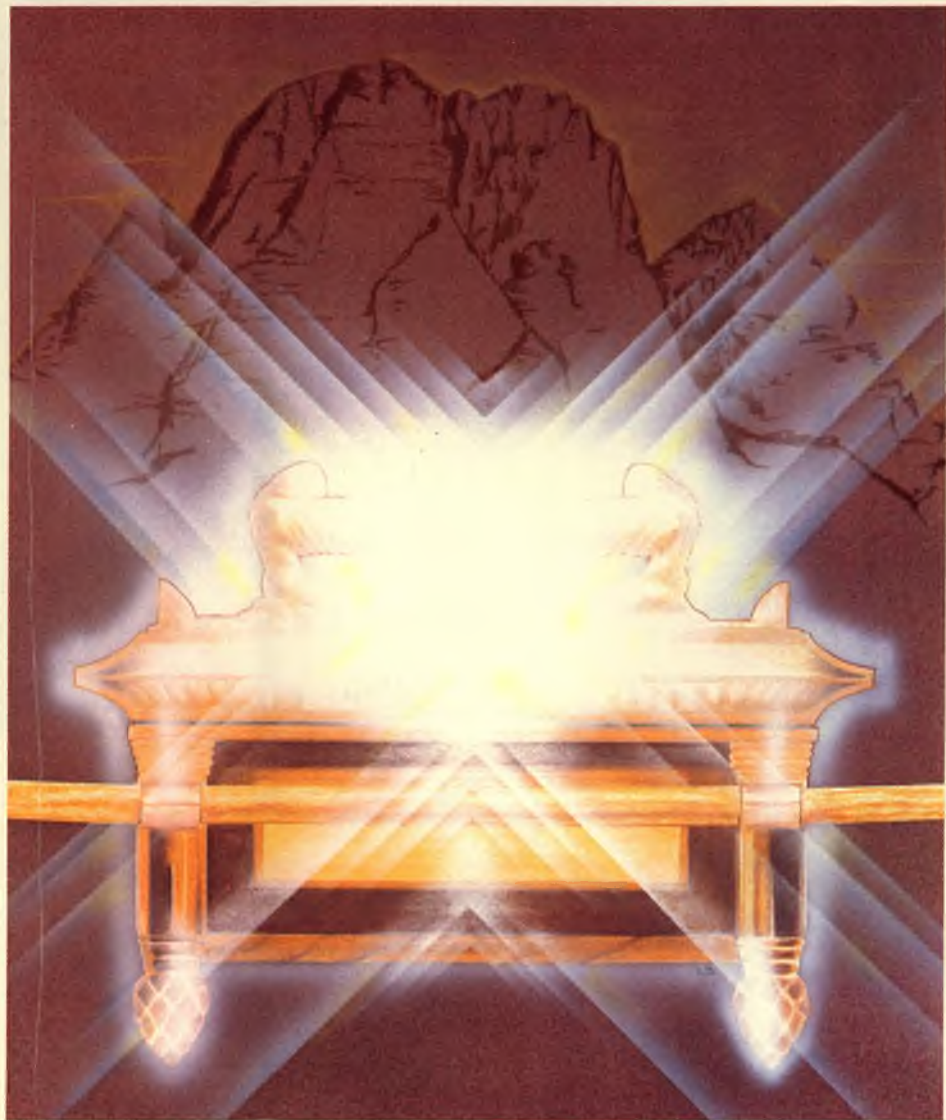


COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

A North American Youth Ministries Publication October-December 1984

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THIS QUARTER'S ARTIST



Louis Johnson was reared and currently resides in southern California. He is a design-illustrator for the Loma Linda University Medical Center. He studied figure and design at Art Center Design in Pasadena and Otis Parson School of Design in Los Angeles. His technical and graphic skills were developed at Santa Monica City College and Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus.

Louis has always had a strong interest in art. He was the senior class artist at Pacific Palisades High School and won the outstanding senior artist award. He has received honors for his sculpting, with pieces displayed locally as well as in Sweden.

Louis would like one day to bring the biblical accounts alive through his art. He has a deep conviction that the characters of Bible times can teach us truths for today's world.

Introduction to the Quarter

AFTER THE LAST CARD

It is stating the obvious, besides being clichéish, to say that everyone needs a close relationship with God. Yet this reality, often verbally expressed, is given practical expression less frequently. One of the most perceptive observers of humanity commented on this problem. "This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes" (Eccl. 7:29, NIV).

God created in man the need to respect a higher authority, the need to worship. But men "go in search of many schemes" rather than recognize God. And it is by these "schemes" that they try to fill the void created by a Godless existence.

Francis Thompson (1859-1907), a medical school dropout, reformed opium addict, and poet, eloquently expressed this condition in his poem, "The Hound of Heaven." In it he related his life of running from God, only to find that what he was running from was what he wanted and needed most.

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;

I fled Him, down the arches of the years;

I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways

Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears

I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

Up vistaed hopes I sped;

And shot, precipitated,

Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,

From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

But with unhurrying chase,

And unperturbed pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

They beat—and a Voice beat

More instant than the Feet—

"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me." . . .

"Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me." . . .

"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me." . . .

Now of that long pursuit

Comes on at hand the bruit;

That Voice is round me like a bursting sea: . . .

"Strange, piteous, futile thing!

. . . Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,

Save Me, save only Me? . . .

Rise, clasp My hand, and come . . .

Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,

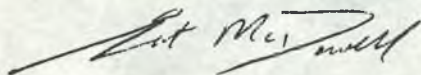
I am He whom thou seekest!"

So God meets man and man's emptiness is filled. But is this the whole story? Man's greatest need is God, but what happens when man and God meet, humanity to divinity? C. S. Lewis, in his book *Perelandra*, suggests the following scenario.

I had no doubt at all that I was seeing an eldil.* . . . My sensations were, it is true, in some ways very unpleasant. . . . I felt sure that the creature was what we call "good," but I wasn't sure whether I liked "goodness" so much as I had supposed. This is a very terrible experience. As long as what you are afraid of is something evil, you may still hope that the good may come to your rescue. But suppose you struggle through to the good and find that it also is dreadful? How if food itself turns out to be the very thing you can't eat, and home the very place you can't live, and your very comforter the person who makes you uncomfortable? Then, indeed, there is no rescue possible: the last card has been played. . . . Here at last was a bit of that world from beyond the world, which I had always supposed that I loved and desired, breaking through and appearing to my senses: and I didn't like it, I wanted it to go away. I wanted every possible distance, gulf, curtain, blanket, and barrier to be placed between it and me (pp. 18, 19).

Is there a paradox here? Is man's greatest need something he cannot stand to have, the comforter that causes great uncomfot, the food that "he cannot eat." Yes, I believe so. How then is it possible to commune with God? This is the topic of this quarter, and it is hoped that as you study God's majestic mercy you will find some answers.

"We have one who speaks to the Father in our defense." "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence" (1 John 2:1; Heb. 4:16, NIV).



Evert McDowell
Editor

*An eldil is a perfect being—the embodiment of goodness.

The Chasm

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts’ ” (Isaiah 55:9, NIV).



Hide and Seek

by Deanna Davis

INTRODUCTION

Remember hide and seek—hiding in dark closets, standing motionless behind doors, crouching behind the sofa, hoping you wouldn't be found? But what if you weren't found, at least not right away? The dark closets could become frightening. Standing motionless or crouching for long periods of time could cause small muscles to ache. The hope to remain hidden could easily give way to hoping to be found.

The tension between needing to hide and needing to be found has been an elemental part of human existence since the fall of Adam and Eve. Pride causes the desire to hide. In its competitive nature, pride constantly makes comparisons, seeking to exalt self above others. An attempt to exalt self at God's expense brought sin into our world.

The knowledge of evil which man gained through disobedience was the recognition of evil as the essence of his changed nature. To hide from the weight of this self-knowledge, proud man consoles himself with the thought that he may be bad, but others are worse. Eve felt superior to the serpent, and Adam felt more righteous than Eve.

But the prideful grasp at self-exaltation also gave Adam and Eve a sense of shame at being naked, which they quickly tried to remedy by making aprons out of fig leaves. Hiding from God, still wearing his leafy loincloth, Adam tried to explain his fee-

ble cover-up. "I was afraid, because I was naked" (Gen. 3:10). In the presence of God, Adam found his clothes left him naked and afraid.

Pride is, as C. S. Lewis noted, "the complete anti-God state of mind."¹ All other sins are part of its baggage. Pride belittles, but God uplifts. To admit God's righteous and perfect character requires humans to deny their own proud self-centeredness, a task which of themselves they cannot accomplish.

Unable to restore themselves to God's image, Adam and Eve created a distorted image of God, imputed to him the blame for their transgression, thus casting doubt on his wisdom and love for them.

A vast gulf of enmity now separated God and the human race. Sin is as abhorrent to God as God's perfection is to human pride.

Adam and Eve were driven out from God's presence, but not before he made durable clothing for them and clothed their nakedness of soul with faith in a promise of reconciliation. The Son of God would reveal God's character and vindicate his justice. One day in another garden he would take the deserved punishment for sin. Sinless, he would suffer our penalty of death and separation from God. He would bridge the chasm with a cross, making available to all humankind a robe of his perfect righteousness, that being hid in him we might be found.

