified fear. But there are other enemies of the church besides the anticipated world domination of the papacy. There are also enemies of the church that come from *within*.

These "enemies from within" usually fall into two categories: *persons* and *subtle changes in values*. Paul warns us of both of these in Acts 20:30 and in Hebrews 2:1. Of these two enemies, the second is much more dangerous than the first because its chemistry is inherent in the very nature and mission of the church.

For example: As a fledging church grows and expands, as it progresses from tin tabernacles to Gothic cathedrals, its spiritual priorities are endangered by the demands of the complex facilities it needs to administer. One non-Adventist professor sees such church growth problems as part of a normal maturation process. He urges mainstream Protestantism to help this process along by an open attitude toward minority churches. This centripetal force operates as follows:¹

First, growing churches find it notoriously difficult to preserve the enthusiasm of their first generation Bible-based movement. Success brings in numbers, and numbers require a complex organization.

Second, the increasingly complex organization is further complicated by the need for specialists and institutions at regional and national levels to provide up-dated training. Furthermore, if these institutions are to receive accreditation their teachers must have acceptable degrees. Hence the reason for the most able and ambitious teachers and ministers attending the large universities or university-related seminaries.

Third, the objectives of these seminaries and institutions cut across denominational frontiers. A Presbyterian finds a comrade in a Pentecostal. A Northern Baptist makes a life-long friend of a Seventh-day Adventist. Subtle transformations of emphases in Christian beliefs and behavior take place. Soon there is less emphasis on the immediacy of the second coming of Christ. The hope is not denied; it is delayed. There is less of an interest in apocalyptic peculiarities and a deeper involvement in citizenship and community affairs. And the simple approach to Scripture is transformed by the growing complexity of an involved life.

The transvaluation of beliefs by subtle changes in priority of emphasis is subliminal in nature and poses the greatest threat to our church and its mission. But we are the church. And the danger of the enemy within our church is within ourselves.

¹ See Horton Davies, *Christian Deviations* (London: SCM Press, 1965), pp. 128-132.

Key passage:
Acts 20:30
Hebrews 2:1

Notes

"Subtle changes in value" are inherent in the very nature and mission of the church

"There is less of an interest in apocalyptic peculiarities and a deeper involvement in citizenship and community affairs"

by Edna Maye Loveless

Key passage:
Revelation 13

Notes

As Seventh-day Adventists, we have pinpointed in apocalyptic writings that organization referred to as "the beast." Yet we have failed many times to condemn those beast-like characteristics that we are guilty of ourselves. But to take a good, hard look at ourselves is important. And it means understanding the inner, unregenerated self.

Thus, to characterize and condemn the beast-like inner self means to understand that:

1. The inner self, unregenerated, plays God. Such selves wouldn't often admit taking a God-like stance; but God has reserved certain functions for Himself. And what is it but blasphemy

. . . when I judge another person?

. . . when I assess blame regarding another's foundering marriage?

. . . when I analyze another's failures and predict final conclusions?

It is impossible to draw simple conclusions, single meanings, from people's private lives. For every event there are multiple sets of motivations. God's reservation of judgment for Himself was done to protect His dear children. Knowing so little of others, we should be skeptical of facts, squeamish about conclusions, thankful for mercy and unwilling to sit on the seat of judgment reserved for God.

2. The inner self, unregenerated, is a persecuting force. Before we lay blame on a Rome-based power, let us examine the persecution we are capable of within the walls of our own church. For instance, we persecute when we are intolerant of people who fall short of our ideas of Christian practice. What persecution has been suffered by such comments as:

"They are so hung up on a fat-free diet. Why can't they be normal?"

"His definition of justification is all wet. We can't have him teaching a Sabbath School class."

"I can't stand to hear him preach."

Paul reminds Christians that those who are weak must be accepted without attempts to settle doubtful points (Romans 14:1; 15:1). He was concerned that persecution of a religious nature was occurring right inside the church.

3. The inner self, unregenerated, transfers power from God to other powers. A lamb-like country, as America, may become a dragon. This is our classical interpretation of Revelation 13. But a lamb-like Christian may also become a dragon by relinquishing power and authority which belongs to God, to someone else. How is this done?

By allowing another person or organization to be my interpreter of the Scriptures?

By letting the need to "get ahead" in school or on the job supersede my commitment to God?

By riding roughshod over others in pursuit of a goal?

The problem with the dragon is that while we're making the self into its image, we don't recognize it as the dragon. But when we transfer authority and power to persons or things other than God, we have admitted the dragon into our lives.

Indeed, if we are acquainted with the self-righteous Pharisees who spent their time condemning the pagan Romans, then we should guard against becoming the self-righteous contemporary Christians who condemn a beast-like power eloquently without examining the tendency of the self to imitate it.

by Stephen Hiten

Key passage:
Psalm 46

Notes

Though the faithful followers of Jesus have often suffered persecution through the ages, it is apparent that the loyal Christian in the closing days of earth's history will be a special object of Satan's wrath and is destined to endure heretofore unimagined trials.

Natural human reaction to such anticipated cruelty is fear and/or flight. Why should one submit oneself to physical pain, abuse and mental torture merely because of a certain religious belief or the observance of a day? Like a brave soldier of Jesus Christ he is willing to fight, even to the death, in the mortal conflict between good and evil.

But even the bravest soldier of the cross needs a place of refuge from the raging storm of Satan's hatred where his heart can find repose. Thus in that hour God promises, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" and "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Isaiah 26:3; Psalm 46:1). These precious words will sustain the faithful, persecuted child of God during earth's culminating hour of trial.

God's provision of a refuge in the days ahead is beautifully typified in ancient Israel's dedication of six cities of refuge (Numbers 35:10-29). The cities of refuge were provided as places of escape for one who had inadvertently slain a person and was being pursued by a near-relative avenger bent on killing him, which was an accepted method of execution at the time. These cities were so distributed as to be reasonably close to any part of the country, and the roads leading to them were to be kept in good repair with clear signposts so that a fleeing refugee would not needlessly be impeded in his flight.

At the gate of the city, the fleeing fugitive was required to state his case to the elders, and if his was determined to be a case of unintentional manslaughter, he was taken in and protected from the avenger. In due course he was tried and, if found to be innocent of murder, was allowed to live in that city and was protected as long as he remained in the city or until the death of the incumbent high priest.

From this Old Testament illustration, a number of lessons can be drawn concerning a place of refuge for God's people in the last days:

1. The refugee was in grave danger and could make absolutely no delay in running to a city of refuge. Likewise, the sinner is exposed to eternal death until he finds a hiding place in Christ. He dare not wait until the time of trouble breaks to be safe in Christ. Now is the accepted time.

2. Just as the fugitive was safe only as he remained in the city of refuge, even so it is not enough that the sinner believe in Christ for the pardon of sin; he must, by faith and obedience, abide in Him.

3. The death of the incumbent high priest finally set the refugee completely at liberty to return to his normal life. In the same way it is only by the death and resurrection of Jesus, our High Priest, and the atonement He makes for sinners, that Christians are able to be liberated in soul. When the Christian accepts by faith Christ's atonement for him personally, he will be able to say with Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:35, 37).

REACT

1. J. J. Blanco, in the Evidence article for this week, states, "The transvaluation of beliefs by subtle changes in priority of emphasis is subliminal in nature and poses the greatest threat to our church and its mission." Do you agree? How do you differentiate between a growth in understanding with an accompanying shift of emphasis, and a "transvaluation of beliefs"?
2. A look at church history reveals that the Christian church is usually its own greatest foe. How do you explain this?

Do you feel that the Adventist church is its own greatest foe? Explain.

3. Discuss in specific terms what it means for the Christian to make God his refuge.
4. Do you see any religious group (Christian or non-Christian) as *presently* being an enemy of the Adventist church? Why?
5. Below, list those things, people or organizations that are enemies of the Christian church in general, and then those that are enemies of the Adventist church specifically.

Enemies of the Christian church

Enemies of the Adventist church

Discuss your findings.



St. Paul in Prison — Rembrandt

"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

— Ephesians 6:13; NIV

Our Spiritual Resources

by Jenine Fryling

Twenty-seven male voices swell the sound of the familiar text, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God . . . wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (see Eph. 6:10-17).

As the accompanist for the male chorus, I have heard these words in rehearsal and performance many times. In a rhythmic, spoken setting, against a piano background of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," the words powerfully describe the Christian's armor—or war pack—for fighting the foe.

Though we Christians may at times have felt alone in our battles against the devil and his workings, these spiritual weapons described in Ephesians 6, along with the dense foliage of God's protection and the "army rations" of His Word, supply more than what is necessary for a victorious outcome at the end of the battle.

Our camouflage fatigues consist of Jesus' robe of righteousness, another asset for us because no matter where we crouch in the thick jungle, we are safe. Our attire is doing for us what we could never do for ourselves. And the heavy army boots of Jesus' peace give us psychological protection from despair and anxiety.

In our pack we carry other necessities such as faith and the Holy Spirit, resources that are continually available to us if we will only reach for them.

The parachute of salvation is an item that has performed its duty already. We are grateful for what it has done for us and we accept that fact, not stopping to wonder if this billowing object actually did bring us down safely.

Not only our food rations, but our ammunition as well comes from the Word of God. As Jesus had an "It is written" to fire at every temptation, so we too may claim the far-reaching promises of God.

And let us constantly remember that he who has walked this trail before us is always beside us in the Person of His Holy Spirit, if we are only willing to allow Him room on the path. But even when we shove Him into the undergrowth He stays nearby, offering to us the correct directions we need to take.

Indeed, our battle is great, but our weapons and resources are even greater. For "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31b).

by editors

Notes

In our lesson last week we discussed some of the enemies that face the Christian and the church. This week we are studying the resources available to the Christian for successful spiritual combat.

“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). These precious words of Jesus supply the foundation for Christian living, and thus, Christian warfare. For, **“If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31b).** The first lesson which the Christian must learn in fighting spiritual battles is that his only hope is in Christ. **“Without me,”** said Jesus, **“ye can do nothing.”** **“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me” (John 15:5b, 4).** In every circumstance the Christian may repeat with Paul, **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).**

Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, discusses the Christian’s armor in which he is to “stand against the wiles of the devil.” **“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints” (Eph. 6:14-18: NIV).** As Paul wrote above, the Christian finds strength to do spiritual battle in righteousness—both imputed (God’s work for us) and imparted (God’s work in us)—in the word of God and in prayer, among other things.

But not only does the Christian find strength individually, but collectively as well. The writer of the book of Hebrews calls this to our attention when he says, **“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25; NIV).** When under heavy pressure, we need the encouragement of fellow-travelers on the King’s highway. We are not in this world alone. We need our God and we need each other.

Yet, aside from the strength we find in God and in human fellowship, the Lord promises to send us, at times, physical protection from our enemies. **“If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the Lord, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”**

The Psalmist continues: **“Because he loves me,”** says the Lord, **“I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation” (Psalm 91:9-16; NIV).**

And the prophet Isaiah adds, **“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep you over, when you walk through the fire, you will not be burned. . . . For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. . . . Do not be afraid, for I am with you” (Isaiah 1:2, 5; NIV).**

This Logos article has been condensed and rewritten from the week of May 31-June 6 from the adult Sabbath School lesson.

by Johnny Lazor

How shall we be victorious in the present spiritual conflict? "We have little idea of the strength that would be ours if we would connect with the source of all strength."¹

"God is able and willing 'more abundantly' to bestow upon His servants the strength they need for test and trial. . . .

"For the disheartened there is a sure remedy—faith, prayer, work. In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, fear not. Have faith in God. He knows your need. He has all power. His infinite love and compassion never weary. Fear not that He will fail of fulfilling His promise. He is eternal truth. Never will He change the covenant He has made with those who love Him. And He will bestow upon His faithful servants the measure of efficiency that their need demands. The apostle Paul has testified: 'He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. . . . Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distress for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong.'" 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10."²

For remember, "our hope is not in man, but in the living God. With full assurances of faith we may expect that He will unite His omnipotence with the efforts of human instrumentalities, for the glory of His name. Clad with the armor of His righteousness, we may gain the victory over every foe."³

"God has provided abundant means for successful warfare against the evil that is in the world. The Bible is the armory where we may equip for the struggle. Our loins must be girt about with the truth. Our breastplate must be righteousness. The shield of faith must be in our hand, the helmet of salvation on our brow; and with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, we are to cut our way through the obstructions and entanglements."⁴

Ellen White goes on to name some of the resources used by the Corinthian believers which are still available to us today: "With faith in God as their armor, and with His word as their weapon of warfare, they would be supplied with an inner power that would enable them to turn aside the attacks of the enemy."⁵

"We have before us a warfare—a lifelong conflict with Satan and his seductive temptations. The enemy will use every argument, every deception, to entangle the soul; and in order to win the crown of life, we must put forth earnest, persevering effort. We must not lay off the armor or leave the battlefield until we have gained the victory, and can triumph in our Redeemer. As long as we continue to keep our eyes fixed upon the Author and Finisher of our faith, we shall be safe."⁶

Key passage:
Ephesians 6:11

Notes

"In the darkest days, fear not"

"Our hope is not in man, but in the living God"

"As long as we keep our eyes fixed upon the Author and Finisher of our faith . . ."