1. Lewis, C. S., *Mere Christianity*, 1960, p. 109.

Deanna Davis writes from Portland, Ore. She is a graduate of Walla Walla College and Andrews University.

The Chasm That Terrifies

LOGOS

The concept of an emotional "chasm" is difficult to grasp except through experience. Unless one has gone through a divorce or a similar permanent estrangement between loved ones, its depth of meaning is inaccessible. It can only be described as utter and complete hopelessness. "Chasm" can also be encountered in a physical sense. My deepest appreciation of this sort of chasm came while growing up in the Far East. Our family would often go hiking in the mountains of Taiwan. And more often than I cared for we would come upon deep gorges spanned only by ancient swinging bridges of questionable integrity. It was there, swaying in the wind, hundreds of feet above the rocky rapids, that the terrifying meaning of "chasm" struck home.

It is this terrible combination of hopelessness and terror that characterizes the estrangement of man from God. Sin made man the antithesis of God. God is holiness personified—as the seraphs in Isaiah's vision attest. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3, NIV). This holiness is expressed in God's perfect character which is wholly other than erring human character. "'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isa. 55: 8, 9, NIV). And what are God's ways? "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages" (Rev. 15:3, NIV).

This creates the most marked contrast conceivable; the sanctity of God versus the profanity of man. For among humans "there is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3:10-12, 15-18, NIV). Man is set against God with an intrinsic hostility. And so a great gulf is set, the impassable chasm fortifies itself for eternity.

The plight of man was desperate. He could not survive for long, and yet he was powerless to reverse the situation he himself had created. Only God could engineer a rapprochement.

Across the infinite chasm, God detected man's helplessness. Even though man had put himself at enmity, the God of love came to the rescue. He sent his Master Bridgebuilder to throw a span across the chasm. The Bridgebuilder died in the attempt—but not before he completed his mission. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV). The chasm—as wide and deep and terrifying as ever—is still there. But so is the bridge.

L. R. C.

The Chasm and the Cord

selected by Beverly Beem

While at Battle Creek in August, 1868, I dreamed of being with a large body of people. A portion of this assembly started out prepared to journey. We had heavily loaded wagons. As we journeyed, the road seemed to ascend. On one side of this road was a deep precipice; on the other was a high, smooth, white wall, like the hard finish upon plastered rooms.

As we journeyed on, the road grew narrower and steeper. In some places it seemed so very narrow that we concluded that we could no longer travel with the loaded wagons. We then loosed them from the horses, took a portion of the luggage from the wagons and placed it upon the horses, and journeyed on horseback.

As we progressed, the path still continued to grow narrow. We were obliged to press close to the wall, to save ourselves from falling off the narrow road down the steep precipice. As we did this, the luggage on the horses pressed against the wall, and caused us to sway toward the precipice. We feared that we should fall, and be dashed in pieces on the rocks. We then cut the luggage from the horses, and it fell over the precipice. We continued on horseback, greatly fearing, as we came to the narrower places in the road, that we should lose our balance, and fall. At such times, a hand seemed to take the bridle, and guide us over the perilous way.

As the path grew more narrow, we decided that we could no longer go with safety on horseback, and we left the horses and went on foot, in single file, one following in the footsteps of another. At this point small cords were let down from the top of the pure white wall; these we eagerly grasped, to aid us in keeping our balance upon the path. As we traveled, the cord moved along with us. The path finally became so narrow that we concluded that we could travel more safely without our shoes; so we slipped them from our feet, and went on some distance without them. Soon it was decided that we could travel more safely without our stockings; these were removed, and we journeyed on with bare feet.

We then thought of those who had not accustomed themselves to privations and hardships. Where were such now? They were not in the company. At every change, some were left behind, and those only remained who had accustomed themselves to endure hardships. The privations of the way only made these more eager to press on to the end.

Our danger of falling from the pathway increased. We pressed close to the white wall, yet could not place our feet fully upon the path, for it was too narrow. We then suspended nearly our whole weight upon the cords, exclaiming: "We have hold from above! We have hold from above!" The same words were uttered by all the company in the narrow pathway. As we heard the sounds of mirth and revelry that seemed to come from the abyss below, we shuddered. We heard the profane oath, the vulgar jest, and low, vile songs. We heard the war song and the dance song. We heard instrumental music, and loud laughter, mingled with cursing and cries of

TESTIMONY

Key text:
2 Corinthians 5:7

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anguish and bitter wailing, and were more anxious than ever to keep upon the narrow, difficult pathway. Much of the time we were compelled to suspend our whole weight upon the cords, which increased in size as we progressed.

I noticed that the beautiful white wall was stained with blood. It caused a feeling of regret to see the wall thus stained. This feeling, however, lasted but for a moment, as I soon thought that it was all as it should be. Those who are following after will know that others have passed the narrow, difficult way before them, and will conclude that if others were able to pursue their onward course, they can do the same. And as the blood shall be pressed from their aching feet, they will not faint with discouragement; but, seeing the blood upon the wall, they will know that others have endured the same pain.

At length we came to a large chasm, at which our path ended. There was nothing now to guide the feet, nothing upon which to rest them. Our whole reliance must be upon the cords, which had increased in size, until they were as large as our bodies. Here we were for a time thrown into perplexity and distress. We inquired in fearful whispers, "To what is the cord attached?" My husband was just before me. Large drops of sweat were falling from his brow, the veins in his neck and temples were increased to double their usual size, and suppressed, agonizing groans came from his lips. The sweat was dropping from my face, and I felt such anguish as I have never felt before. A fearful struggle was before us. Should we fail here, all the difficulties of our journey had been experienced for naught.

Before us, on the other side of the chasm, was a beautiful field of green grass, about six inches high. I could not see the sun, but bright, soft beams of light, resembling fine gold and silver, were resting upon this field. Nothing I had seen upon earth could compare in beauty and glory with this field. But could we succeed in reaching it? was the anxious inquiry. Should the cord break, we must perish.

Again, in whispered anguish, the words were breathed, "What holds the cord?" For a moment we hesitated to venture. Then we exclaimed: "Our only hope is to trust wholly to the cord. It has been our dependence all the difficult way. It will not fail us now." Still we were hesitating and distressed. The words were then spoken: "God holds the cord. We need not fear." These words were repeated by those behind us, accompanied with: "He will not fail us now. He has brought us thus far in safety."

My husband then swung himself over the fearful abyss into the beautiful field beyond. I immediately followed. And oh, what a sense of relief and gratitude to God we felt! I heard voices raised in triumphant praise to God. I was happy, perfectly happy.

Who's Blocking the Bridge?

by Alden Thompson

A mediator has come to bridge the gulf between God and man. "Mediator" suggests alienation—and that "help" is needed to restore peace, to bring about "atonement," to use the theological term. The crucial question is: Does the hindrance to peace lie with God or with man? Or is the chasm simply the "natural" result of sin? In attempting to answer that question we find a tension in Scripture and opposing theories of the atonement in Christian history.

On the one hand, the "objective" view of the atonement sees the death of Christ as pointing Godward; the mediator pleads with God before he pleads with man. This view is rooted in the Pauline epistles and emphasizes the legal metaphor (God as Judge).

Building on the foundation laid by Augustine (d. 430) and Anselm (d. 1109), John Calvin (d. 1564) developed the "penal substitutionary" theory of the atonement, taking the "objective" view to its so-called logical extreme. In this view the mediator must first remove the obstacle to peace that lies on God's side of the chasm. The gulf between God and man results from the reaction of God's holiness to sin. "Wrath" is God's inevitable response to sin, directing itself either against the rebel or a substitute (Christ). Christ's death "satisfies" God's wrath, making peace possible between God and man.

By contrast, the "subjective" view of the atonement sees the death of Christ pointing manward; the mediator pleads with man, not God. This view is rooted in the Gospel of John and emphasizes the family metaphor (God as Father).

In the history of Christian thought, Abelard (d. 1142) and Ritschl (d. 1889) are known for taking this "subjective" view of the atonement to its so-called logical conclusion in what is often known as the "moral influence" theory of the atonement. Here the hindrance to peace lies on man's side of the gulf. Radically formulated, this view of the atonement sees sin merely as ignorance. The death of Christ "educates" man, demonstrating God's love.

Most Adventists prefer to avoid the more extreme interpretations of Christ's role as mediator. Our "statements of belief" are deliberately ambiguous on the point. And that's good. For if we set up housekeeping too tidily at one end of the bridge, we will distort the biblical witness, robbing God's Word of its power to meet mankind's varied needs.

Both views of the atonement in their extreme formulations run the risk of distorting the truth about God and his kingdom. A heavy-handed emphasis on the "objective" atonement runs the risk of depicting God as a harsh taskmaster who demands his full pound of flesh as the price of peace; the "Father" is seen as tough and the "Son" gentle, when both should be seen as working together in perfect harmony.

A one-sided emphasis on the subjective "atonement" also has its dangers, tending to minimize both the horrors of sin and the threat

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Romans 5:8-11

"A heavy-handed emphasis on the 'objective' atonement runs the risk of depicting God as a harsh taskmaster."

Alden Thompson is professor of religion at Walla Walla College.

that sin poses to the very foundation of God's government. Sin could all too easily be seen as a light matter with God, something readily overlooked with no serious consequences.

For our benefit, Scripture portrays obstacles on both sides of the chasm. Man is at war with God and has blockaded his end of the bridge. Rebel hearts know that blockades only come down at great cost. And precisely here the gospel shines forth—while we were still rebels and enemies, Christ paid the price and brought the barricades crashing down (see Romans 5:6-11). Whatever price had to be paid was paid by God—unilaterally, at his end of the bridge, and at his initiative. That, you see, is the cross on the divine side of the chasm (the objective atonement).

But then we turn to John (especially chapters 14-17) and find the bridge on man's side of the chasm (the subjective atonement). From John we learn that the magnificence of the mediator's gift means we no longer need him to stand between God and man. For he is God, and through him we finally know that the Father loves us just as much as the Son (see John 16:26, 27).

The chasm has been bridged and the barricades are down—at both ends. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1, RSV).

"A one-sided emphasis on the 'subjective' atonement tends to minimize the horrors of sin."

Prayer and Pizza

by Joy Lynne Graves

Every night Jack Smith kneels down by his bed, folds his hands, and closes his eyes. He says the same prayer every night, even when he indulges in his favorite pastime—the midnight mushroom and olive pizza.

With a bulging stomach he kneels down in his usual spot, folds his hands, and clears his throat. His prayer crawls out of his throat, turns around, and thuds down to his toes. Somewhere between his last prayer and that midnight snack, Jack senses that God has turned his back, and he is alone with nothing but loneliness. He sees his sins mounting up to Orion, separating him from the healing power of God. He looks up to the corner of the ceiling and wonders what life is all about. God seems to be a universe away, as unapproachable as a star and as immense as the galaxy.

* * * * *

Like many Christians, Jack Smith has forgotten the key to a Christian's life. He bases his experience on a bloated stomach and a foggy mind. Instead of losing his faith every time he sneezes or bangs his head, Jack should concentrate on five basic Christian qualities.

1. **Christ has already resolved sin's power.** When Jesus defeated Satan at Calvary, he smashed all of Satan's control over a Christian's life. Now is the time Jack Smith should be rejoicing, for God is in command; Satan is overthrown (Gal. 3:13; Rom. 8:31).

2. **Hiding from God is dangerous.** Jack should be open with himself and with God. No matter what happens Jack should keep talking to God, even when he's stuffed. Jack should also recognize that he will have slow spiritual times; even Jonah had off days (Jonah 1 and 2).

3. **Ask for help.** God is as far away as a whisper and as near as a thought. Not only is he willing to give all the help needed, but angels are ready and waiting to assist. However, they do need permission to interfere. All Jack needs do is ask, and he will receive (Matt. 7:7, 8).

4. **Separate faith from feeling.** A midnight pizza hangover can deter anyone's positive attitude about life, people, or God. While faith believes in spite of feelings, feelings seesaw on an empty stomach. Faith is a gift from God, but feeling comes from our emotions. Faith is active; feeling is passive (Eph. 2:8, 9).

5. **Master the techniques of prayer and Bible study.** Prayer is more than mumbling dutiful words to an unseen power. The magic in prayer comes from talking to the universe's King and the closest friend anyone in the world could ever have. God is not a slot machine, nor is prayer the coin that will win all of Jack's dreams, prevent his nightmares, or smooth out his problems. It is a long-distance call from an old friend. Bible study returns the call Earth's way so God can talk back. Both go together and are vital for communication with God (Mark 14:38).

HOW TO

Key text:
Isalah 55:8, 9

Joy Lynne Graves is an Instructor in English at Walla Walla College.

The Chasm Between Christians and Christ

by Gayle Saxby

OPINION

Sometimes we Christians think that the chasm between God and humanity is of no consequence—for *us*, anyway. When we read there is “no one who seeks God” (Romans 3:11, NIV), and that, “the sinful mind is hostile to God” (Romans 8:7, NIV), we tend to pin these descriptions on “non-believers” only. We exclude ourselves, because we do not see how different we really are from our example, Christ.

However, if we look at Christ’s life sensitively and perceptively, we begin to understand our true condition. Our thoughts and motives and therefore our acts are self-centered. Christ, on the other hand, acted from selflessness. Whereas we usually “don’t have time” to show others we care about them, Christ untiringly healed, taught, fed, raised to life, and comforted those around him. While we feel slighted if our good deeds are not recognized and we don’t get something in return, Christ quietly accepted the humiliation and pain of a criminal’s death as the only acknowledgment of his love for others. The contrast between us and Christ, and therefore God, is summed up in Isaiah 55:8: “‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord” (NIV).

Though this contrast is great, Christ identifies with our estrangement from God because he experienced it when he cried, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34, NIV). That is cause for us to rejoice, for as Paul puts it, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21, NIV).

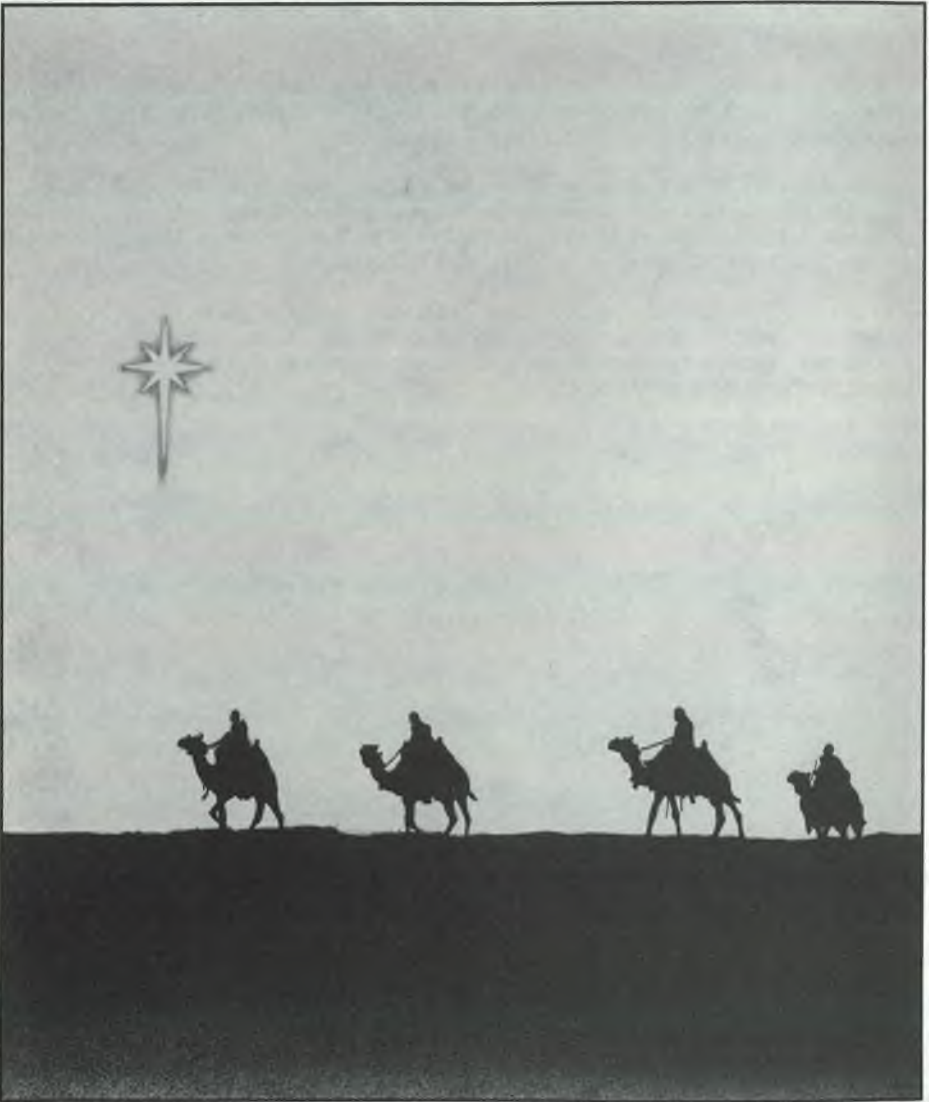
Gayle Saxby was a junior English major when she wrote this, and is presently a student missionary in Athens, Greece.

REACT
Lesson 1

1. Neo-orthodox theologians maintain that we can know God only through "truth by encounter"—meaning that God must confront us personally before we can perceive or respond to him. Do you agree? How would this affect our search for truth—or for God?
 2. Which view of Christ's mediation do you tend to favor—the objective or subjective (Evidence)? Why is either extreme dangerous?
 3. In your own experience, have you been more blessed by John's view of Christ's mediatorial role or Paul's view of Christ's substitutionary death?
 4. The author of Opinion holds that there is a chasm between Christians and Christ, just as there is between non-believers and Christ. Do you agree, in light of the fact that a Christian is said to be justified when he accepts Christ as his Saviour?
 5. Many psychologists argue that there is no such thing as an unselfish action or motive. Do you agree? If so, does that mean that the chasm between God and man is never truly bridged on this earth? Why or why not?
-

The Bridge

“Jesus said: ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life’ ” (John 14:6, Jerusalem Bible).



The Bridges

by Gary Tetz

INTRODUCTION

Jacob saw a ladder. John Milton perceived a golden chain. Ellen White walked a lighted pathway, flanked by darkness and oblivion.

One ladder; one chain; one path; each underline Christ's own words, "I am *the way, the truth, and the life.*" One bridge spans the distance between God and man.

These metaphors are not the only descriptions of Christ's work. He is also the Shepherd, the Door, and the Vine. Each brings images of a mediator, a go-between, or a vital channel of life support. And each make it clear that only one bridge exists.