¹ *Messages to Young People*, p. 105.

² *Prophets and Kings*. pp. 164, 165.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁴ *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 502.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

⁶ *Messages to Young People*, p. 104.

by Thomas a' Kempis

Editor's Note: Christians have not been left to face the enemy alone. There are at their disposal ample provisions for successful spiritual combat. Thomas a' Kempis was one who clearly understood the necessity for man to depend totally upon God when fighting spiritual battles. Consider his work below.

CHRIST. My son, I am the Lord, who gives strength in time of trouble. Come to me when the struggle goes hard with you. Your slowness in turning to prayer is the greatest obstacle to receiving My heavenly comfort. For, when you should earnestly seek Me, you first turn to many other comforts, and hope to restore yourself by worldly means. It is only when all these things have failed that you remember that I am the Saviour of all who put their trust in Me; and that, apart from Me, there can be no effective help, no sound counsel, and no lasting remedy. But now, with spirit renewed after the tempest, gather fresh strength and light in My mercies. For I am near, and will restore all things, not only completely, but generously and in full measure.

Is anything too hard for Me? Shall I be like one who does not fulfil his promise? Where is your faith? Stand firm, and persevere. Be courageous and patient, and help will come to you in due time. Wait patiently for Me, and I Myself will come and heal you. Temptation is your testing—there is no cause for alarm or fear. Sorrow upon sorrow can be the only result if you worry about the future. Sufficient to the day is the evil in it. It is quite vain and useless to be either anxious or pleased about the future, for what you anticipate may never happen.

The mind of man is prone to delusions, but to be deceived by the suggestions of the Devil is a sign of spiritual weakness. Satan does not care whether it be by truth or falsehood that he mocks and deceives you; or whether he obtains your downfall through love of the present or fear of the future. Therefore, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Trust in Me, and put your whole confidence in My mercy. When you think I am far away, then often I am nearest to you. And when you think the battle almost lost, then the reward of all your toil is often near. All is not lost when anything turns out contrary to your plans. Therefore do not allow your feelings of the moment to obscure your judgment, nor yield to depression as though all hope of recovery were lost.

Do not imagine yourself utterly forsaken if for a while I have allowed some trial to harass you, or withdrawn the comfort that you desire; for this is the way to the Kingdom of Heaven. Be assured that it is better for you, and for all My servants, to struggle against difficulties than to have everything as you wish. I know your secret thoughts, and it is necessary for your salvation that you should sometimes be deprived of spiritual joys, lest you become conceited in your happy state, and complacently imagine yourself better than you are. What I have granted, I can take away, and restore it when I choose.

When I grant comfort, it remains Mine; and when I withdraw it, I am not taking anything that is yours, for every good gift and every perfect gift is Mine alone. If I send you trouble and affliction, do not be indignant or downhearted; for I can swiftly help you, and turn all your sorrow into joy. Notwithstanding, I keep My own counsel, and in all My dealings with you, give Me due praise.

Key passage:
Matthew 7:7-11

Notes

"Your slowness in turning to prayer is the greatest obstacle to receiving My heavenly comfort"

"When you think I am far away, then often I am nearest to you"

From Thomas a' Kempis: THE IMITATION OF CHRIST, trans. by Leo Sherley-Price (Penguin Classics, 1952). Copyright © Leo Sherley-Price, 1952. Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd. Pages 133-135.

by J. Bruce Ashton

Key passage:
John 20:24, 25

Notes

As Christians, one of our most significant spiritual resources is the right and responsibility to test the authenticity of every provision promised to us—to try things out for ourselves. When I put up a couple of swings for my kids, I was concerned with safety. Of course I chose new rope of sufficient diameter, beams that were hefty enough to take the stress and seat boards with neither cracks nor splinters. Anyone could have made good swings from those materials; but only one person could convince me of their safety. I was the first to sit (gingerly!) on them, bounce a little, stand up, then finally swing vigorously.

Spiritually, we too want to be safe, sure of our support. We should remember then, “there is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others.”¹

Below I have listed four resources available to the Christian in fighting spiritual battles. Consider each of these, and the personal applications you may make to “test their authenticity.”

1. The presence of God as a resource. First, ask for God’s presence as He has promised it (see Hebrews 13:5; Exodus 33:14). Then, the next time you approach a stop sign, tempted to be “in too big a hurry” to stop your wheels, ask the Present Lawgiver whether your hurry really justifies spurning human regulations. Or when you see that person no one gets along with walking to chapel alone, ask the Everpresent Friend if He would like to walk with him, and may you come too?

2. The Word of God as a resource. First, investigate what study of and conformity to the law is meant to do for you (see Psalm 119: 45, 52, 93, 98-100, 130, 165, and others). Then, when needing reassurances or deeper insights for your own understanding of righteousness by faith, for instance, take a familiar story from the Word (such as the Prodigal Son) and analyze what it really says theologically. Or, wanting incentive to get involved in rest home visitation, look up Isaiah 61 and remember, “His experience is to be ours.”²

3. The church as a resource. First, read again Paul’s description of the interrelationships of Christ’s “body” (Romans 12:4-8, I Cor. 12; esp. 12-27). Then, ignoring *just for the moment* your “outreach” activities, review how *your church* has been benefited by your membership, your fellowship, your spiritual gifts, in the last 30 days. Remember, your greatest help here is your giving.

But most of us would rather give than accept—so practice accepting. Ask your roommate a question that has stumped you, and really listen to his answer. Have him back it up with Scripture. Pursue your study until you find a specific application for yourself. Friendships developed along such spiritual lines are far and away the most rewarding.

4. God’s desire to see you perfected as a resource. First, notice the element of cooperation in our salvation (read John 15:1-8). Then, remembering God’s concern for the eternal safety of His own, meet your next perplexity or trial as one He has allowed for your testing. Express your need into a single word. Look up that word in a concordance and receive the promised victory with gratitude.

¹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 348.

² *Ibid.*, p. 363 (read the whole context of this statement).

by Edwin Zackrisson

Key passage:
Romans 5:1

Notes

This week we have learned that the Lord has not left us to face the enemy alone; there are at our disposal ample provisions for successful spiritual combat. But what about those times when God does not seem to help—and you fall into sin? What about those times when even the “spiritual resources” can’t keep your world from falling apart, and when spiritual peace turns to turbulence and guilt seems your master? What is the Christian’s hope then?

A young friend of mine once asked whether God forgives deliberate sin as well as unintentional mistakes. She said, “I think God loves me when I am good, but sometimes I do wrong and I know it is wrong, but I do it anyway. Then I feel terrible—like I’ve let God down. Don’t I have to get good again before I can get back my assurance of His acceptance?”

She was right in recognizing that a Christian should not *want* to sin. But she *did* sin—that was her perplexity. So to solve the problem of the alienation she felt, she hoped to “do better” or to rectify her missing the mark by working it off.

John wrote: “Whoever is a child of God does not continue to sin, because God’s very nature is in him, and because God is his Father, he is not able to continue to sin” (1 John 3:9; TEV). I call this a “law” text. The law tells me the way it is or the way it should be. But my experience shows that the law is almost always describing something different from the way I am.

Paradoxically, the same John began the same letter with a “gospel” text: “My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the expiation (satisfaction of the law) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1, 2; RSV).

The law texts tell me *what I should be*, the gospel texts tell me *what I am in Christ*.

Often our peace of mind evaporates because we misunderstand that feeling is not the ultimate indicator of our relationship with God. If it were we would only perceive that He loves us when we *felt* good. But rather, peace of mind is a product of trusting that Christ has made “peace *with* God” for us (Romans 5:1; RSV).

Young Christians, in their estranged feelings, often act as though *they* must make peace with God—“I must get good so He will love me better.” But the Gospel message is that Christ *made* peace with God *for* us. And as a result there is now “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1; RSV).

To experience merely the fleeting feelings of emotional religion will never keep a person in the church nor will it satisfy the deeper longings of his heart. A real relationship with God is rooted in the truth that reconciliation was made for all of us, apart from us—“also for the sins of the *whole* world” —on Calvary.

There will be times when we do not *feel* the “peace of God,” i.e., peace of mind (Philippians 4:7; RSV) because as human beings our feelings fluctuate. So we must base our assurance on being at peace *with* God. The fact that we feel low at times cannot undo the expiatory work of Christ, nor can it dissolve our adoption as sons and daughters of God in Him.

“Feeling is not the ultimate indicator of our relationship with God”

by Peter E. Gillquist

Notes

Editor's Note: When discussing spiritual resources and spiritual battles, it is important to have a proper perspective on victory. Too many times, a perfect standard of victorious living is discussed without regard to reality. Peter Gillquist attempts to bring things into perspective in this supplementary article.

Now and again, we must reread those passages of Scripture we *didn't* underline—the truths we did not like, the passages that threaten certain of our theological schemes. Particularly, we need to take a second look at what Scripture says about "Christian victory."

It is not enough to hear or read only verses about the abundant life. We need also biblical teaching when we are not only Spirit-filled, but physically tired. While the joy of the Lord is mine by his grace, I find serving him very trying, very difficult. The wind is seldom to my back. Often I feel burned out. The "other side of Jordan," with all its rewards and undeserved blessings, is simply not what I was promised it would be.

"While the joy of the Lord is mine by his grace, I find serving him very trying, very difficult"

Too often our message of "victory in Jesus" is like the half-time highlights on ABC's Monday night football. The network replays only the touchdowns and the long gainers. Rarely do we see the plays that lost yardage, the broken patterns, dropped passes, or injuries. In like manner, are not we evangelicals sometimes guilty of reporting primarily our spiritual highs, implying that they are the norm, and that the spiritual lows just don't occur?

The "victorious Christian life" gospel is at best only half true. Don't misunderstand: I don't believe for a moment that being in union with Christ in his church is misery. But it's patently not all victory. To gain victory, you must have battles, some of which will end in defeat. And whoever heard of winning battles without casualties. Even "winning-isn't-everything-it's-the-only-thing" football coaches don't believe that!

"The 'victorious Christian life' gospel is at best only half true"

Charles Swindoll writes, "Somebody needs to address the other side of the Christian life. If for no other reason than upholding reality, Christians need to be told that difficulty and pressure are par for the course. And no amount of biblical input or deeper-life conferences or super-victory seminars will remove the struggles."

If we expect a trouble-free walk with Jesus Christ, we will not be prepared to handle the inevitable trials and failures that will confront us. Was it not our Lord himself who promised, "In the world you shall have tribulation" (John 16:33)? Fortunately, he went on to say, "but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." The Christian life is victory only in the midst of warfare.

Think about the "Promised Land" messages you have heard. Remember how bad they said the wilderness was? (All Israel had there were meals provided, cloud cover by day, fire light by night, and a God who, even in the midst of their rebellion, was "a father to them.") And how marvelous everything would be once we crossed the river? "Everything will be all right, Brother. Right now you can experience the glory of the other side." Somehow I never saw the price of the glory!

Consider just a small sampling of the problems Israel encountered after crossing the Jordan: the battle of Jericho; defeat at Ai; Achan in the camp; the capture of Gibeon; the burning of Hazor; the burdensome task of apportioning the land; the death of Joshua; Israel's turn to Baal; Gideon's tiny band; more national apostasy; oppression of Israel

by Amnon and later by the Philistines. All of this before the Book of Judges ends! Then comes the tumultuous kingdom era and 70 years of Babylonian captivity. And this is all sweet victory?

There is no victory without conflict!

I once worked for a Christian leader who boldly proclaimed, "I have no problems." He was part of the Jesus-will-do-all-through-you crowd. But in spite of his optimism, he has lost three layers of his top leadership in 10 years. Such an unreal view of life brought about enormous internal conflict in the lives of his associates.

God help us all to resist being regular-sized Christians who make giant-sized claims. Spiritual life on this earth simply is not Eden extended. As British evangelist Michael Harper writes, "We should not make the mistake of thinking that giving oneself to Jesus means moving the gear level into neutral and coasting downhill, folding our hands and letting the Lord live His life through us. That is an irresponsible cop-out."

Countless evangelicals are buying a "victorious life" theology that tends to promise that once a person is filled with the Spirit, problems are eliminated or at least greatly reduced. Some charismatics are currently facing a sort of "name it and claim it" approach, often accompanied by promises of prosperity for all. But when we allow the Book of Acts to speak to this matter of life in the Spirit, we get a far different picture. In addition to the ecstasy of the post-Pentecost miracles, we also find that Peter and John are arrested; Ananias and Sapphira fall over dead; Peter and the apostles are jailed; Stephen is murdered, followed by massive persecution of the church; Simon the sorcerer causes great trouble; the Jews plot to kill Paul; Herod kills James; Paul is stoned; Paul and Silas are arrested at Philippi; riots start in Ephesus; Paul is mobbed and imprisoned in Jerusalem; and a great storm at sea shipwrecks him at Malta. It is in the midst of these troubles and defeats that the church is called to victory. . . .

Christian victory is not being "Overcomers, Retired." The battles go on. Here are three areas for needed victory:

1. Let us encourage our churches to substitute salt and light for some of the sugar and spice. We need to begin again to know the sort of victory and blessing and humdrum hard work that comes from serving the poor, the widowed, the infirm, the lonely. Jesus Christ often ministered to the people nobody else wanted.