To heaven.

Milton, in his epic *Paradise Lost*, describes the personified forms of Sin and Death bursting free from their prison in hell when Eve bites the apple. They follow Satan's path to earth, paving "after him a broad and beaten way over the dark abyss . . ." (book II, ln. 1026).

Another bridge? Yes, and it still exists, connecting our world with the world of darkness.

Two choices.

Both Christ and Satan have closed the gap between man and the supernatural. Both are greatly concerned that a decision be made, that their road be taken. The difference is one of both destination and construction.

One bridge to hell.

The destination is clear. The characteristics are obvious. "Wide is the gate, and broad is

the way, that leadeth to destruction" (Matt. 7:13). This bridge brings hell within easy walking distance. One has no need for maps, as plenty of fellow travellers will provide helpful instruction.

One bridge to God.

The pillars are anchored firmly in heaven. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life" (Matt. 7:14). It is a slender span, but a solid one built to hold the weight of billions. Unfortunately, the true strength will never be fully tested.

And the Bridge *is* Christ. He himself has said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). By physically placing himself across the chasm, he has provided the only possible way to eternal life. Lucifer made no such bodily sacrifice.

A ladder. A path. A chain. In the final analysis it doesn't matter which. The gap has been bridged by the only possible Workman, one who is architect and mortar and stone.

From a vantage point high on the arch we can see other paths and the other bridges crowded with bustling souls. But when the earthquake comes and the dust has settled under the feet of those who placed their trust in a structure cemented with deceit, our step will remain firm on the solid rock. Jesus Christ is, and will continue to be, a Bridge over troubled water. When that time arrives, there will be no other bridges.

Gary Tetz is a senior English and communication media major at Walla Walla College.

Crossing the Dimensions of Reality

LOGOS We live in a world governed by three dimensions—length, width, and height. These make up our reality, and we find it difficult to comprehend any reality structured differently. We can almost imagine a two-dimensional world in which there is no height, or a four-dimensional world with the added dimension being time. In such a state time would not confine, rather, it would serve as another direction for movement. This we conceive as impossible, yet, if it were we might still be unaware of such realities. As anything two-dimensional cannot experience anything three-dimensional, so might we not be able to observe a four-dimensional reality.

What is all this leading to? Simply, how does God, the one who exists in, and controls an infinite number of realities, all far above our own, communicate with beings trapped in one reality with three limiting dimensions, a reality further limited by sin? The problem was presented and the solution hinted at in last week's lesson. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16, NIV). To bridge the gulf between himself and man God sent his Son. And this Son, "being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness" (Phil. 2:6, 7, NIV).

God has tried many ways to communicate to man, but the most effective, the most readily understood was the incarnation. Thus in "human likeness" God can negate the near complete separation that existed between himself and man. By being God and man, he breaks the confining boundaries of our reality and reveals divinity to us. "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (Heb. 1:1-3, NIV).

Christ, because he is human and at the same time divine, becomes the way to God. "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well'" (John 14:6, 7, NIV).

But it took more than God becoming man to reconcile each to the other. "Remember that . . . you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12, NIV). It's rather a bleak picture, without hope, without God, but it doesn't end there. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13, NIV). Through the sacrifice of the God-man, Jesus Christ, all separation is gone. No reality confines, no dimension separates.

E. R. M.

Coming to God

With the confession of the repenting, believing sinner, Christ mingles His own righteousness, that the prayer of fallen man may go up as fragrant incense before the Father, and the grace of God be imparted to the believing soul. Jesus says to the trembling, repenting soul: "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me" (Isa. 27:5). "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). Will you let Him reason with you? Will you commit to Him the keeping of your soul as unto a faithful Creator? Come then, and let us live in the light of His countenance, and pray, as did David, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. 51:7). By faith apply the blood of Christ to your heart, for that alone can make you whiter than snow. But you say, "This surrender of all my idols will break my heart." This giving up of all for God is represented by your falling upon the Rock and being broken. Then give up all for Him; for unless you are broken, you are worthless.

When you turn away from the broken cisterns that can hold no water, and in the name of Jesus your Advocate come directly to God, asking for the things you need, the righteousness of Christ will be revealed as your righteousness, the virtue of Christ as your virtue. You will then understand that justification will come alone through faith in Christ; for in Jesus is revealed the perfection of the character of God; in His life is manifested the outworking of the principles of holiness. Through the atoning blood of Christ the sinner is set free from bondage and condemnation; through the perfection of the sinless Substitute and Surety, he may run in the race of humble obedience to all of God's commandments. Without Christ he is under the condemnation of the law, always a sinner, but through faith in Christ he is made just before God.

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Ephesians
2:14-16

"Through the atoning blood of Christ the sinner is set free from bondage."

Excerpted from Selected Messages, Book 1, pp. 329, 330.

The Mediator Metaphor

by John Brunt

EVIDENCE

Key text:
1 Timothy 2:5

This week's lesson uses several metaphors to point to the work of Jesus Christ. One of them is "bridge," a non-biblical metaphor. Another is biblical. It is taken from 1 Timothy 2:5, where Jesus is called "Mediator," or perhaps in our language "go-between." In this verse Paul seems to be quoting an early Christian hymn.

Of these two metaphors the second is better. Personal metaphors, those drawn from human experience, inevitably are better for religious purposes. A bridge is inactive. It simply allows a person to get from one side to the other. Certainly there is some validity in seeing Jesus as the one who makes access to God possible, but the picture of a static, inactive bridge over a chasm loses most of the dynamic of Jesus' work for us.

Although the biblical metaphor of mediator is better, it too has its problems. Metaphors create pictures in our minds. The metaphor "mediator" could create false pictures. When we think of a mediator or go-between, we usually think of two parties who are unable to communicate with each other directly either because of separation or hostility. The go-between is different from either party, but attempts to bring the two together by alleviating the hostilities or aiding in communication.

When this typical picture is applied to Jesus' role as mediator, it can lead us astray in several ways. First, we might think that somehow God needs convincing—that he is against us and a mediator is needed to alleviate his hostilities. This traditional picture of mediator might also make us think that Jesus is different from God—that he is not truly God, but only God's go-between. It might also lead us to think that he is not really one of us. In each case, however, such thinking would be a mistake.

"No one metaphor for Jesus' work is sufficient."

This is why no one metaphor for Jesus' work is sufficient. Each one must be balanced with others to present a mosaic that is far more than any one of its parts. This early Christian hymn that Paul quotes in 1 Timothy 2:5 tells us something important, but potentially misleading, about Jesus' work. Jesus' role as a middleman must be balanced by another metaphor that comes from 2 Corinthians 5:19. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." God is not a distant or hostile God who needs a mediator to reconcile him to us; rather he himself is actively working in Jesus, reconciling us. That Jesus is the "way" to the Father (John 14:6) must be balanced with Jesus' own statement "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30, RSV). And this hymn itself balances the picture of Jesus as our mediator by referring to him in the very next line as the human Jesus. He is not only our Mediator; he is truly one of us.

This is no ordinary go-between. Never were there two hostile parties who needed a negotiator to end hostilities. Rather God himself is active in Christ. In fact, in Jesus Christ, we encounter God himself. Yet in a paradox far too rich to be contained by any one metaphor, Jesus, at the same time, is truly one of us. The unity of God and humanity in him makes him mediator—and much more.

John Brunt is dean of the School of Theology at Walla Walla College.

Access Points

by Morna Golke

HOW TO

Key text:
John 14:6

I was furious. Meaningless phrases piled on my computer screen. "Access code violation." "Input error." "Unknown file name." How could my file be unknown from five minutes before? With each blurb I got closer to reacting violently. My own computer tolerance allowed for only so much aggravation—if I couldn't "access" I would just "delete." A friend who understood both Fortran and non-verbal English walked over and punched a few keys. Suddenly the cursor beeped obediently, and he explained what the problem had been. In the confusing world of computers, a friend among the video display terminals made the difference. He understood my confusion and the computer's limitations; he was my access point.

Sometimes the circuits to God are clogged with frustration. He seems so far away and unaware of all our trials. If we do pray, things only seem to get worse. We feel safe enough ignoring God when things go well, but then trouble hits and in desperation we search for that magical access point to God. When we realize that through Jesus God's line is always open, we can relax and make use of the opportunity to share our lives with him.

In college, I've learned that study is a major part of success. My computer class went better when I studied, though often my friend would help me understand things. Jesus as our access point may not be all that easy to comprehend, but he invites us to study, to search deeply, to question and search some more. He promises to guide us around all the blocked lines and muddled days.

In a chapel talk one day I heard some good advice for Bible study. First, prepare your atmosphere—where, when, and how long. Make sure it's quiet. Decide what you want to accomplish in your studies and how you intend to do it. List your own questions, pick a topic, find a good concordance (or two), and dive in. Keep a pen and piece of paper handy for those thoughts you want to jot down. Our minds retain those ideas we emphasize.

Prayer is a vital access point in our relationship with God. My friend would have difficulty helping me unless I told him what was wrong. Prayer gives us a special time to tell God what is wrong, to ask him questions, and then to listen. Try a prayer list. Things written down tend to help us organize ourselves, see through a situation, or realize others' needs. Let prayer be the outlet of our praise, as well as our frustrations. Through it our faith can reach beyond the questions, and can access the power that promises to help us hold on.

Jesus—the key, the bridge, the access point. The way, the truth, the life. "Come unto me," he says. "I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). He is our way across the confusion of our lives. He is our access point.

Morna Golke is a junior English major at Walla Walla College who fights with computers as a minor pastime.

Of Bridges and Ladders

by Thane Plummer

OPINION Point

Key text:
Genesis 28:10-17

There are many names and metaphors given for Christ in the Bible, but bridge is not one of them. It is a recent concept and has limitations like any other analogy. When you look at the limits of an analogy, you can begin to understand it better. Let me illustrate.

In times of war, the same bridge that meant safety to some meant death to others. As a result bridges became strategic battle points and many were destroyed. Our salvation lies in Christ; but unlike a bridge he is no longer vulnerable to opposition. He is eternal.

A bridge is a route from one place to another. But Christ is more than just a route; he is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). This is much more than just a convenient way to get to heaven. Christ is our living example; in his life we find the way for our lives day by day.

Also, Christ compares himself to the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd knows his sheep by name, searches for the lost, and carries them into the fold. He is active in the work for our salvation. He loves us. Bridges are strangely incapable of such intimate relationships.

Counterpoint

A bridge is a beautiful and fitting symbol to describe Christ's work of redemption for fallen mankind. To say that it is limited is true, but if there were such a thing as an unlimited symbol, we would have only that one symbol for our Savior. All others would fall short. These shortcomings lie in our language, not in the symbolism.

Jacob dreamed of a ladder that reached from heaven to earth. A ladder upon which angels ascended and descended to minister to the needs of man. This ladder brought hope to Jacob, hope of a Savior who would resolve his separation from God. Thinking of Christ as a bridge can represent the same concept. As Christ said, "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Just as bridges make access to certain places possible, Christ has made the way to the Father possible for us.

Bridges are landmarks, monuments, and can even be symbolic within themselves. The story is told of U.S. soldiers returning home from the Pacific after World War II. They rejoiced when land was sighted, but as the ship sailed closer to San Francisco, every neck strained to see one thing: the Golden Gate Bridge. At the sight of the bridge many of the soldiers openly wept for joy. Some meditated solemnly upon its grandeur, while others shouted out cheers at the top of their lungs. The bridge was their symbol—their symbol of home and of freedom.

Even so, Christ's work of redemption for us is a landmark of his love. We shall praise him and rejoice eternally in remembrance of this work. Because of it we can come home; we can be free.

Thane Plummer is a bioengineering student at Walla Walla College.

REACT
Lesson 2

1. How does emphasis on the *single* way to salvation affect your understanding of the destinies of people of other religions? What does this mean to those never exposed to Jesus Christ? Must people of all religions ultimately convert to the single "correct" faith before they will be saved? Is there a single "correct" faith?
 2. What different aspects of our relationship to God do the two metaphors in the Evidence piece describe? Are there ways in which each is inadequate? Is the author correct in maintaining that the "mediator" metaphor is superior? What "mosaic" do you perceive when the two views are harmonized? Is it an accurate picture?
 3. Does the metaphor of Christ as our "access point" (How To) reveal any insights not found in other metaphors? Can you think of any other accurate metaphors? Try to list several.
 4. If we think of Christ as a bridge over the chasm between us and God, may we also think of him as a bridge that keeps us above the "troubled waters" of life?
 5. If Christ is the only way to God, are the church, the Bible, the Ellen White writings really all that essential? Why do we need them if we have complete access to God in Christ?
-

The Universal Need

"Creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God" (Romans 8:20, 21, Jerusalem Bible).



Egotistical Assumptions

by Darold Bigger

INTRODUCTION

Acid rain, strip mining, water pollution, Greenpeace, oil spills, unclean air, toxic wastes, fuel economy, endangered species, radio-active waste, hunting season.

What do all these have to do with religion? And with Christ the Mediator?

For too long we assumed that the world's resources were here for us to squander in whatever way we wished.

When human beings were first created they were placed in an abundant world prepared for them. It was made for their use and pleasure. And now for *our* use and pleasure. Or so we seem to think.

We're very egotistical to think the rest of the world exists for our sake. We plunder its wealth, squander its resources, trample its beauty. We dig, cut, plow, blast, or shoot whatever gets in our way. We use, abuse, deface, and destroy.

It was never intended to be that way. The natural and animal worlds were not created for us to destroy. The world was made to reproduce and replenish itself. Delicate balances harmonized the planet. This balance would have been eternal if human beings had fulfilled their part.

"You shall have dominion" (see Gen. 1:26), God said. That management was to have been done for the sake of the managed and not just for the sake of the managers. The rest of the world existed at the will of God, not the will of humanity. With origin comes

authority and responsibility for ultimate concerns. People were never to take over questions of ultimate destiny. That was God's responsibility. Their supervision was to bring fulfillment to the creation. God never intended for the human managers to destroy their charges.

We, who were to have dominion over the world, tried to take control. We, who were to be coordinators of life, became vehicles of death. We, who were to manage the world's harmony, now preside over its demise. Because of our sins, the rest of God's world suffers.

That seems unfair. Our assumption that the world was created for our use, or misuse, brings pain and death to the whole creation. And that assumption leads to another.

We've also assumed that the rescue from a doomed world is for us alone. Christ died just for *us*, he gave his life just that *we* might live.

But that is another egotistical assumption. Scripture repeatedly describes a restored earth as well as restored sinners. (See Isa. 11:6; 35:1.)

Through all this, Christ was no disinterested bystander. This is his world, shaped by him at creation, preserved by him after sin, rebought by him at the cross, and to be restored by him after the millennium.

The final solution to our problems comes from our Creator, our Sustainer, and our Future Hope. It comes as a result of Christ's intervention on behalf of his world.

Darold Bigger is pastor of the Walla Walla College Church.

Divine Inertia

LOGOS The daily deterioration of the natural environment manifests itself in a variety of forms and with abundant and far-reaching effects. Paul noticed this chaotic trend back in the first century A.D. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time" (Rom. 8:22, NIV). The prophet Hosea also detected such a phenomenon and eloquently deplored it. "There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying" (Hosea 4:2, 3, NIV).

This tragic truth can only be attributed to a single cause—the hideous specter of sin. Given a foothold in Eden, evil has run rampant throughout humanity, spilling its fatal venom onto innocent creation until the contamination is nearly complete. Only the ultimate outcome remains, when "the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies" (Isa. 51:6, NIV).

Isaiah's prediction would already be reality except for the staying power of Christ's mediatorial work. His constant intercession for man's sins is the glue that prevents disintegration. "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17, NIV). Faithfully keeping evil at bay, Christ never relaxes his loving vigil. "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22, 23, NIV). This demonstration of divine mercy is not simply to extend human probation, however. It also has a more universal purpose in the heavenly scheme. Christ's redemptive work safeguards the loyalty of unfallen beings to prevent a recurrence of sin. "The purpose is that all the angelic powers should now see the complex wisdom of God's plan being worked out through the Church, in conformity to that timeless purpose which he centred in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Eph. 3:10, 11, Phillips).

Infinite mercy notwithstanding, the assaults of evil will not be blunted indefinitely. The time will come when the prophecy of Revelation will be fulfilled, and Christ will reluctantly consign each individual to the implications of his choices. "The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great—and for destroying those who destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18, NIV). Only then will the universe be returned to its flawless state, so that "all human history should be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in Heaven or earth should find its perfection and fulfillment in him" (Eph. 1:10, Phillips).

L. R. C.

God With Us

"His name shall be called Immanuel, . . . God with us." "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God" is seen "in the face of Jesus Christ." From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was "the image of God," the image of His greatness and majesty, "the outshining of His glory." It was to manifest this glory that He came to our world. To this sin-darkened earth He came to reveal the light of God's love,—to be "God with us." Therefore it was prophesied of Him, "His name shall be called Immanuel."

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"—"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"—"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.

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 unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union.

The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died,—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, "and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift,—Immanuel, "God with us."

TESTIMONY

Key text:
2 Corinthians
5:18, 19

**"Our little world
is the lesson
book of the
universe."**

Excerpted from *The
Desire of Ages*, pp. 19,
20, 28.

Love the Land

by Jon Dybdahl

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Romans 8:22,
23, RSV

In 1854, Chief Seattle, a famous Indian orator, spoke at an assembly of tribes preparing to sign treaties with whites who had overrun their lands. In the following paragraphs are excerpts of his speech.¹ Though he feared the intentions of the "white man," the chief had earlier accepted Christianity. His concept of God and his creation gives us a new perspective on "sins" of "white men" against this created world.

"The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. . . .

"We will consider your offer. For we know that if we do not sell, you may come with guns and take our land.

"But how can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?"

"Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

"So, when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us.

**"Whatever
befalls the earth
befalls the
children of the
earth."**

"We know that white people do not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to them as the next, for they are strangers who come in the night and take from the land whatever they need. The earth is not their brother or their sister but their enemy, and when they have conquered it, they move on. They leave their ancestors' graves behind, and they do not care. They kidnap the earth from their children. They do not care. Their parents' graves and their children's birthright are forgotten. They treat their mother, the earth, and their brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. Their appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert.

"So we will consider your offer to buy our land. If we decide to accept, I will make one condition: You must treat the beasts of this land as your brothers.