2. Though people won't like us for it, we can draw our lines where the Scriptures do. We can confront and care for those Christians toying with divorce, greed, gossip, sloppy or unethical practice in business, and immorality. We must be aggressive in righteousness.

3. Let us make our spiritual accounts accurate, testifying to God's faithfulness in failure, not just in success. In testifying to our conversion to Jesus Christ, we must not make the B.C. days worse than they really were, or our A.D. days better. If we have occasion to write of our ministry or of that of our church or organization, we need to tell both of those saved and of those who leave the faith—and why. We must report as well about those for whom prayer was offered and who were not healed. . . .

"Spiritual Warfare: Bearing the Bruises of Battle" by Peter Gillquist. *Christianity Today*, August 8, 1980. Copyright © by Christianity Today 1980. Used by permission. Pages 24, 25.

"There is no victory without conflict!"

"Christian victory is not being 'Overcomers, Retired.' The battles go on."

REACT

1. The Logos article for this week states, "The Lord promises to send us, at times, physical protection from our enemies." Why "at times"? Why not "always"?

2. Edwin Zackrisson, in the Opinion article for this week, speaks of peace with God as being the Christian's foundation spiritual resource. Explain how this is.

3. What spiritual resources are available to one who has never had the opportunity to hear of the Bible or of Christianity?

4. "I have been fighting with a problem in my life for years—and have not yet found the strength to overcome. Day after day I have sincerely asked the Lord for victory, but I am still chained to this bad habit. Am I 'lost'? What can I do?"

5. List three things one may do to avail himself of the Christian's spiritual resources.
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

6. Why is it that some seem to be able to avail themselves of spiritual power more easily than others? Does one's environment and/or psychological make-up play any significant role here? Or is the only consideration a spiritual one? Explain the implications of your answer.

7. Regarding Peter Gillquist's "Spiritual Warfare: Bearing The Bruises Of Battle":
Should the "successful" Christian life have built into it a certain expectation of failure?

Someone has said, "May the Lord grant us victory over the belief that we always have to be victorious!" Do you agree with this idea?



The Damned Cast Into Hell — Signorelli

“So listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong. He repays a man for what he has done; he brings upon him what his conduct deserves. It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice.”

— Job 34:10-12; NIV

Divine Justice

by Sandra Schiau

justice (jus'-tis), n: equity; the action, practice, or obligation of awarding each his just due.

"Therefore, hear me, you men of understanding,
far be it from God that He should do wickedness,
and from the Almighty that he should do wrong.
For according to the work of a man he will requite him,
and according to his ways he will make it befall him.
Of a truth, God will not do wickedly,
and the Almighty will not pervert justice."
(Job 34:10-13; RSV)

"The Singer felt the agony of dying, the multiplied pain of a hundred thousand men all dying at one time.

"With an agility of delight the Hater danced his way around the armature and strutted on the ropes. He looked into the fog again and shouted, 'Your move, Earthmaker!'

" 'I have you crying, Earthmaker. You can never glory in your universal riches, for I have made you poor. And there is none to pity you. Everyone you made has retired to eat and drink away their absurd holiday, and when they wake up in the morning their great machine will have done its work. You lie at man's caprice and wait for him to break your heart. . . . Earthmaker is crying at the mercy of his earth.'

" 'Look how he dies. Cry, Creator, Cry! This is my day to stand upon the breast of God and claim my victory over love. You lost the gamble. In but an hour your lover will be pulp upon the gallows. Did you tell him when his fingers formed the world, that he would die on Terra, groaning with his hands crushed and whimpering in my great machine?' "

"He, the Sin Bearer, endures the wrath of *divine justice*. . . ." ²

¹ Taken from *The Singer* by Calvin Miller. © 1975 by Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of the USA and used by permission of InterVarsity Press. Pages 124-125.

² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 755 (emphasis supplied).

by editors

Notes

During the Middle Ages, theologians developed the doctrine of "everburning embers" as the ultimate fate of the wicked. This twisted version of divine justice has made more skeptics, atheists and infidels than any other Christian teaching. It is to Satan's advantage to thus misrepresent the character of God. But only divine love could have tolerated sin in an orderly universe. We must therefore view the eradication of evil as essential to the good of all creation. In love, the God of heaven will put an end to it all.

Because man lives in a moral universe and every soul has been given the freedom to think and to follow his own convictions, **"every one of us shall give account of Himself to God" (Romans 14:12)**. Those who can plead the righteousness of Jesus in their behalf will not enter into the condemnation of God. But to those who have lived unholy lives and to those who have trusted in their own holiness for salvation, the damnation of God is delivered. **"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evil doer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,"** says the Lord God Almighty. **"Not a root or branch will be left to them" (Malachi 4:1; NIV; see also John 15:5, 6).**

God's work of destruction is appropriately phrased **"his strange work—his task, his alien task" (Isaiah 28:21; NIV)**. Some, in seeking to reconcile this view of God's justice with Calvary's view of His love, have taught that in the end, sinners self-destruct in the intensity of divine radiance. Others see the judgment fires of God as being issued directly and purposefully from the throne of God to deserving sinners. But whatever view one holds regarding the justice and judgments of God, we do know that this is a "strange," "alien," heart-rending act for the Creator.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God's mercy is the foundation of His every act, including judgment. This is evident in many of the parables of Christ and teachings throughout the New Testament, but especially in the story of the prodigal son. In this situation, justice demanded at least a stern rebuke, disfellowship from the family, and that the son be given a position among the hired servants. But **"while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son and threw his arms around him and kissed him.**

"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found'" (Luke 15:20-24; NIV).

And today, justice would demand that the Lord return and give to every man his just deserts. But **"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9)**. Hence, the divine invitation, **"Come now, let us reason together,"** says the Lord. **"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).**

by Ronald Pickell

Key passage:
 Psalm 85:106

Notes

In her books *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *The Great Controversy*, Ellen White makes it clear that the major issue in the controversy with evil has been God's justice. In these books she devotes whole chapters to study the topic of the origin on sin and God's reaction to it (chapters 1, 79, and 27, respectively).

In *The Great Controversy* she writes, "He [Satan] had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government before the angels, claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of heaven; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself."¹

Therefore, whatever God did to bring an end to the sin problem, it was necessary for Him to prove the justice of His ways. At the same time, it was important for Him to take a stand against sin to secure His law. Ellen White comments that God's plan therefore, has been to allow Satan the opportunity to reveal his principles. "For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the given government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might forever be placed beyond all question."²

But while establishing the justice of His law and operations, God was also concerned that His mercy be made evident. "In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner."³

How then, could Satan's charges be met? How *could* God be both just and merciful? How could He take a stand against sin and yet express His love to sinners? For "Justice demands that sin be not merely pardoned, but the death penalty must be executed." But "God in the gift of His only-begotten son, met both of these requirements. By dying in man's stead, Christ exhausted the penalty and provided a pardon."⁴

". . . the death of Christ was an argument in man's behalf that could not be overthrown. The penalty of the law fell upon Him who was equal with God, and man was free to accept the righteousness of Christ, and by a life of penitence and humiliation to triumph, as the Son of God had triumphed, over the power of Satan. Thus God is just and yet the justifier of all who believe in Jesus."⁵

"By dying in man's stead, Christ exhausted the penalty and provided a pardon"

¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 498.

² *Ibid.*, p. 499.

³ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 761.

⁴ *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1099.

⁵ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 502, 503.

by Walter Kaufmann

Editor's Note: At times it is beneficial to study the thinking of non-religious authors regarding certain traditionally religious beliefs. Such is your opportunity below. Thoughtfully consider what Mr. Kaufmann is saying and then challenge his ideas with your own thoughts on the subject.

The decidophobe loves retributive justice because she tells him precisely what is to be done: wrongdoing must be punished, and there is one penalty that is just and therefore mandatory. But I say

1. *Punishments can never be just.*
2. *Even if a punishment could be proportionate, it would not follow that it ought to be imposed.*
3. *The preoccupation with retributive justice is inhumane.*

The first thesis means that a punishment can never be deserved or wholly proportionate. If the nine-year-old child sentenced to death in 1832 for smashing a window and stealing two-pence worth of paint had actually done these things, and if the penalty conformed with precedent and custom, that would not entail that the punishment was deserved and just. The same goes for a man broken on the wheel for stealing a piece of cheese.

Jefferson plainly felt that at least some of the punishments provided in existing penal codes were unjust; but he believed in the possibility of "proportioning crimes and punishments." To be just, a punishment must satisfy three conditions: the accusation must be proved; the punishment must accord with precedent and custom; and the punishment must be proportioned to the crime. . . .

The first two conditions concern particular instances of punishment. The third condition, proportionality, concerns the penal law and is far more interesting. The crucial point is that the admission that some punishments are cruel and unusual does not commit one to the view that for every crime—or even any crime—there is a proportionate and hence deserved and just penalty. Indeed, it seems very plain that for some crimes there is not. . . .

To begin with crimes for which there is clearly no proportionate punishment: how could one possibly establish what a man deserves for seducing a child, for raping a child, or for arson or treason? The question of how one should deal with such crimes calls for excruciating decisions. . . .

When Adolf Eichmann was kidnapped to stand trial, a truthful verdict was possible, a just punishment was not. Still, a punishment can be more or less inappropriate. Thinking in terms of degrees like this is anathema to the Manichaeon, who likes to insist that a punishment is either just or unjust. He dreads being confused by multiple choices. Putting a child to death for stealing two-pence worth of paint may be crueler than cutting off its right arm, and perhaps giving it two hundred lashes is not quite as outrageous as maiming it, but it is hardly just. Fining the child a shilling and then getting it a job at which it can earn that much might make more sense. But is that what the child deserves, or might one find a preferable penalty?

The child was accused of a petty crime. Now consider Eichmann. Visiting on Hitler's leading henchmen at least some of the tortures to which they had subjected millions of people, and all but putting to death these mass murderers again and again would have been more proportionate to their crimes than hanging them. But the punishment that is more proportionate and more nearly deserved is not necessarily

Key passage:
Revelation 14:9-1

Notes

"How could one possibly establish what a man deserves for seducing a child?"

preferable even on purely moral grounds. That is the point of my second thesis.

This thesis cannot be proved. The best way to back it up is to consider concrete cases, like those of Eichmann, or better yet, Hitler and Himmler, Stalin and Beria, and to ask whether the more nearly proportionate punishment for their systematic mass tortures and mass murders would necessarily be preferable. Those whose moral sense was formed by the doctrine of hell may say yes. Nevertheless, some intuitive grasp of my thesis is almost as old as criminal justice itself: justice is sometimes tempered by mercy, and there is the sovereign's right to pardon.

This traditional way of taking my point into account is, however, utterly inadequate. It gives expression to a deep confusion. Selective mercy and selective pardon raise grave doubts about the cases in which it is claimed that justice has been done. They call into question the claim that in cases where mercy does not come into play justice was done.

Consider St. Augustine's claim that all men deserve damnation; that God elects a few for salvation although they do not deserve it; and that the damned cannot complain that God is unjust. After all, says the saint, that nobody is punished worse than they deserve merely shows the infinite mercy of God.

Such reasoning is specious. First, such arbitrary inequality of treatment is what philosophers call a "paradigm case" of injustice. For it is a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition of "just" treatment that like cases are treated alike. Second, Augustine's God exemplifies anything but infinite mercy. In connection with this last point, consider Dante, whose concern with proportioning punishments to crimes was second to no man's. He gave the most beautiful and eloquent expression to the traditional Christian view of justice. In his sublime inscription over the gate to the *inferno* he stressed the eternity of suffering—the word "eternal" recurs three times in the nine lines—before concluding:

Abandon, as you enter, every hope.

But it is the central triplet about hell that requires comment here:

Justice moved my Architect above,
What made me was divine Omnipotence,
The highest Wisdom and the Primal Love.

The power of Dante's poetry in the original Italian evokes admiration, and almost twenty centuries of Christian teaching have helped to keep most readers from being struck by the enormity of this incredible perversion of the meaning of justice and love. The only parallel that comes to mind is bound to sound like blasphemy, but it requires some shock to awaken those who are not shocked by Dante's lines and by the Christian view. Over the gate of Auschwitz those who entered saw the words: *Arbeit macht frei*—"work liberates."

One can still wander about this camp for hours, walk through barracks, stare at mountains of shoes and hair, at ovens, and then see those words when leaving. Those who take language lightly and have no love for words may feel that this inscription adds nothing to the horror. Yet it is the ultimate in brazen cynicism and dishonesty—a final, almost unbelievable, affront.

The whole Third Reich lasted barely more than twelve years, Auschwitz only about three—a drop in the bucket compared to the eternal torments of hell. But what on earth could one liken to the Christian hell if not a concentration camp? And what to the Auschwitz inscription if not the infinitely more fateful claim that eternal tortures are compatible with, and were actually devised by, the greatest love that ever was—and by justice?

"It is a necessary condition of 'just' treatment that like cases are treated alike"

But what on earth could one liken to the eternal torments of hell if not a concentration camp?