"I am a savage and I do not understand any other way. I have seen a thousand rotting buffalos on the prairie, left by whites who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and I do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive.

"Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. We did not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

"So if we sell you our land, love it as we've loved it. Care for it as we've cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you take it. And with all your strength, with all your mind, with all your heart, preserve it for your children and love it . . . as God loves us all."

1. "The Earth Is Our Mother." Reprinted with permission from *The Other Side* magazine, January 1983, pp. 20, 21. 300 West Apsley St., Philadelphia, PA 19144. Copyright © 1983.

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Discerning the Need

by Gregory E. Valdez

If the Lord were to come to you and ask you what you believe the most pressing problem is in the world today, what would you answer? Would you say hunger, pollution, war, sickness, disease or death? Or, would you be more philosophical in your answer and say immorality, hatred, distrust, man's inhumanity to man, or sin in general?

During a recent meeting at a faculty member's home that same question was asked: "What is man's greatest need?" While we alluded to many of the problems already mentioned, we could not come up with a single problem common to everyone. The only thing that the majority could agree upon was that people need to be ministered to, and that their needs must be realized and met in the context of where and how they live their individual lives.

How can we best discern human need and meet it? The apostle Paul touches on the universal answer in the book of Philippians when he urges us to have the same "mind" as Christ (Phil. 2:5). He assures us that the Lord will assist us in thinking correctly (3:15), and he suggests what we should think about (4:7, 8). In short, Paul is saying that we must learn to think as God thinks. If we do, we will see those people around us as God sees them. We will see ourselves as God sees us, and most important, we will see sin as God sees sin. Words like *love*, *compassion*, *forgiveness*, and *understanding* will take on exciting new meanings. When we think like God, we will be eager to cooperate with his plan for meeting the needs of the earth and the intelligences of the universe.

But how can we begin to think like God? Again, in the book of Philippians, the apostle Paul shows us how to begin:

1. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition . . . but consider others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3, NIV).

2. "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5, NIV).

3. "All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained" (Phil. 3:15, 16, NIV). We must leave ourselves open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and when we are impressed, act on those impressions.

4. "Rejoice in the Lord . . . be gentle . . . do not be anxious . . . pray . . . ask . . . with thanksgiving" (Phil. 4:4-6, NIV). Rejoice in the Lord, thank him for the prayers he has answered in the past, and thank him for answering your present and future prayers.

5. In Phil. 4:8 Paul reminds his readers that when they are tempted or discouraged they should remember the good things that God has done.

6. "And my God will meet all of your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19, NIV). His riches, not ours. What a promise!

HOW TO

Key text:
Philippians 2:2

Destroyers of the Earth

by Brent Stanyer

OPINION

Key text:

Revelation 11:18

In this week's lesson we have seen that the needs of the universe include not only the salvation of individuals, but also the restoration of our universe to its original condition. This condition includes a renewal of the relationships that were established when the universe was created.

Sin has disrupted these relationships. The disruption is visible in our relationships with God and fellow humans, and it is also visible in our treatment of the environment and the natural order of creation.

As was suggested in Wednesday's section, human beings have been guilty of ignoring their relationship to the environment and treating the earth in a careless and haphazard manner. This mistreatment seems to be in direct opposition to the idea of responsibility we find given to Adam and Eve when they were entrusted with dominion over the Garden of Eden (Gen. 1:28).

I presume that we would find it very strange to hear Adam suggesting to Eve that the earth existed for them to use as they saw fit, a place they could treat in any manner that they chose. Rather, I see the first inhabitants of the earth as also being the first environmentalists whose care and concern for the earth was limitless.

When sin disrupted the perfect order of creation, the need for responsibility still remained. However, this sin caused human concerns to become selfish, and thus the earth's inhabitants saw the earth as theirs to treat in whatever manner was necessary to satisfy their desires. Mankind lost its sense of responsibility for its earthly home. As a result of this loss of responsibility, the earth has become both a tool in the pursuit of happiness and a dumping ground for the wastes left over from those pursuits.

Just as we wait for "the redemption of our bodies" so creation waits to "be set free from its bondage to decay" (Rom. 8:23, 21, RSV). Here Paul suggests that there is an integral relationship between the redemption of mankind and the restoration of the earth. Unless we realize that this connection involves human responsibility and return to our original relationship with God and his creation, we are in danger of being listed with the destroyers of the earth.

Brent Stanyer was a senior religion and business administration major at Walla Walla College at the time of this writing.

1. Why is it that the physical world also has to bear the brunt of sin? Is it that acid rain, disappearing species, or squandered resources are a constant reminder of what sin does?
2. Has sin on earth in any way affected inhabitants of sinless worlds? Does Christ's mediation have any effect on the sin problem from their perspective?
3. What kind of world would it be for us if we treated the earth like Chief Seattle (see Evidence)? Would there be any advance of civilization, or would we continue living close to the land as did Adam and Eve and our North American Indians? How can we specifically "love the land" as admonished?
4. Do Christians have a responsibility to cooperate with Christ in his mediatorial role of preserving the natural order? If so, what specific action would such a responsibility lead us to in today's world? What implications might Chief Seattle's speech (see Evidence) have for such a responsibility?
5. Do you agree with the statement in the How To section that the most pressing need of mankind is to learn to think as God thinks? Why or why not?
6. Does God punish destroyers of the earth (see Opinion)? If so, does that include those who litter, hunt, or remove their catalytic converters?

The Mediator's Role

" 'The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' " (Matthew 20:28, NIV).



Arms of Love

by Kelly Wilson

INTRODUCTION

How much do you love me? Perhaps you can recall being asked that question as a child. I certainly can! Although I don't remember exactly who the questioner was, I do know it was someone I loved very much. So in answering, I stretched out my arms as far as I could. My back was arched, and I was even standing on tip-toe with the effort, as I declared, "This much!" And yet as hard as I tried, I could never stretch my arms wide enough to show the breadth and depth of my love. I could reach only so wide and no more. My gesture was inadequate.

But when Jesus stretched out his arms of love on the cross the gesture was more than adequate. He encompassed all humanity in that reach, that saving embrace. His love was not limited by his humanity, but was enhanced by it. And his death gave us the opportunity for new life.

A new life, a new beginning—the thought is bright with hope in a dismal world, and so it should be. We who were once estranged from God by a wall of sin, now have an invitation to be forgiven and to come home.

In 1979, then President Jimmy Carter became a mediator between Egypt and Israel. He mediated resolutions to the differences involved in a decades-long conflict. He faced what was to become

probably the most difficult and delicate mediating of his presidency. He dedicated himself to bring peace between two countries. When Israel's Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat of Egypt finally agreed to a peace treaty, it was considered a major foreign policy breakthrough. Carter confided to the press, "One of the most frustrating and discouraging experiences I ever had in my life was in dealing with the Mideast settlement between Egypt and Israel." But out of the frustration and effort came triumph.

In the first century, Jesus became a triumphal mediator when he became flesh and blood like all other human beings. He too was dedicated to peace and to the resolution of differences—the differences between us sinners and God, the holiest of holy.

Although he faced cruelty and death as the ransom for sin, he succeeded! He broke those barriers of sin and established his power over sin and Satan, giving us the freedom to be reconciled to God and to answer God's call to come home.

The prominent difference between Carter and Jesus as mediators is this: Carter was hailed for putting his career and reputation on the line to help *change* the world; Jesus put his life on the line to *save* the world.

Kelly Wilson is a journalism major at Walla Walla College.

A New Status

LOGOS

When Henry David Thoreau was on his deathbed, his religious aunt came to him and asked with great concern, "Henry, have you made your peace with God?" Thoreau is reported to have deadpanned in response, "I didn't know we were enemies." He was right in the sense that God never takes an attitude of animosity toward us. Yet because God loves us he has to oppose the sin that destroys us. Thus Paul writes, "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight" (Col. 1:21, 22, NIV).

How does Christ's death remove our sin and give us the holiness necessary for reconciliation? "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24, NIV, emphasis supplied). Our iniquity need no longer separate us from God, for it was laid on Jesus at the cross (see Isa. 53:6). Jesus called this vicarious, substitutionary death a ransom. "The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28, NIV). We are no more capable of taking care of our guilt before God than a bound and gagged kidnap victim is capable of coming up with his own ransom. But Jesus' death takes care of it for "the many."

The devil and death are other factors which threaten to alienate us from God, but Christ removes these obstacles as well. This he could do only by fully experiencing what it means to be human. "since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (Heb. 2:14, 15, NIV). William Johnsson comments that the "Son became man so that He might die. . . . He would enter the enemy's ground and subject Himself to the terrors of the supreme, the eternal weapon. But by so doing, He would turn the tables on the ancient enemy. Taking the devil's instrument, He would nullify it. Just as He tasted death for every man, assuming our place before God, so by His own experience in death He removed its terror forevermore for those who accept Him."¹

Our own attitude of rebellion is another source of alienation from God that Christ's mediation removes. "God exalted him [Jesus] to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel" (Acts 5:31, NIV, emphasis supplied).

Christ's mediation does not alter God's attitude toward us. Rather, in fully resolving the problem of our alienation, it becomes the means by which God, in his incredibly abundant grace, confers on us the same status as the risen Christ. "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6, NIV).