Augustine's and Dante's God does not really treat the mass of men in accordance with their deserts. But as long as men believed that he did and that this meant that eternal torments awaited most men after death, it made good sense to torture men for a few days or weeks if need be to save them from hell and to silence all who might endanger the faith and salvation of their fellowmen.

These reflections on Dante lead to my third thesis, that the preoccupation with retributive justice is inhumane. But my analysis of the functions of punishment shows that this thesis does not entail any demand for the abolition of punishment. Punishments are needed, invocations of justice are not.

In deciding what to punish and how to punish, we should banish from our minds the chimaera of justice. The suggestion made by Rawls that "in a just society legal punishments will only fall upon those" who have a "bad character" is ill considered. Having a "bad character" is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of being punished legally even in a morally admirable society. It makes sense to punish people for parking violations, but it does not make sense to insist that those who have violated various parking regulations have thus shown that they are wicked. Parking laws, if sensible, are enacted to make for a better society: they should eliminate or reduce traffic congestion, or insure some turnover of cars to make it possible for many people to visit a certain area. The reason for instituting penalties is that a prohibition that is not backed up by any penalties is generally useless if there is any great temptation to disregard it.

When a person has been duly convicted of a violation of the law and punished in accordance with precedent, it does not follow that he deserved the punishment and that justice was done. He may be a very decent person who has more than enough troubles and ailments as it is, while many people who cause much suffering to their fellowmen go free and flourish. It is bad enough that we cannot dispense with punishments. We do not have to add insult to injury by claiming that the poor man who gets caught receives his just desert. Desert is out of the picture.

Of course, we can and should ask whether the prohibition is reasonable, and whether the penalties provided by the law are reasonable or excessive. The critical evaluation of a law is centered on three questions: What purposes does it serve? Are these purposes good? And does it serve them efficiently?

It is important to be clear about the purposes because the law must be judged in relation to them; and if it serves no purpose, it ought to be abolished. . . .

If there were no penalties, the law would almost certainly be ineffective, but even if it provided stringent penalties, a' la Nuremberg, it might still prove ineffective. If the purpose can be agreed on, reasonable discussion should center on the question of how the law can be made effective; how the crimes that we want to prevent can be prevented. Asking about the price one has to pay for probable gains is part of the question of efficiency. But one does not have to fret about what those breaking the law deserve. . . .

What I have tried to show is this: we cannot dispense with punishments, but we should realize that punishments cannot be just; that a less disproportionate punishment is not always morally preferable; and that the preoccupation with retributive justice is inhumane.

"Punishments are needed, invocations of justice are not"

"But one does not have to fret about what those breaking the law deserve"

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by Ellen Gilbert

Key passage:
Proverbs 22:6

Notes

As a parent, one of the most challenging problems that awaits you is to construct a God-like philosophy of discipline or justice. Few things in this world lend themselves to be so easily misinterpreted as does parental discipline. And few parents really seem to feel totally confident in administering it.

Below, I have suggested four key points for a parent to remember as he is contemplating this issue of justice and discipline in the home. Now I realize that many of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY readers are not now parents. But most of you will be before long, and below are some things you need to know. And to those who never will be parents, go ahead and ponder these points too, considering God's philosophy of discipline and justice as a Parent towards you.

1. In administering just discipline, the parent's attitude must be: I love you too much to let you behave like this. Dr. James Dobson states that parents are symbols of justice, law and order, which every child loves.¹ Therefore, if parents refuse to set limits for their children when needed, the children begin to wonder if the parents really do love them. An undisciplined child may even feel like he doesn't belong to his family. Hebrews 12:8 says, "But if ye be without chastisement, where of all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons."

2. Clearly identify and explain the "rules"—well in advance of possible rule-breaking times. Just as God has outlined our boundaries in the Ten Commandments, so parents must accurately identify the regulations their children are expected to follow.² Inconsistency of parental expectation is one of the most harmful factors in child development.

3. Parents must be worthy of respect if they expect their children to accept their values. Children often will not respect God if they do not respect their own parents. And yet, respect is a mutual, interpersonal dynamic. That is, a parent should not anticipate being respected by a child to whom he has never shown any human dignity. "The grace of Christ in the heart will impart a heaven-born dignity and sense of propriety. It will lead fathers and mothers to treat their children as intelligent beings, as they themselves would like to be treated."³

4. Though never breaking the will, it is the responsibility of parents to help mold their children's wills into usable powers. "God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience."⁴ And yet, "If you permit your youngster's will to remain unbridled, the result is often extreme self-will which makes him useless to himself, others or even God."⁵ But remember that not everything your child does wrong deserves corporal punishment, only those behaviors that go directly against established rules.

As parents, we certainly will want to raise obedient, respectful children so that they, along with us, may enjoy the loving arms of the family. And yet there must be discipline and justice in order to obtain this goal. So God calls us to bring our families—or plan to bring our future families—under the control of a Christian philosophy of discipline, and to work cooperatively under the justice and discipline of our heavenly Father.

¹ *Hide or Seek* by James Dobson. Published by Fleming H. Revell Co. Used by permission. Page 82.

² *Dare to Discipline* by James Dobson. Published by Tyndale House Publishers. Used by permission. Page 15.

³ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 515.

⁴ *The Great Controversy*, p. 541.

⁵ James Dobson, *Hide or Seek* (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1974) p. 85.

by Ron Springett

Key passage:
Romans 5:8

Notes

Divine justice can be a rather abstract concept. But as soon as the concept is attached to the divine subject we speak of as God, i.e., the God of the Bible, the two merge into one. We see that the abstraction is unreal. Could there ever be such a thing as divine injustice? We are quick to answer with Paul, "God forbid!" (Romans 3:5, 6; 9:14). Logic would lead us to answer, Yes, it is possible, in the abstract. But as soon as the Person enters the picture and we get to know Him, the abstraction evaporates in the presence of the concrete Reality. But more on this later.

Human justice for most of us is also an abstract concept. It is only on the rare occasion when we come face to face with the policeman who has stopped us for some traffic violation that human justice becomes concrete and subjective. While the lawmakers are almost total abstractions to us, the law enforcers are the ones we meet. We feel free to argue with them about the administration and interpretation of the law. We use the same abstract law to justify ourselves and thus prove our innocence as do the officers when they quote to condemn us and collect the fine. But we know that they have to prove us guilty, and that there is the distinct possibility that we may indeed be innocent.

All this changes when we come to the justice of God. Here there is one undeniable fact set out to begin with: All are guilty (Romans 3:9-20). In human justice this would be the end of the case. The verdict would be pronounced and sentence given.

Imagine now a woman condemned to death. She appears before the judge and it is revealed that this very woman is the judge's own long-lost sister. The court falls silent. The judge takes off his robe, steps down from the bench, presents his hands to the sheriff for the handcuffs, and as he walks past the astounded crowd to the death cell tells the equally astounded court recorder, "Put my name there." The law stands, its requirements are met, but the judge died to meet them.

If such a case did occur in the courts of human justice, we can be sure that the conversation and the news would not be about the law but about the judge. What kind of person is he? What love! What mercy! What sacrifice! Psychologists might try to explain it and sociologists attempt to predict its effect on society, and philosophers would analyze it. But the judge's sister would remember it the rest of her life.

Overnight she would be transformed from a common criminal into a person of great worth; her heart would be broken; her life changed. She would exemplify in her life everything her brother stood for: justice, love and mercy. She would be a new and very grateful woman.

And that's what divine justice is all about.

by C. S. Lewis

Editor's Note: Balancing Kaufmann's "A Challenge to Retributive Justice" is C. S. Lewis' "A Defense of Retributive Justice." Here, Lewis argues against the idea that criminals need only to be cured, not punished.

We have had a good deal of controversy in recent years about the treatment of prisoners. I don't know whether a murderer is more likely to repent and make a good end on the gallows a few weeks after his trial or in the prison infirmary 30 years later. I propose to leave that specific question untouched.

My subject is more general; it is the popular theory of punishment which may be called the humanitarian theory. Those who hold it think that it is mild and merciful. In this I believe that they are seriously mistaken. I believe that the "humanity" which it claims is a dangerous illusion and disguises the possibility of cruelty and injustice without end. I urge a return to the traditional or retributive theory not solely, not even primarily, in the interests of society, but in the interests of the criminal.

According to the humanitarian theory, to punish a man because he deserves it, and as much as he deserves, is mere revenge, and, therefore, barbarous and immoral. It is maintained that the only legitimate motive for punishing is the desire to deter others by example or to mend the criminal. When this theory is combined with the belief that all crime is more or less pathological, the idea of mending tails off into that of healing or curing and punishment becomes therapeutic. Thus it appears at first sight that we have passed from the harsh and self-righteous notion of giving the wicked their just deserts to the charitable and enlightened one of tending the psychologically sick. What could be more amiable? One little point which is taken for granted in this theory needs, however, to be made explicit. The things done to the criminal, even if they are called cures, will be just as compulsory as they were in the old days when we called them punishments. If a tendency to steal can be cured by psychotherapy, the thief will no doubt be forced to undergo the treatment. Otherwise, society cannot continue.

My contention is that this doctrine, merciful though it appears, really means that each one of us, from the moment he breaks the law, is deprived of the rights of a human being.

The humanitarian theory removes from punishment the concept of desert. But the concept of desert is the only connecting link between punishment and justice. It is only as deserved or undeserved that a sentence can be just or unjust.

I do not here contend that the question "Is it deserved?" is the only one we can reasonably ask about a punishment. We may very properly ask whether it is likely to deter others and to reform the criminal. But neither of these two last questions is a question about justice. There is no sense in talking about a "just deterrent" or a "just cure." We demand of a cure not whether it is just but whether it succeeds. Thus when we cease to consider what the criminal deserves and consider only what will cure him or deter others, we have tacitly removed him from the sphere of justice altogether; instead of a person, a subject of rights, we now have a mere object, a patient, a "case."

On the old view the problem of fixing the right sentence was a moral problem. Accordingly, the judge who did it was a person trained in jurisprudence; trained, that is, in a science which deals with rights and duties and which, in origin at least, was consciously accepting guidance

The humanitarian theory maintains that the only legitimate motive for punishing is the desire to deter others by example or to mend the criminal

"The concept of desert is the only connecting link between punishment and justice"

from the law of nature, and from Scripture. We must admit that in the actual penal code of most countries at most times these high originals were so much modified by local custom, class interests, and utilitarian concessions, as to be very imperfectly recognizable. But the code was never in principle, and not always in fact, beyond the control of the conscience of the society. And when (say, in eighteenth-century England) actual punishments conflicted too violently with the moral sense of the community, juries refused to convict and reform was finally brought about.

This was possible because, so long as we are thinking in terms of desert, the propriety of the penal code is a question on which every man, being a rational and moral creature, has the right to an opinion.

But all this is changed when we drop the concept of desert. Whether a punishment deters and whether it cures are not questions on which anyone is entitled to have an opinion simply because he is a man. For they are not questions about principle but about matters of fact. And this can only be settled by the experts. Only the expert "penologist," in the light of previous experiment, can tell us what is likely to deter: only the psychotherapist can tell us what is likely to cure. It will be in vain for the rest of us, speaking simply as men, to say, "but this punishment is hideously unjust, hideously disproportionate to the criminal's deserts." The experts with perfect logic will reply, "but nobody was talking about deserts. No one was talking about *punishment* in your archaic vindictive sense of the word. Here are the statistics proving that this treatment deters. Here are the statistics proving that this other treatment cures. What is your trouble?"

The humanitarian theory, then, removes sentences from the hands of jurists whom the public conscience is entitled to criticize and places them in the hands of technical experts whose special sciences do not even employ such categories as rights or justice. It might be argued that since this transference results from an abandonment of the old idea of punishment, and, therefore, of all vindictive motives, it will be safe to leave our criminals in such hands.

I will not pause to comment on the simple-minded view of fallen human nature which such a belief implies. Let us rather remember that the "cure" of criminals is to be compulsory; and let us then watch how the theory actually works in the mind of the humanitarian expert.

"The humanitarian theory removes sentences from the hands of jurists and places them in the hands of technical experts"

ONLY A DISEASE?

A typical spokesman in one of our national papers argues that a certain sin, now treated by our laws as a crime, should henceforward be treated as a disease. And he complains that under the present system the offender, after a term in jail, is simply let out to return to his original environment where he will probably relapse. What he complained of was not the shutting up but the letting out. On his remedial view of punishment the offender should, of course, be detained until he is cured. And of course the official straighteners are the only people who can say when that is.

The first result of the humanitarian theory is, therefore, to substitute for a definite sentence (reflecting to some extent the community's moral judgment on the degree of ill-desert involved) an indefinite sentence terminable only by the word of those experts—and they are no experts in moral theology nor even in the law of nature—who inflict it. Which of us, if he stood in the dock, would not prefer to be tried by the old system?

It may be said that by the continued use of the word punishment and the use of the verb "inflict" I am misrepresenting humanitarians. They are not punishing, not inflicting, only healing. But do not let us be deceived by a name. To be taken without consent from my home and

friends; to lose my liberty; to undergo all those assaults on my personality which modern psychotherapy knows how to deliver; to be remade after some pattern of "normality" hatched in a Viennese laboratory to which I never professed allegiance; to know that this process will never end until either my captors have succeeded or I [have] grown wise enough to cheat them with apparent success—who cares whether this is called punishment or not? That it includes most of the elements for which any punishment is feared—shame, exile, bondage, and years eaten by the locust—is obvious. Only enormous ill-desert could justify it; but ill-desert is the very conception which the humanitarian theory has thrown overboard.

If we turn from the curative to the deterrent justification of punishment we shall find the new theory even more alarming. When you punish a man to make of him an example to others, you are admittedly using him as a means to an end; someone else's end. This, in itself, would be a very wicked thing to do. On the classical theory of punishment it was of course justified on the ground that the man deserved it. That was assumed to be established before any question of "making him an example" arose. You then, as the saying is, killed two birds with one stone; in the process of giving him what he deserved you set an example to others. But take away desert and the whole morality of the punishment disappears. Why, in heaven's name, am I to be sacrificed to the good of society in this way?—unless, of course, I deserve it.

But that is not the worst. If the justification of exemplary punishment is not to be based on desert but solely on its efficacy as a deterrent, it is not absolutely necessary that the man we punish should even have committed the crime. Every modern State has powers which make it easy to fake a trial. When a victim is urgently needed for exemplary purposes and a guilty victim cannot be found, all the purposes of deterrence will be equally served by the punishment (call it "cure" if you prefer) of an innocent victim, provided that the public can be cheated into thinking him guilty. It is no use to ask me why I assume that our rulers will be so wicked. The punishment of an innocent, that is, an undeserving, man is wicked only if we grant the traditional view that righteous punishment means deserved punishment. Once we have abandoned that criterion, all punishments are justified on other grounds, grounds that have nothing to do with desert. Where the punishment of the innocent can be justified on such grounds as deterrence, any distaste for it will be merely a hang-over from the retributive theory.

My argument so far supposes no evil intentions on the part of the humanitarian and considers only what is involved in the logic of his position. My contention is that good men (not bad men) consistently acting upon that position would act as cruelly and unjustly as the greatest tyrants. They might in some respects act even worse. Of all tyrannies a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience. Their very kindness stings with intolerable insult. To be "cured" against one's will is to be put on a level with those who have not yet reached the age of reason or those who never will; to be classed with infants, imbeciles, and domestic animals. But to be punished, however severely, because we have deserved it, because we "ought to have known better," is to be treated as a human person made in God's image.

In reality, however, we must face the possibility of bad rulers armed with a humanitarian theory of punishment. When our rulers are wick-

Is it not punishment for one to undergo all these assaults on his personality of modern psychotherapy and be re-made after some pattern of "normality"?

"When you punish a man to make of him an example to others, you are admittedly using him as a means to an end; someone else's end"

"The punishment of an innocent man is wicked only if we grant the traditional view that righteous punishment means deserved punishment"

"It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies"

ed, the humanitarian theory of punishment will put in their hands a finer instrument of tyranny than wickedness ever had before. For if crime and disease are to be regarded as the same thing, it follows that any state of mind which our masters choose to call "disease" can be treated as crime, and compulsorily cured. It will be vain to plead that states of mind which displease government need not always deserve forfeiture of liberty. For our masters will not be using the concepts of desert and punishment but those of disease and cure.

We know that one school of psychology already regards religion as a neurosis. When this particular neurosis becomes inconvenient to government, what is to hinder government from proceeding to "cure" it? Such "cure" will, of course, be compulsory; but under the humanitarian theory it will not be called by the shocking name of persecution. No one will blame us for being Christians, no one will hate us, no one will revile us. The new Nero will approach us with the silky manners of a doctor, and though all will be in fact as compulsory as imaginable, all will go on within the unemotional therapeutic sphere where words like "right" and "wrong" or "freedom" and "slavery" are never heard. And thus when the command is given, every prominent Christian in the land may vanish overnight into Institutions for the Treatment of the Ideologically Unsound, and it will rest with the expert jailers to say when (if ever) they are to re-emerge.

"The new Nero will approach us with the silky manners of a doctor"

Mercy and/or Justice

But it will not be persecution! Even if the treatment is painful. Even if it is lifelong, even if it is fatal, that will be only a regrettable accident; the intention was purely therapeutic. In ordinary medicine there were painful operations and fatal operations; so in this. But because they are "treatment," not punishment, they can be criticized only by fellow-experts and on technical grounds, never by men as men and on grounds of justice.

This is why I think it essential to oppose the humanitarian theory of punishment, root and branch, wherever we encounter it. It carries on its front a semblance of mercy which is wholly false. That is how it can deceive men of good will. The error began, perhaps, with Shelley's statement that the distinction between mercy and justice was invented in the courts of tyrants. It sounds noble, and was indeed the error of a noble mind. But the distinction is essential.

The older view was that mercy tempered justice, or (on the highest level of all) that mercy and justice had met and kissed. The essential act of mercy was to pardon; and pardon in its very essence involves the recognition of guilt and ill-desert in the recipient. If crime is only a disease which needs cure, not sin which deserves punishment, it cannot be pardoned. How can you pardon a man for having a gumboil or a club foot? But the humanitarian theory wants simply to abolish justice and substitute mercy for it. This means that you start being "kind" to people before you have considered their rights, and then force upon them supposed kindnesses which no one but you will recognize and which the recipient will feel as abominable cruelties.

You have not overshot the mark. Mercy, detached from justice, grows unmerciful. That is the important paradox. As there are plants which will flourish only in mountain soil, so it appears that mercy will flower only when it grows in the crannies of the rock of justice: transplanted to the marshlands of mere humanitarianism, it becomes a man-eating weed.

"Mercy, detached from justice, grows unmerciful"

Taken from *God in the Dock*, by C. S. Lewis. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.). Used by permission. Pages 287-394.

C. S. Lewis is considered by many to be this century's greatest Christian apologist.

1. Ronald Pickell, in the Testimony article for this week, says that “whatever God did to bring an end to the sin problem, it was necessary for Him to prove the justice of His ways.” Adventists typically agree that in the drama of the great controversy, God is, in a sense, on trial, and must prove His justice.

And yet, how is it possible for an omnipotent (all-powerful) and omniscient (all-knowing) God to be tried?

Isn't a being who has an infinite amount of ability to manipulate all the evidence and the minds of all intelligences, beyond the scope of trial by a jury of his creations?

2. Walter Kaufmann states in the Evidence article for this week, “The whole Third Reich lasted barely more than twelve years, Auschwitz only about three—a drop in the bucket compared to the eternal torments of hell. But what on earth could one liken to the Christian hell if not a concentration camp? And what to the Auschwitz inscription [“Work liberates”] if not the infinitely more fateful claim that eternal tortures are compatible with, and were actually devised by, the greatest love that ever was—and by justice?”

How do you react to this statement?

3. Kaufmann developed three main ideas in his article:
 - a. Punishments can never be just.
 - b. Even if a punishment could be proportionate, it would not follow that it ought to be imposed.
 - c. The preoccupation with retributive justice is inhumane.

Which of these ideas do you agree with and with which do you disagree? Explain.

4. C. S. Lewis, in the supplementary article for this week, upholds the idea of retributive justice by claiming that without it, mercy is “transplanted to the marshlands of mere humanitarianism, [where] it becomes a man-eating weed.” Do you agree with Lewis’ idea here? Why?

What is your response to his entire article?

5. Do you see the Adventist teaching regarding the doctrine of hell as contributing towards a better understanding of the justice of God? If so, how?

Heaven

"Were you not raised to life with Christ? Then aspire to the realm above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, and let your thoughts dwell on that higher realm, not on this earthly life." — Colossians 3:1, 2; NEB



Roe Deer in a Forest — Courbet

by John McVay

(A letter from an experienced demon to a "rookie" demon, with all due apologies to C. S. Lewis.)

My dear Wormwad,

Congratulations for persistent tempting of your collegiate patient. However, I see a problem developing.

In my last letter I gave you the watchword: Entangle, Entangle, Entangle! I told you to "pull out all the stops" in getting your patient involved in everything possible. The hopeful effect would be to crowd out his conversations with the Enemy.

You have carried out my counsel well—perhaps too well. These Christians have an uncanny way of turning the greatest defeat into victory. Your patient has become so entangled in studies, student government and the like that he has begun to ponder and recognize a certain futility to earthly existence. In the furor you have caused he has found pause to contemplate the peace of heaven. In depriving him of time with the Enemy, you have led him to long for the time when he can trod the wild heights of heaven with Him. In burdening him with tasks which he can never accomplish, you've turned his mind to the green pastures of heaven (that degraded place!) where he can work for centuries bringing one task to perfect completion.

You must change your strategy. Relax the pressure of tests, papers, and responsibilities without number. Let him have a little reprieve on earth that he might not set his mind on the debauchery of that place from which we fell.

Your task pleads for the utmost urgency. If you do not divert his dreams, they may soon materialize (horrors!). Yes, all is at stake. Do your work well and you will be rewarded; fail and you know what the lowerarchy has prepared for you.

Your affectionate uncle,
Scaretop

selected by editors

Notes

“Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and crying will be heard in it no more.

“Never again will there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpents' food. They will neither harm nor destroy in all my holy mountains,' says the Lord” (Isaiah 65:17-25; NIV).

“The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God.

“Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, ‘Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.’

“Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

“And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor will any ferocious beast get on it; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away” (Isaiah 35:1-10; NIV).

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away’ ” (Rev. 21:1-4; NIV).

“Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book’ ” (Rev. 22:6, 7; NIV).

by Tarsee Li

"A fear of making the future inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon it as our home. Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them in the Father's house. Those who accept the teachings of God's word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. And yet, 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' 1 Cor. 2:9. Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.

"In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called a country. Heb. 11:14-16. There the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations. There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home."¹

"There the redeemed shall 'know, even as also they are known.' The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul, shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together 'the whole family in heaven and earth' (Eph. 3:15)—these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed."²

"All the perplexities of life's experience will then be made plain. Where to us have appeared only confusion and disappointment, broken purposes and thwarted plans, will be seen a grand, overruling, victorious purpose, a divine harmony."³

"And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character."⁴

"In this life we can only begin to understand the wonderful theme of redemption. . . . The plan of redemption will not be fully understood, even when the ransomed see as they are seen and know as they are known; but through the eternal ages, new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind."⁵ "Then as the glories of the eternal home burst upon our enraptured senses we shall remember that Jesus left all this for us, that He not only became an exile from the heavenly courts, but for us took the risk of failure and eternal loss."⁶

¹ *Great Controversy*, p. 674, 675.

² *Ibid.*, p. 677.

³ *Education*, p. 305.

⁴ *Great Controversy*, p. 678.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 651.

⁶ *Desire of Ages*, p. 105.

Key passage:
Revelation 21:1

Notes

"A fear of making the future inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon it as our home"

"All the perplexities of life's experience will then be made plain"

by Greg King

Key passage:
John 14:2, 3

Notes

Civilization has taken great steps forward over the centuries. Whereas one hundred years ago it took months to travel across the United States, today the same distance can be covered in a matter of hours. The farmer of yesteryear produced enough food to feed his own family with only a scanty surplus, but the modern agriculturalist can feed practically a whole community of individuals. But as we pat ourselves on the back for all of the advances we have made, let us not do it too heartily. Why? I feel that in many areas, "pilgrims" have regressed over the years.

One of these areas of regression has been our understanding of the future, especially our view of heaven. If you find the thought of an arraignment before the judgment bar of God terrifying, perhaps you are comforted by the view of paradise that states, "Heaven is merely nature and society becoming more perfectly balanced." However, this teaching is clearly contrary to Scripture. So take a journey with Christian and Hopeful of *Pilgrim's Progress*, and as you do, you will gain a clearer insight into the biblical teachings of a literal heaven.

"The Bright Ones told them [Christian and Hopeful] of the bliss of the place, which they said was such as no tongue could tell, and that there they would see the Tree of Life, and eat of the fruits of it.

" 'When you come there,' said they, 'white robes will be put on you, and your talk from day to day shall be with the King for all time. There you shall not see such things as you saw on earth, to wit: care and want, and woe and death. You now go to be with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'

"Christian and Hopeful: 'What must we do there?'

"They said: 'You will have rest for all your grief. You will reap what you have sown—the fruit of all the tears you shed for the King by the way. In that place you will wear crowns of gold, and have at all times sight of Him who sits on the Throne. There you shall serve Him with love, with shouts of joy and with songs of praise.'

"Now while they thus drew up to the gate, lo, a host of saints came to meet them. . . . Then the whole host with great shouts came round on all sides (as it were to guard them); so that it would seem to Christian and Hopeful as if all Zion had come down to meet them.

"Now, when Christian and Hopeful went in at the gate a great change took place in them, and they were clad in robes that shone like gold. There were bright hosts that came with harps and crowns, and they said to them: 'Come ye, in the joy of the Lord.' And then I heard all the bells in Zion ring.

"Now, just as the gates were flung back for the men to pass in, I had a sight of Zion, which shone like the sun; the ground was of gold, and those who dwelt there had love in their looks, crowns on their heads, and palms in their hands, and with one voice they sent forth shouts of praise."¹

¹ John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, (Retold by Mary Godolphin). Harper & Row Publishing, Inc., New York, 1939. Used by permission. Pages 67-68.

by Mark Bresee

Key passage:
Hebrews 11:16

Notes

Is heaven just for kids and tourists? I am afraid that many of us have not outgrown our "zoo" and "eternal travel" images of the hereafter. But if we are going to spend forever in the heavenly Canaan, we would probably all like to know more about the place. And indeed, the eternal realities *can* become much more vivid and meaningful to us. Here are a few steps that may help.