D. F. M.

1. William G. Johnsson, *In Absolute Confidence*, p. 67.

Angels Couldn't Do It

selected by Myron Widmer

The highest angel in heaven had not the power to pay the ransom for one lost soul. Cherubim and seraphim have only the glory with which they are endowed by the Creator as His creatures, and the reconciliation of man to God could be accomplished only through a mediator who was equal with God, possessed of attributes that would dignify, and declare him worthy to treat with the Infinite God in man's behalf, and also represent God to a fallen world. Man's substitute and surety must have man's nature, a connection with the human family whom he was to represent, and, as God's ambassador, he must partake of the divine nature, have a connection with the Infinite, in order to manifest God to the world, and be a mediator between God and man.

These qualifications were found alone in Christ. Clothing His divinity with humanity, He came to earth to be called the Son of man and the Son of God. He was the surety for man, the ambassador for God—the surety for man to satisfy by His righteousness in man's behalf the demands of the law, and the representative of God to make manifest His character to a fallen race.

The world's Redeemer possessed the power to draw men to Himself, to quiet their fears, to dispel their gloom, to inspire them with hope and courage, to enable them to believe in the willingness of God to receive them through the merits of the divine Substitute. As subjects of the love of God we ever should be grateful that we have a mediator, an advocate, an intercessor in the heavenly courts, who pleads in our behalf before the Father.¹

Christ Jesus is represented as continually standing at the altar, momentarily offering up the sacrifice for the sins of the world. He is a minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. The typical shadows of the Jewish tabernacle no longer possess any virtue. A daily and yearly typical atonement is no longer to be made, but the atoning sacrifice through a mediator is essential because of the constant commission of sin. Jesus is officiating in the presence of God, offering up His shed blood, as it had been a lamb slain. Jesus presents the oblation offered for every offense and every shortcoming of the sinner.²

We have no time to lose. We know not how soon our probation may close. Eternity stretches before us. The curtain is about to be lifted. Christ is soon to come. The angels of God are seeking to attract us from ourselves and from earthly things. Let them not labor in vain.

When Jesus rises up in the most holy place, lays off His mediatorial robes, and clothes Himself with the garments of vengeance, the mandate will go forth: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: . . . and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11, 12.³

TESTIMONY

Key text:

1 John 3:1

"He came to earth to be called the Son of man and the Son of God."

1. *The Review and Herald*, Dec. 22, 1891 (Or *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 255, 256).

2. *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1077; comment on Romans 8:28, 34.

3. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 314, 315; published in 1904, in view of the coming pantheistic crisis in 1905.

Myron Widmer is associate pastor of the Walla Walla College Church.

Ignore Only at Great Peril

by Charles Scriven

EVIDENCE

Key text:

Hebrews 2:14
and

Colossians 1:13

I want to remind you of two main ways in which Adventists currently talk about the cross and its significance, and then offer a third way. I will also suggest that this third way can be ignored only at great peril to the adequacy of our witness as Christians.

According to one way, the cross was the scene of the penal, substitutionary death of Christ. Human beings committed sin; the law requires death as a penalty for sin; Jesus on the cross bears the penalty as our innocent substitute; we can now be saved without compromising the requirements of law. In this view there is a standard of justice to be satisfied—the legal penalty for sin must be paid—and God would be remiss to forgive anyone without making sure this has been done.

The second view holds that the cross has nothing at all to do with satisfying the demands of justice. Neither the Bible nor logic can allow such an idea, say proponents. It is true that human beings have committed sin, but the central thing about this is not that it puts us under the legal penalty of death (though sin does lead to death) but that it breaks the relationship of trust which should exist between us and God. God wants above all things to forgive us, and has always wanted this. But how can he communicate his forgiveness to us when we have become distrustful of him? The answer is that he can do this through a moving disclosure of his character, and this is what he does through his Son upon the cross.

The cross is not the payment of a penalty to satisfy legal requirements; it is a demonstration of God's love. And when we who sin see in the cross how deep and wide his love really is, our bondage to distrust will be overcome and we will assume once more an attitude of trusting obedience to God.

Our key texts for today suggest a third way of interpreting the cross, a way highly compatible with our Adventist vision yet not, I think, discussed so often as the other two. In this view the fundamental significance of the cross is victory—victory over the powers of evil, deliverance from the dominion of darkness. Arguably, it is the view that predominates both in the New Testament and in the writings of the earliest Christian leaders.¹ It suggests two things that are inadequately represented in the other views. One is the idea that nonviolent love, a love that takes upon itself the weakness of the cross, is *how* evil in our world is overcome. This nonviolent love is, even to this day, God's will for disciples of Christ. The other is that the cross changes history, that it disarms the evil powers in our social and political life and guarantees the ultimate transformation of our history. On this you may consult 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 and Colossians 2:15, for example, as well as the passages cited above.

Should we not place greater emphasis on this third motif? How else will we ever advance beyond the vapid individualism that has so long kept us from the social and political concerns that characterized the prophets and even Jesus himself?

Charles Scriven is an assistant professor of theology at Walla Walla College.

"Love that takes upon itself the weakness of the cross is how evil is overcome"

1. See Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor* (New York: MacMillan, 1969).

Hard to Say I'm Sorry

by Ed Boyatt

"Son, I would like you to go next door and tell her you are sorry."

"But, Dad, I don't want to. I'm not sorry."

"It's not that hard to say, 'I'm sorry.' Just last week you told me how you were sorry in disappointing me."

"Yes, Dad, but that's different—I know you."

Scripture tells us that one of the mediator's roles is to give repentance and forgiveness (Acts 5:31). I understand how forgiveness is a gift. Jesus lived and died that I might be justified and forgiven. This is freely given to me; no performance on my part is required; my work is only to accept the free gift. But how is repentance a gift? How can sorrow and a determination to change my behavior be "given" to me?

I believe my five-year-old son expressed a simple theological dictum in the statement, "I know you." Joy and sorrow come best from personal friendships. That is why the heart of repentance is relational. Hence, sin is not just breaking a rule, sin is hurting a friendship.

The gift of friendship is the capacity to be joyful or sad. Jesus does not divinely impute us with repentant sorrow, but the capacity for such feeling and action does come from a personal friendship with him. This finds a human parallel with the close relationship I have with my son. This unique friendship makes it possible to experience great joy or sorrow.

The issue is not to try to make ourselves to be deeply sorrowful, but to develop through daily prayer and Bible study a personal friendship with Jesus Christ; so that joy or sadness will spontaneously come when our special friend is joyful or disappointed.

This is why Paul tells us that true sorrow is brought about by God's love, not from the motives of fear, reward, force, or duty (Rom. 2:4).

No wonder it was hard for my son to feel sorrowful about another person that he did not know very well. Where there is little knowledge, there is little love. Where there is little love, there is little potential for genuine joy or sorrow.

HOW TO

Key text:
Acts 5:31

Ed Boyatt is vice-president for student affairs at Walla Walla College.

The Unsigned Contract

by Myron Widmer

OPINION

Key text:
Ephesians
2:13-16

PART I: A Parable

It took only a few moments for the old store owner to sense that he had been left out, that he had gotten the worst end of the business deal. But the contract had been signed—no backing out now.

He had to do something about it. He knew someone he could trust with his troubles, and one who had the expertise needed to somehow get the salesman to give him better contractual terms.

A knock on the door brought a friendly greeting and a warm chair by the fireside. The friend listened intently as the simple story was told. Yes, agreed the friend, it was a bad deal. And the friend said he would try to work for a better contract.

Two weeks passed until the old black phone rang in the little general store. It was his friend. He had sorted everything out, and the salesman was willing to come for a meeting between the two. A new contract had already been written out to the betterment of the store owner. All the owner needed to do was to sign it. A meeting time was set. A place was agreed upon. The day arrived.

The salesman and the friend waited at the courthouse, the place of the meeting. The new, fairer contract waited upon the heavy oak table. All that was needed was the local store owner's approving signature to make it legal. The two men continued to wait. The store owner was now half an hour late. A phone call to the store went unanswered, as did the call to his home. A short walk to the store by the salesman and the friend found the assistant in charge, and he didn't know when the owner would return. The assistant said he heard the owner mumbling something as he was going out the door, something about not going to the meeting.

The salesman had another appointment and couldn't wait any longer. He drove off muttering that the old contract must still be abided by . . . and something about the foolishness of the store owner.

PART II: An Opinion

It is logical to assume that Christ's mediatorial work has provided the way for both an improved, sinless, physical world, and a pure (non-sinful) spiritual world of human hearts where human-kind can be assured of their original role as sons and daughters of God because the wall of hostility has been broken down.

It seems illogical, though, to assume that since the wall of hostility is broken down that everything has been accomplished for me, and without me, and thus I need do nothing. No greater mistake could be made. Though I cannot do anything to earn it, I must reach out and grasp it. "It is peace that you need—Heaven's forgiveness and peace and love in the soul. Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; you can never hope, by your own efforts, to secure it. But God offers it to you as a gift, 'without money and without price.' Isaiah 55:1. It is yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it."¹

1. *Steps to Christ*, p. 49.

Myron Widmer is associate pastor at Walla Walla College Church.