1. Study about heaven and the new earth. How long has it been since you spent a significant amount of time doing this? Well, that's too long!

Try comparing God's plan in the Old Testament to bring about the Messianic kingdom with His plan in the New Testament. The spirit of prophecy is another rich source with visions of celestial beauty. Climb the narrow path to the New Jerusalem with the pioneers in *Early Writings*. Watch and listen as Adam and Christ meet after being apart for 6,000 years in *The Great Controversy*.

2. Compare your views of eternal life with others. By this I don't mean just sharing with other Adventists. Investigate the Catholic and liberal Protestant views about heaven. Find out a few things about reincarnation and other Eastern beliefs. Comparing your picture of what heaven will be like with these others should help you see that your view is the most *real!* It is the best!

3. Live like you are in heaven now. We need not wait to develop healthy bodies and Christlike characters. And why not now enjoy studying some field of science such as botany, ornithology or astronomy? Indeed, our musical abilities, gardening skills and craftsmanship can be developed here too. Form everlasting friendships. We claim to have eternal life now, so why not live it!

4. Use your imagination. Take what you have learned from your study, comparisons and daily living and put it all together. Pretend you are actually there. Look, listen, walk, talk, touch, taste, smell. Take a dose of eternal life daily.

by Melvin Campbell

Key passage:
Luke 17:20, 21

Notes

There are a good many meals that I dutifully eat so I can get to the dessert. Since I am on a high carbohydrate diet, the dessert aspect fits perfectly into my culinary needs.

Now when it comes to life's diet, I look forward to the "pie in the sky." After a life on this earth we all could use a little—or a lot—of "pie in the sky" reward. You may not like this expression, but if you stop and list what heaven on the new earth will be like, I think you will find that indeed it is a "pie in the sky." I can savor the delightful aroma of this "pie" already as I study about the new earth. Here are some scriptural descriptions:

1. New Heaven — New Earth
2. Wolf, lamb and lion eat straw
3. Snakes still crawl on the ground
4. Animals won't eat man or vice-versa
5. All labor is productive; hence, minimum frustration
6. Trouble-free environment
7. People are made happy by the Lord
8. Plenty of pure water
9. All roads lead to holiness—sin problem is over
10. No fools to contend with
11. Munitions are not available.
12. War is a forgotten discipline
13. No night
14. Mansions are available
15. Tree of life—fruit is for the taking
16. Reigning monarchs are ex-sinners
17. It all never ends . . .

Now there are, however, some pieces to the pie that some people don't find very tasteful. Some are scriptural and some are constructions of men, developed through the ages. Here are a few:

1. *The new earth provides mansions for all (John 14:1-3)*. If heaven is living in a mansion alone, then count me out! I like people too well.

The RSV version has come to my lonely rescue. It places me in a "room" instead of a "mansion" (John 14:2; RSV) — an extended family concept with Jesus Himself as the Father. Lots of people about—yet space for each. And ready access to the Savior—but something we can comprehend only once we are there.

2. *No marriage in heaven (Matthew 22:23-33)*. I love my wife and kids. At this point I would love to spend eternity with her and the family. So I will have to wait this one out. Just because I can't understand the relationships in heaven is no reason to throw the pie away. After all, what are my alternatives?

3. *Rocking chair, harp, wings and cloud concept—scarcely worth listing*. Sounds good for a few days but not for eternity. There is only so much "harping" that a person can take, and the wings don't appeal to me either—flying yes, wings no.

4. *Unreal world with bodiless spirits concept*. Adventists consider man to be holistic. A soul is a combination of the physical and life forces. But we still view heaven as unreal. However, compared to the present earth it probably is!

5. *Perhaps number five brings us to the real crux of the matter—the beginning of the kingdom of heaven (Luke 17:20, 21)*. The Scriptures indicate that on this earth—now—we begin to participate in the kingdom of heaven. Oh no! The pie has fallen—at least part of it!

by Merton Sprengel

Notes

Orion has had a special religious significance to many Seventh-day Adventists over the last seventy years. Many have held the belief that heaven is in the direction of Orion, seen through a vast, star-studded corridor of indescribable beauty, observed by astronomers. The specific location of this "corridor" depends on the believer. About equal numbers place it either in the middle of the belt, or in the sword of the constellation. Most also believe that Christ will come through this "open space" at the second advent.

In this article three major historic sources from which various beliefs seem to have originated will be discussed.

In mid-1846, Joseph Bates published a small booklet discussing his belief in heaven, the dwelling-place of God, as a literal, physical place in the universe. Speaking of the second coming of Christ, he expressed the opinion that "there is but one place in the heavens for this CITY to come from."¹

Noting the fall and expulsion of man from Eden, and God's placement of "Cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the tree of life,"² and the fact that Eden is not now known to exist on earth, nor is visible from earth's orbit, Bates asks, "From what part of Heaven will this glorious CITY appear? We answer, from where the flaming sword is 'guarding the way of the tree of life,' and the Cherubims are stationed."³

Specific identification of this location is given as the Orion nebula, in the middle of the sword. Five times Bates uses parts of Huygens' description (quoted below) to develop his argument for the location of heaven in Orion on an astronomical basis:

"Astronomers place three stars close together in the Sword of Orion; and when I viewed the middlemost with a Telescope, in the year 1656, there appeared in the place of that one, twelve other stars; among these three that almost touch each other, and four more besides appeared twinkling as through a cloud so that the space around them seemed much brighter than the rest of the heaven, which appearing wholly blackish, by reason of the fair weather, was seen as through a curtain opening through which one had a free view into another region which was more enlightened."⁴

Other translations of this passage use slightly different words, but similar meanings. Furgerson's version reads, "It looks like a gap in the sky, through which one may see (as it were) part of a much brighter region."⁵ von Humbolt: "This appearance looked, therefore, almost as if it were a hiatus or interruption."⁶ MacPherson: "the effect being that of an opening in the sky through which a brighter region was visible."⁷

Assuming that these translations of Huygens' statement are accurate, the reader will note that Huygens did not say he could see through an opening or gap in the sky, but that it looked *like* a view one might have in a room with a curtain opening allowing one "as it were" to see into another region. One should not confuse what Huygens saw (through his 2 1/3 inch telescope) with the analogy he used to describe his

"There is but one place in the heavens for this CITY to come from"

observation. The qualifiers "as," "like," "as it were" and "the effect being" are important to a proper understanding of Huygens' description. What Huygens saw was a region of light, the nebula, surrounded by dark sky. But Joseph Bates apparently believed there really was a "gap" or "opening" in the great nebula of Orion through which the Holy City would descend. Note the following selections:

"The qualifiers are important to a proper understanding of Huygens' description"

"So in THIS morning watch God will not only look through this mighty space, (black on the one side with the stormy cloud,) but, as the prophet Joel says, he will Roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem. . . ."⁸

"A western view . . . gives it the appearance of a stormy cloud, with the full moon shut in behind it, and three bright stars looking through the cloud. This dark looking cloud is called the gap in the sky."⁹

Bates attempted further astronomical support with a quotation from *The Illustrated London News* of April 19, 1845, which first appeared in the *Literary Gazette*, April 5.¹⁰

"Marvellous rumors are afloat"

"Marvellous rumors are afloat respecting the astronomical discoveries made by lord Rosse's monster Telescope. It is stated that Regulus [a star in the constellation Leo], instead being a sphere, is ascertained to be a Disc; and stranger still, that the nebula in the belt [*sic*; should be "sword"] of Orion is a universal system, a sun with planets moving around it, as the earth and her fellows move around our glorious luminary."¹¹

"Bates chose as supporting evidence to use a quotation from an article whose very purpose it was to refute the claims of that quotation!"

This served as an introduction to an article in the *News* by James South of Kensington's Royal Observatory. Bates used this quote to support his claims. However, the rest of the article describes Rosse's telescope and *refutes in part the strange claims made by the introductory quotation*. Hence, Bates chose as supporting evidence to use a quotation from an article whose very purpose it was to refute the claims of that quotation! In this article, James South denies the report of Regulus looking like a disc, and no mention is made of viewing the Orion nebula. James South did, however, express the hope that the mystery of the "nature and origin of the light"¹² of Orion would be cleared up by use of this new instrument. But, in fact, the Orion nebula was *not* seen before the publication of the April 5 report. A written report by Mr. Robinson, another astronomer assisting Rosse with the initial telescopic tests and observations, makes the following definite statement:

The mirror "was kept in the tube as long as there were any hopes of seeing the great nebula of Orion. That, however, was always clouded while within its [the telescope's] range. . . . At length, when all hopes of Orion were lost in the twilight, the mirror was removed from the telescope, and polished on March 3rd."¹³

Observations of Orion between March 3 and April 5 were impossible since Orion was lost in the twilight earlier each evening as the days passed. It is clear that the *Literary Gazette* report was only a "marvellous

rumor," and not valid astronomical evidence of any special characteristic of the Orion nebula.

It is unfortunate that Joseph Bates used the supporting documents that he did without checking them out thoroughly. Perhaps he would have reached a different conclusion had he done so. It is evident from this and another analysis¹⁴ of the beliefs of astronomers of Bates' time that there is no known valid astronomical evidence to support the notion of heaven being in the Orion region, or in that direction.

The second major source of information connecting Orion with heaven, the second advent and related events, is Ellen White. Most Adventists consider her single statement as authoritative. In describing her vision of November 16, 1848, she wrote:

"Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The Holy City will come down through that open space."¹⁵

In other references to these same events, Ellen White uses similar language, but without specific mention of Orion. In some statements, the opening referred to is evidently in the clouds.

Since Joseph Bates wrote his views about two years earlier than Ellen White's vision was given, and since they were co-workers during this time, probably discussing astronomical subjects from time to time, some have suggested that the idea of Orion in this context originated with Bates, and was accepted and used by Ellen White. On this point, of course, we can only conjecture. In recent years it has become common knowledge that Ellen White included material within her writings from many contemporary sources. Even if Ellen White did use an idea originating with Bates in writing out her vision, this does not negate the main thrust of the message. We, however, should be careful to stay within the bounds of observational credibility if we wish to suggest that astronomers have verified Ellen White's Orion statement.

What views about Orion were held by Adventists from 1851 to 1900 is difficult to determine due to an apparent silence by SDA writers. Loughborough alone seems to mention it.¹⁶

Since 1910, however, numerous books and church periodical articles discussing Orion have appeared, helping to establish and publicize the views held by many for several decades. In addition to Ellen White's and Joseph Bates' ideas of where heaven is, other concepts, which many believe are based on astronomical facts, have originated from the influence of one man, Lucas Reed. Reed was editor of the *Signs of the Times* for several years, during which he published several articles relating to Orion and other aspects of astronomy.

The first *Signs* article appeared in March 1910, and was apparently inspired by a newspaper article by Edgar Larkin, then director of Lowe Observatory near Los Angeles. Larkin wrote of an exciting discovery regarding the Orion nebula with the new 60-inch telescope at Mount

"There is no known valid astronomical evidence to support the notion of heaven being in the Orion region or in that direction"

Wilson. In early photographs the nebula appeared flat. But these new pictures gave the impression of perspective and depth, or "the opening and interior of a cavern."¹⁷

The unidentified author of the *Signs* articles,¹⁸ (referred to here as "Mr. X") uses this idea, together with Huygens' and Ellen White's statement, to reestablish the idea of an open space in Orion which astronomers had concluded was an erroneous concept based on a misunderstanding of early observations. In quoting Huygens, Mr. X, like Bates, leaves out the important qualifying words, "like" and "as it were," or their equivalents. In fact, he even states that Huygens "thought that this bright space in the heavens was an opening."¹⁹

The concept is then developed that, "the light given out by the nebulae is something entirely unknown to man's experience,"²⁰ while recognizing that spectroscopic observations showed that some of the light is due to hydrogen gas and other undetermined elements. Since that time, extensive spectroscopic research has identified the unknown light and elements. In 1910 the cause of the spectral light patterns was not known, but within a few years the discovery of the electron structure of the atom cleared up that problem. Today there is no scientific support for the belief that the light from the Orion nebula is anything mysterious, unknown or special in any way, or for attributing it to "light from the throne of God," as some still maintain.

Another idea which originated at this time is that the Orion nebula is, or extends from, an immense corridor whose sides are composed of millions of stars. These ideas apparently come from two often-repeated statements of Larkin's *Examiner* article.

1. "Torn, twisted, and riven masses of shining gas, irregular pillars, columns and stalactites in glittering splendor, and stalagmites rising from the mighty floor! The appearance is that of light shining and glowing behind Herculean walls of ivory and pearl, and these studded with millions of diamond points—shining stars."²¹

2. "And stars are so numerous around the opening that they constitute an apparent pavement of starry sand—the stellar floor."²²

If there were millions of stars known to be visible within the Orion nebula, there would be no problem with the idea conveyed here. However, because there are only a few hundred visible, one is led to wonder what Mr. Larkin was referring to.²³ A partial answer is that the phrase "—shining stars" (in 1. above) is not in the original article! It was apparently supplied by Mr. X, possibly on the basis of statement 2.

Further insight is given on this point from a similar statement that Larkin makes in his own *Signs* article a year later.

"Torn, twisted, and distorted masses of shining gaseous matter, adorned with myriads of glittering points, incipient suns, no doubt, form the gigantic walls. . . ."²⁴

Here the term "incipient" (meaning, "in an early stage of formation") indicates that Larkin did not consider the "walls" made of "formed" or

"There is no scientific support for the belief that the light from the Orion nebula is anything mysterious, unknown or special in any way"

“shining” stars. Thus, adding the term “shining stars” is unwarranted. But at least four later Adventist writers who have used this statement, some incorrectly giving the *Examiner* as the source, included the words “shining stars.” Since “incipient” suggests origin by stellar evolution, it is perhaps understandable that an Adventist writer would be sensitive about its use and thus would feel justified in making the substitution.

It will be noted by those familiar with the Orion nebula from personal observations or quality photographs that Mr. Larkin writes with a very colorful style, tending towards the sensational in places. Therefore the reader must be careful not to confuse observed facts with the imaginary descriptions and speculation given. Much of Larkin’s article is hardly acceptable as a source of scientific data upon which to base any dependable conclusions. It leads the reader to conjure up fantastic scenes which bear little resemblance to observed facts. Although Mr. Larkin was surely a devout astronomer, he obviously became somewhat carried away in telling of his exciting observations.

From these and other references that could be cited we can see that speculation was an important factor in the development of many theologically related ideas about Orion. Mr. X even admits this in his article:

“That the throne of God is beyond that open space, that the open space in Orion is but the corridor to the throne of glory . . . this great burst of glory, hides the dwelling-place of the Most High. We know that the speculation is a daring one, that the thought is almost overwhelming. . . .”²⁵

In later *Signs* articles, and in other materials published or written by Lucas Reed and authors who used his materials, similar claims and speculations are found. But it is clear that claims of astronomical support for several notions regarding Orion are unfounded. Indeed, when using scientific materials to support theological or other conclusions, it is important to select evidence that will withstand the closest examination and honor the truth.

“Speculation was an important factor in the development of many theologically related ideas about Orion”

¹ Joseph Bates, *The Opening Heavens*, 1846, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴ Christian Huygens, *Systema Saturnium*, p. 9. A translation quoted by Bates in *The Opening Heavens*, pp. 7, 8.

⁵ Furgerson, *A Treatise On Astronomy*, 1770. Quoted by Bates in *The Opening Heavens*, p. 6.

⁶ Alexander von Humbolt, *Cosmos*, vol IV, 1868, p. 38.

⁷ Hector MacPherson, *Makers of Astronomy*, 1933, p. 51.

⁸ Joseph Bates, *The Opening Heavens*, 1846, p. 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ “Varieties” in *The Literary Gazette*, no. 1472, London, April 5, 1845, p. 220.

¹¹ Joseph Bates, *The Opening Heavens*, 1846, p. 8.

¹² “Discoveries with the Great Rosse Telescope” in *Illustrated London News*, London, April 19, 1845, pp. 253, 254.

¹³ T. R. Robinson, “On Lord Rosse’s Telescope” in *The Scientific Papers of William Parsons*, London, 1926, p. 25.

- ¹⁴ M. Sprengel, D. Martz, "Orion Revisited" in *Review and Herald*, May 25, April 1, 8, 1976.
- ¹⁵ *Early Writings*, 1882, p. 41. Material first printed in 1851.
- ¹⁶ Loughborough, *Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 1892, pp. 125-127.
- ¹⁷ Edgar Larkin, "Colossal Cavern in Stellar Floor" in *The San Francisco Examiner*, January 14, 1910.
- ¹⁸ There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that "A Christian Astronomer," here referred to as Mr. X, was Lucas Reed, the *Signs* editor.
- ¹⁹ A Christian Astronomer, "The Open Glory" in *Signs of the Times Monthly*, March 1910, p. 126.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ The transparencies referred to by Larkin were viewed through a telescopic apparatus. It is possible that the "millions of diamond points" were nothing more than magnified film grains.
- ²⁴ Edgar Larkin, "Colossal Cavern in Space Nebulosity" in *Signs of the Times*, February 1911, p. 83.
- ²⁵ A Christian Astronomer, "The Open Glory" in *Signs of the Times Monthly*, April 1911, pp. 174, 175.

REACT

1. In thinking over your experiences of this past week, what subtle means has Satan used to divert your attention from the heavenly realities? How has God sought to direct your thoughts beyond the ritual of everyday life?
 2. Does it really make much of a difference what one believes about heaven?
 3. The Opinion article for this week states that the kingdom of heaven has already been founded—on this earth in the hearts and minds of Christians. What demands does this make on the Christian today?
 4. Why is it necessary for God to bring about such a radical change—as the “new creation”—upon this earth? Why not let it evolve into a better and better world until it reaches a heavenly state?
 5. Many Adventists have traditionally held that heaven is in the direction of the constellation Orion—at the end of this constellation’s “star-studded corridor of indescribable beauty.” Merton Sprengel, however, in a supplementary article for this week, discusses the historical bases for such speculation. How do you react to the information he presents?
 6. Below, list three specific activities you hope to pursue in the “earth made new.”
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
-



The Resurrection of Lazarus — Sint Jans

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

— John 17:3; NIV

Eternal Life

by Doug Morgan

In "The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'" from *The Chronicles of Narnia*, C. S. Lewis directs our minds to what is centrally significant in our hope of eternal life. The children from earth (Edmund, Lucy and Eustace) have just completed an adventurous voyage from Narnia to the "End of the World," Aslan's country (Aslan, a lion, representing Christ).

"The children got out of the boat and waded—not towards the wave but southward with the wall of water on their left. They could not have told you why they did this; it was their fate. And though they had felt—and been—very grown up on the *Dawn Treader*, they now felt just the opposite and held hands as they waded through the lilies. They never felt tired. The water was warm and all the time it got shallower. At last they were on dry sand, and then on grass. . . .

"But between them and the foot of the sky there was some thing so white on the green grass that even with their eagles' eyes they could hardly look at it. They came on and saw that it was a Lamb.

"'Come and have breakfast,' said the Lamb in its sweet milky voice.

"Then they noticed for the first time that there was a fire lit on the grass and fish roasting on it. They sat down and ate the fish, hungry now for the first time for many days. . . .

"'Please, Lamb,' said Lucy, 'is this the way to Aslan's country?'

"'Not for you,' said the Lamb. 'For you the door into Aslan's country is from your own world.'

"'What!' said Edmund. 'Is there a way into Aslan's country from our world too?'

"'There is a way into my country from all the worlds,' said the Lamb; but as he spoke his snowy white flushed into tawny gold and his size changed and he was Aslan himself,

towering above them and scattering light from his mane.

"'Oh, Aslan,' said Lucy. 'Will you tell us how to get into your country from the world?'

"'I shall be telling you all the time,' said Aslan. 'But I will not tell you how long or short the way will be; only that it lies across a river. But do not fear that, for I am the great Bridge Builder. And now come; I will open the door in the sky and send you to your own land.'

"'Please, Aslan,' said Lucy. 'Before we go, will you tell us when we can come back to Narnia again? Please. And oh, do, do, do make it soon.'

"'Dearest,' said Aslan very gently, 'you and your brother will never come back to Narnia.'

"'Oh, Aslan!' said Edmund and Lucy both together in despairing voices.

"'You are too old, children,' said Aslan, 'and you must begin to come close to your own world now.'

"'It isn't Narnia, you know,' sobbed Lucy. 'It's *you*. We shan't meet *you* there. And how can we live, never meeting you?'

"'But you shall meet me, dear one,' said Aslan.

"'Are—are you there too, Sir?' said Edmund.

"'I am,'" said Aslan. 'But there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name. This was the very reason why you were brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there.'"

Jesus said, "Eternal life means to know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, whom you sent" (John 17:3; TEV). So it's true. The way to Aslan's country, and the most exciting thing about being there—about eternal life—is to know Aslan Himself, the Lamb/Lion, the great Bridge Builder.

¹ Reprinted with permission of Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., from *THE VOYAGE OF THE DAWN TREADER* by C. S. Lewis. Copyright © 1952 by Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., renewed 1980 by Arthur Owen Barfield, Pages 213-216.

by editors

Notes

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:11, 12).

The supreme passion of man is to live forever. Pagan philosophies have imputed to man an immortal nature, but the writers of the Scriptures take a dim view of this doctrine. Bible writers are consistent in their views that man, by sin, forfeited his privilege of living forever for a transitory state of mortality in this life, while he awaits the gift of God in the first resurrection. Death is seen as an enemy, a foreign element in the government of God. And our hearts will never be satisfied until it is banished forever from the universe.

The idea that man should live forever is not new. It is a divine principle that prevailed in Eden until the sin of Adam. Death is foreign to the nature of God. **“In Him was life and that life was the light of men” (John 1:4).** It was, therefore, not in God’s plan for man that he die. But sin affected all of this. Man voluntarily separated himself from God. Therefore, he has experienced the full separation of death. Death is the natural result of sin, for it is the ultimate degree of separation from God. Sin is by nature schismatic. It is impossible to rebel against God and be at one with Him. Thus, with the sin of Adam, death entered into this world.

The desire to live forever has nevertheless persisted. Pagan philosophers invented an immortal soul concept to ease the pain of dying. The Bible is quite clear, however, on the subject of the mortal nature of man. Wrote the psalmist, **“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalm 146:4).** And the Preacher said, **“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun” (Eccl. 9:5, 6).**

The apostle Paul, however, brings a message of hope. **“For if, by the trespass of one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17; NIV).**

“Listen,” writes Paul, **“I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory’ ” (1 Cor. 15:51-54; NIV).**

Says the apostle John, **“And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:11-13).**

by editors

Key passage:
I John 5:11-13

Notes

Death and eternal life are opposites in nature and function, yet bound together in the life of the Christian. Though no one can avoid facing death, eternal life is promised to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

In the paragraphs below, we have arranged statements written by Ellen G. White dealing with this subject of eternal life. As you read her thoughts, consider how she felt this concept should influence the daily experience of the Christian.

1. Eternal life begins when the heart receives, by faith, the Spirit of God.

"Eternal life is the receiving of the living elements in the Scriptures and doing the will of God. This is eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. To those who do this, life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel, for God's word is verity and truth, spirit and life. It is the privilege of all who believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour to feed on the Word of God. The Holy Spirit's influence renders that Word, the Bible, as immortal truth, which to the prayerful searcher gives spiritual sinew and muscle."¹

"Eternal life is the receiving of the living elements in the Scriptures and doing the will of God"

2. Death is a power none can resist, but Christians need not fear, for the believer has life through Christ.

"You know that death is a power that none can resist; but you have made your lives nearly useless by your unavailing grief. Your feelings have been little less than rebellion against God. . . .

"While thus giving way to your feelings, did you remember that you had a Father in Heaven, who gave his only Son to die for us, that death might not be an eternal sleep?"²

3. Let your earthly interest be subservient to the eternal.

"Many who profess to be looking for the appearing of our Lord, are anxious, burdened seekers for worldly gain. They are blind to their eternal interest. They labor for that which satisfieth not; they spend their money for that which is not bread. They strive to content themselves with the treasures they have laid up upon the earth, which must perish, and they neglect the preparation for eternity, which should be the first and only real work of their lives."³

4. The conditions of inheriting eternal life are exemplified in the life and parables of Jesus Christ.

In the parable of the good Samaritan, "the conditions of inheriting eternal life are plainly stated by our Saviour in the most simple manner. The man who was wounded and robbed represents those who are subjects of our interest, sympathy, and charity. If we neglect the cases of the needy and the unfortunate that are brought under our notice, no matter who they may be, we have no assurance of eternal life; for we do not answer the claims that God has upon us."⁴

"If we neglect the cases of the needy and the unfortunate, we have no assurance of eternal life"

5. "Make your life preparation for eternity. You have not a moment to lose. Do you keep God's commandments? Do you fear to offend Him? Do you feel your dependence on Christ? Do you realize that you must be kept every moment by His power? Is your life filled each day with submission, contentment, and gratitude?"⁵

¹ *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, pp. 38, 39.

² *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 313.

³ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 600.

⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 524.

⁵ *Medical Ministry*, p. 129 (emphasis ours).

by William Barclay

Key passage:
John 5:25-29

Notes

This is the truth I tell you—the hour is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and, when they have heard, they will live. For, as the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to exercise the process of judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be astonished at this, for the hour is coming when everyone in the tombs will hear his voice and will come forth; those who have done good will come out to a resurrection which will give them life, but those whose actions were base will come out to a resurrection which will issue in judgment.

Here the Messianic claims of Jesus stand out most clearly. He is the Son of Man; he is the life-giver and the life-bringer; he will raise the dead to life and, when they are raised, he will be their judge.

In this passage John seems to use the word *dead* in two senses.

(i) He uses it of those who are spiritually dead; to them Jesus will bring new life. What does it mean?

(a) To be spiritually dead is to have stopped trying. It is to have come to look on all faults as ineradicable and all virtues as unattainable. But the Christian life cannot stand still; it must either go on or slip back; and to stop trying is therefore to slip back to death.

(b) To be spiritually dead is to *have stopped feeling*. There are many people who at one time felt intensely in face of the sin and the sorrow and the suffering of the world; but slowly they have become insensitive. They can look at evil and feel no answering sword of grief and pity pierce their heart. When compassion goes the heart is dead.

(c) To be spiritually dead is to *have stopped thinking*. J. Alexander Findlay tells of a saying of a friend of his—“When you reach a conclusion you’re dead.” He meant that when a man’s mind becomes so shut that it can accept no new truth, he is mentally and spiritually dead. The day when the desire to learn leaves us, the day when new truth, new methods, new thoughts become simply a disturbance with which we cannot be bothered, is the day of our spiritual death. (d) To be spiritually dead is to *have stopped repenting*. The day when a man can sin in peace is the day of his spiritual death; and it is easy to slip into that frame of mind. The first time we do a wrong thing, we do it with fear and regret. If we do it a second time, it is easier to do it. If we do it a third time, it is easier yet. If we go on doing it, the time comes when we scarcely give it a thought. To avoid spiritual death a man must keep himself sensitive to sin by keeping himself sensitive to the presence of Jesus Christ. (ii) John also uses the word *dead* literally. Jesus teaches that the resurrection will come and that what happens to a man in the after-life is inextricably bound up with what he has done in this life. The awful importance of this life is that it determines eternity. All through it we are fitting or unfitting ourselves for the life to come, making ourselves fit or unfit for the presence of God. We choose either the way which leads to life or the way which leads to death.

“To avoid spiritual death a man must keep himself sensitive to sin by keeping himself sensitive to the presence of Jesus Christ”

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by David Smith

Key passage:
Isaiah 66:23

Notes

A little boy was squirming in a church pew one Sabbath morning. All Sabbath meant to him was "sit still" and "be quiet," and he was sick of all of it. As usual, his mother quickly tired of his restless behavior and insisted that he listen to the sermon. Reluctantly, he sat still and began to listen to the minister's message on the joy of eternal life in heaven. At that moment the minister capped his remarks with this comment: "Just imagine: Heaven will be like an eternity of Sabbaths!" The little boy sat devastated. Eternal life held no appeal for him at that moment.

How like the little boy some of us are. Our spiritual lives aren't that exciting, and we really can't contemplate enjoying an eternal existence in a spiritual world. Certainly, everyone would like to live forever, but for some of us, facing an eternity of Sabbaths dims our spiritual aspirations. It seems that some of us haven't learned to experience real spiritual joy here on earth, and life seems sadly dull and meaningless.

But such does not need to be the case. By changing a few attitudes, and by experimenting a little, one can make eternal life a truly exciting and desirable prospect. Consider the following suggestions.

1. Since the most meaningful and rewarding aspects of existence are tied to our relationships with others, do all that you can to cultivate worthwhile relationships. Make "others" important in your life. Just think of all the "others" there will be to develop relationships with when eternal life becomes a reality!

2. Remember that eternal life is time, a series of cumulative moments. So learn to use your time wisely. Make each moment count. If you can control your use of time during your limited existence here on earth, eternal "time" will not seem so intimidating.

3. Practice Paul's secret of contentment explained in Phillipians 4:11-13. Learn to trust God completely, so that no matter what happens to you, you will trust Him to meet your needs. Such faith will enable you to eagerly await the joys God has promised for eternity, even if you can't, at present, concretely visualize them.

4. Make each Sabbath count. The Sabbath is sanctified time and each Sabbath offers new possibilities for dealing with spiritual time. "Keep" each Sabbath in such a way that you grow spiritually and truly enjoy the time involved in doing so. Be creative, yet sincere, in your approach to each Sabbath day. Do all that you can to make the Sabbath a delight, for many times, the Sabbath offers us the best way to experience the joy and peace of eternal life right now.

5. In John 15, Christ discussed the idea that as branches (Christians) we must abide in the Vine (Christ), so that we might bear fruit. He then states in verse 11: "These things have I spoken unto you . . . that your joy may be full." Here Christ is talking about a fulness of joy that begins now and continues through all eternity. This joy is the result of falling in love with Christ, and abiding in the Vine. Love is the greatest power in the universe, and falling in love can transform even the most spiritually lethargic life. Wanting to spend eternity with the One you love is the highest motivation possible for desiring eternal life. So go ahead and fall in love with the One who first loved you. Then an eternity of Sabbaths won't seem to be time enough for you to spend with Him.

by Duane Fike

"Are we about there?"

Any parent or youth director has heard that question a hundred times from the back of the car or the back of the bus. Time just seems to drag on long trips or extended outings.

However, most of what we do is measured in time. It takes just so much time to plan a party, fix a bike, run an errand, or study a lesson. It also takes time to grow seeds and to grow old. Some people say time is money, and others say that some things just aren't worth the time it takes. And through it all, time marches on.

With so much emphasis on time, it is hard to imagine a state in which time does not exist—a period in which time has no beginning and no ending. God knew eternity would be the greatest reprieve He could give weary time-bound humans. Too many modern pressures are brought about because we have all become slaves to time.

The constant furtive glance at the clock continually robs us of moments of peace or joy—we rush as if there will be no tomorrow. But with an eternity to look forward to, we won't just have all the time in the world to get something accomplished, we will have all the time in the universe, and the great clock won't even be running.

But now, we are bound to the restrictions of hours and days and years. And then one day we die, and at that point time ends for us, and it never gets going again. When we arise out of the grave, eternity will have begun.

But unfortunately, before our hour-glass finally runs empty, we too often neglect our Christian growth. We may spend time trying to be "good," but how much further do we pursue our Christ-likeness or the understanding of God's will? How much attention do we place on arriving at a personal spiritual destination?

"Are we about there?"

Probably not. I suspect we are all in Cradle Roll here on earth, as far as our Christian experience is concerned. I doubt if we ever really get beyond a very basic concept of what God is and what our salvation means.

But what if we had a forever to acknowledge God as we should, and to gain an understanding about His love and His power. Imagine time without end to spend with loved ones. Consider the extent, from here through eternity, to which we might discover our own talents, other beings, and strange new worlds. What if we had unending time just to *be*—time to *become*! The list of future potentials is endless, as endless as the time it will take.

Recently my four-year-old son and I were driving by a playground and I mentioned to him that soon we would be going to an amusement park. As he had never been to an amusement park, I told him that there would be rides and fun things to do there that his little mind couldn't imagine. While I was extolling upon all the thrills of an amusement park, my son, in his childish wisdom, suddenly interrupted me and said, "Yes, but not as much fun as heaven."

The words struck home. Talk about a little mind! Is it ever really possible to imagine what eternity holds for every one of us? What on earth could be as much fun as a place of endless joy—of everlasting pleasure?

"Are we about there?"

Let's hope so.

Key passage:
Revelation 21:6, 7

Notes

"Too many modern pressures are brought about because we have all become slaves to time"

"And then one day we die, and at that point time ends for us, and it never gets going again"

"What if we had unending time just to be — time to become!"

1. The hope of eternal life figures prominently in the teachings of many conservative Christian groups as a motive for accepting the gospel of Christ. If there were no promise of eternal life for the Christian, however, would you remain "in the faith"? Why?

Do you feel the hope of eternal life is emphasized too much in certain Christian circles? Or is it not emphasized enough?

2. The Bible says that to know Jesus Christ is to have life eternal (John 17:3; I John 5:11, 12). What does this mean?
3. If Christians begin experiencing eternal life immediately following their conversion, then why must they die? Why are not Christians translated to heaven without experiencing death?
4. Consider the poem below:

Father,
I've often thought how hard the pain for you to bear
to see Your suffering children dying every day and every where.
Our own hearts faint when friend or relative dies,
but what must the heart of Infinite Love feel
as You tell Your child "Goodbye."

Tell me of the pain, Father,
You must constantly feel
when son or daughter goes to sleep,
a son or daughter You've never known,
a son or daughter You could never keep.

And tell me, Father,
for Your book has never said—
When You come and have taken us home,
will these past memories cease?
Or will Your heart forever roam,
longing to raise Your children that are dead?
— Eugene Shirley

How do you think God would answer this question?

**“Some things add a little
class to life.”** —Robin Duska



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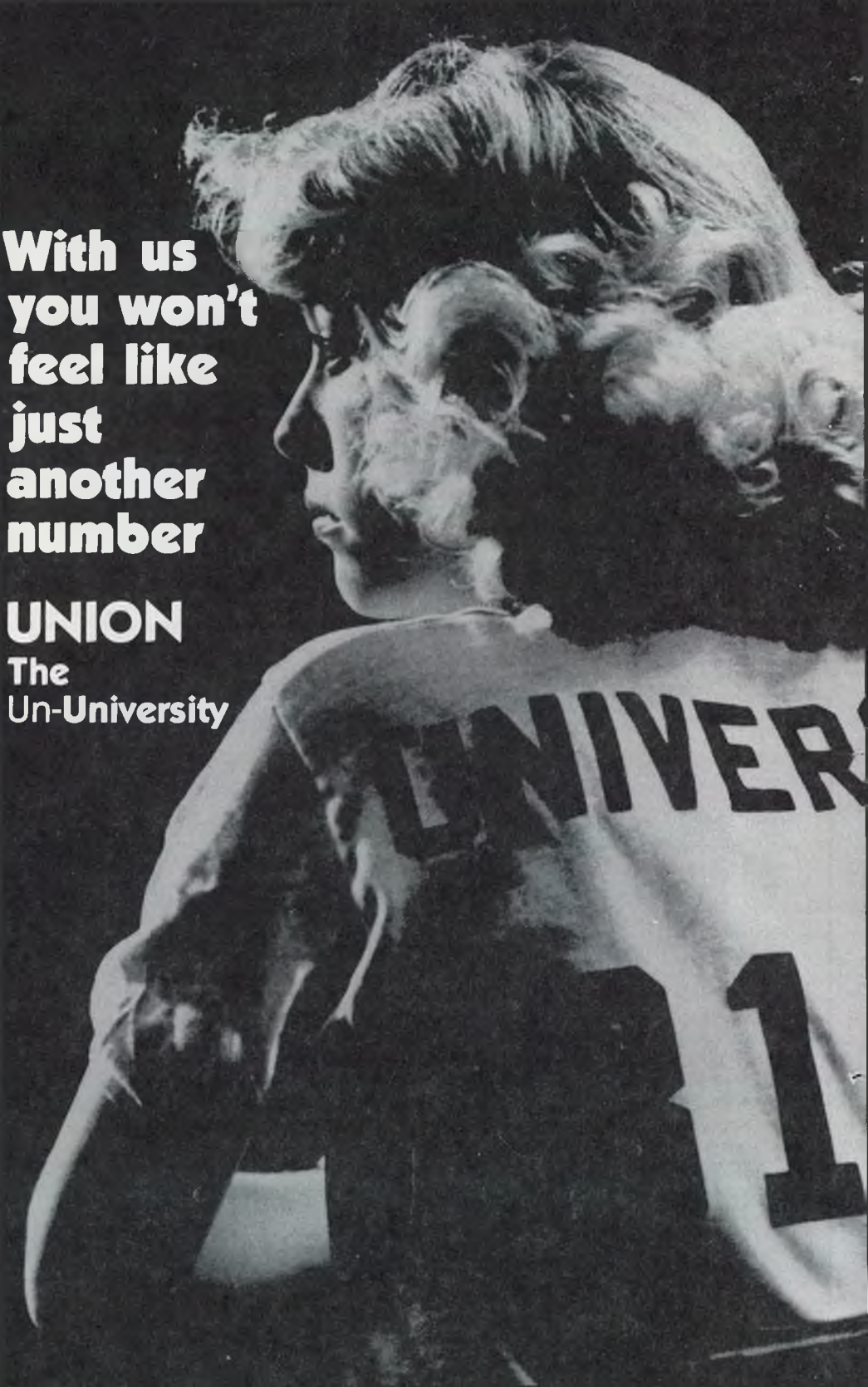
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East Indonesia	11,008,378	334	36,041	48,758
Japan	115,890,000	62	9,700	8,640
Korea	37,028,000	322	42,743	41,219
North Philippines	30,181,487	748	78,324	58,051
South China Island	22,247,588	48	9,235	7,981
South Philippines	9,907,884	482	94,247	97,571
Southeast Asia	87,107,259	182	28,888	25,859
West Indonesia	125,843,542	347	37,277	43,484
Guam-Micronesia Mission	200,000	9	1,264	1,077
Division Totals	451,956,302	2,874	402,087	405,875

Figures as of fourth quarter 1979



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And not all of them are doctors or nurses.
We have accountants.
Teachers and printers.
Data Processors and engineers.
Carpenters and electricians.

Our people work in a large, modern hospital that has a reputation in the community for outstanding care. They enjoy living in the suburb of a progressive city which offers all the culture and excitement of a metropolis.

Find out more about us.
Send for our information package.

RITE:
Personnel Director
Shawnee Mission Medical Center
14th and Grandview
Shawnee Mission, KS 66201

CALL COLLECT:
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