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1. What factors alienate or threaten to alienate you from God? How does Christ deal with these factors?
 2. What do you think Jesus meant in describing his death as a ransom? To whom or what is the ransom paid?
 3. Why does Ellen White suggest that only one equal with God could be the mediator for earth's sinful race?
 4. Is the cross the payment of a penalty to satisfy legal requirements, or is it strictly a demonstration of God's love? Or both? Or neither?
 5. Charles Scriven (*Evidence*) suggests that nonviolent love, a love that takes upon itself the weakness of the cross, is *how* evil is overcome. What ramifications might this have for our view of Christ and our struggle against sin(s)?
 6. What practical implications does viewing the cross as victory (see *Evidence*) have for how we relate to our society, our government, and those individuals or nations we consider our enemies?
 7. Why is it that joy and sorrow come most often in relationships with personal friends? What would this say about our relationship with Christ?
 8. What implications do you see in the parable "The Unsigned Contract"?

REACT
Lesson 4

Worthy Is the Lamb

“ ‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!’ ” (Revelation 5:12, NIV).



Wanted: A Messiah With Eternal Impact

by Julie
Lenee Woods

INTRO- DUCTION

During the French Revolution various revolutionaries attempted to undermine the role of God and the church in the lives of the French people. The church's land was seized, and the new government tried to replace people's religious fervor with nationalism to help the revolutionary cause. C. H. Robinson relates the advice of the wily and mutable Talleyrand regarding such efforts:

"M. Lepeaux on one occasion confided to Talleyrand his disappointment at the ill success with which he had met in his attempt to bring into vogue a new religion which he regarded as an improvement on Christianity. He explained that despite all the efforts of himself and his supporters his propaganda made no way. He asked Talleyrand's advice as to what he was to do. Talleyrand replied that it was indeed difficult to found a new religion, more difficult indeed than could be imagined, so difficult that he hardly knew what to advise. 'Still,' he

said—after a moment's reflection, 'there is one plan that you might at least try. I should recommend you to be crucified and to rise again on the third day.'"

Why has the death and resurrection of Christ had such a uniquely powerful impact on human history? What is it about those events that is as real and as life-altering today as it was 2,000 years ago?

In exploring such questions this week, we focus on Revelation 5:1-12. Here we find pictured in the right hand of God a scroll, sealed with seven seals, which holds the destiny of the human race. No one is qualified to open the scroll save a unique being who at one glance appears to be a lion, but at another, a lamb. Why is the Lion/Lamb qualified to break the seals of this all-important scroll? Why is that action significant to us?

The key to the once-for-all impact of the crucifixion and resurrection lies in the answers to these questions.

Julie Lenee Woods is a history teacher at Walla Walla Valley Academy.

The Bondsman

LOGOS I've recently been reflecting on an interesting question. Let's suppose I was taken into custody by the local law-enforcement officers and charged (unjustly, we'll presume) with a felony. Given my one phone call, who would I call to come post bail and win my release? The obvious answer would be my parents, but since they presently live on the other side of the world this option is quickly eliminated. Other relatives, like Grandma E., Uncle Don, and Uncle Ken, come to mind—but none of them live within 500 miles. And none of my easily-accessible friends would probably possess the resources sufficient to post even a medium-sized bond. So the question still has me a bit perplexed—and determined to avoid such a situation.

Fortunately for us, our options when apprehended by evil are not so indefinite. Not only do we have a Bondsman who is instantly accessible, but also one who believes in us enough to submit himself as surety for us. Otherwise known as the Lamb, our Bondsman is the one to whom the heavenly creatures sing, "You are worthy to take the scroll to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9, 10, NIV). What a transformation—from common criminals to priests and kings. Simply because our Bondsman was willing to wager his life on what he could make of us.

But it gets even more personal. Our Bondsman does not stop with our transformation—he even adopts us into his family. "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers" (Heb. 2:11, NIV).

In bringing us into this familial relationship, Jesus adapts himself to the role of kinsman-redeemer as defined in the Mosaic law. It was both the duty and the privilege of the nearest of kin under this unique statute to redeem property lost by an unfortunate relative (see Lev. 25:25). In our context, Jesus, by assuming human nature, becomes the next of kin of each one of us so that he might redeem us. He is truly our Brother. "For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17, NIV).

The infinite love of our Bondsman is phenomenal. Just a single phone call summons the One who does it all. And he does it all for free. No legal fees, no retainer, no expenses. Everything for nothing. No wonder heaven reverberates with the cry, "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Rev. 5:12, NIV). Amen.

L. R. C.

Offerer Is the Offering

by Rick Jordan

TESTIMONY

Key text:
John 1:29

Jesus is qualified to redeem us because, on the one hand he is equal to God in dignity, power, and glory (see Rev. 5:13). On the other hand, having taken human nature, he is united with us. "By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God."¹ Thus uniting humanity and divinity in his own nature he is uniquely able to restore us to a right relationship with God. Only by becoming fully human could he be the sacrificial lamb who takes away our sins.

"The image of Satan was upon men, and Christ came that He might bring to them moral power and efficiency. He came as a helpless babe, bearing the humanity we bear. 'As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.' He could not come in the form of an angel: for unless He met man as man, and testified by His connection with God that divine power was not given to him in a different way to what it will be given to us, He could not be a perfect example for us. He came in humility, in order that the humblest being upon the face of the earth could have no excuse because of his poverty, or ignorance, and say, because of these things, I cannot obey the law of Jehovah. Christ clothed His divinity with humanity, that humanity might touch humanity; that He might live with humanity, and bear all the trials and afflictions of man. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. In His humanity He understood all the temptations that will come to man."²

"Christ was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. To many it has been a mystery why so many sacrificial offerings were required in the old dispensation, why so many bleeding victims were led to the altar. But the great truth that was to be kept before men, and imprinted upon mind and heart, was this, 'Without shedding of blood, there is no remission.' In every bleeding sacrifice was typified 'the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'³

"The infinite sufficiency of Christ is demonstrated by His bearing the sins of the whole world. He occupies the double position of offerer and of offering, of priest and of victim. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. 'The prince of this world cometh,' He declares, 'and hath nothing in me.' He was the lamb without blemish and without spot."⁴

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.
2. Manuscript 21, 1895.
3. *Signs of the Times*, Jan. 2, 1893.
4. Letter 192, 1906.

Rick Jordan is a theology major at Walla Walla College.

“We Shall One Day . . .”

by Ernest Bursey

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Revelation
5:9, 10

Taken in vision through an open door into heaven, John describes what looks like a stage set for some sort of magnificent performance. The centerpiece is a throne whose occupant radiates a vermilion glow. A rainbow of luminous green arches over the throne. Four Creatures covered with eyes station themselves on the four sides of the throne. And encircling it are twenty-four kings engaged in a ritual bestowal of endless adoration of its occupant. At the signal of a song from the Creatures, they descend their thrones and fall before him.

Given his incontestable right to praise from the whole of the universe, the clutch of kings and the four animals around the throne amount to the tiniest fraction of the cast its occupant deserves. Where are the angels and why are they silent? And where are the rest of his subjects? With the rest of the stage darkened, the tableau around the throne creates a scene of splendid isolation. We sense the gap between God's worth and the size of the worshipping group, notable though it may be.

The lamblike Lion changes all that. The one occupying the throne holds in hand a scroll, the written title deed that insures mankind its inheritance. But the scroll is sealed up. Humanity is enslaved and cannot claim its royal prerogative. Who can open the scroll? Until someone else opens it, the future remains only a tantalizing possibility. When the Lamb takes the scroll, the immensity of his achievement moves the Four Creatures and the twenty-four Elders to prostrate before him and to issue a fresh song in his honor. (See Rev. 5:9, 10.)

“Humanity is enslaved and cannot claim its royal prerogative. Who can open the scroll?”

Now all the lights come on. John looks again, and this time he hears the voices of millions upon millions of angels declaring the Lamb-Lion's right to receive “Power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing” (Rev. 5:12, RSV). At last every living being from the heights of heaven to the depths below the seas unite in one vast issue of praise both to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb. Now the story can continue. Thanks to Jesus, all the actors, including the supporting cast are on stage. As Redeemer he has given the inhabitants of earth the right to claim their inheritance and reign as kings. In so doing he has given to God a kingdom of priests who offer their praise.

Redemption—the slain Lamb shows us how it happens. But the deeds and songs of the Four Creatures and the twenty-four Elders show us why. We shall need to remember that redemption is for God's sake, too. As for us, we are redeemed to worship. If the Scottish catechism is correct in its insistence that man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever, then, in the words of C. S. Lewis, “we shall one day discover that these are the same thing.”¹

1. C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, pp. 90-98. See also Kenneth Strand's *Perspectives in the Book of Revelation*.

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How to Deal With Your Destiny

If Jesus (the Lamb) has secured hope for our destinies through the cross, then we should let the cross shape the way we live out those destinies. We fulfill our personal destinies by following the Lamb wherever he goes (Rev. 14:4). That means his way of winning our redemption (the cross) becomes our way of relating to the world.

Fulfilling your destiny by following Jesus in the way of the cross means you can:

1. **Face your destiny with confidence.** Because of the Lamb's death in the *past* (Rev. 5:9), you have been brought into his kingdom in the *present* and are assured that you will reign in the *future* (vs. 10). Setbacks like financial loss, personal tragedy or failure, or disrupted relationships may at times rob you of a sense of joy and hope. But so long as you are allied with the Lamb, neither these things nor anything else can rob you of your destiny. You need not be menaced by anxiety, terror, or chaos as you face the future. You can face your destiny every day with confidence, not because of what you have accomplished or will accomplish, but because of what Jesus accomplished at Calvary.

2. **Deal with obstacles to your destiny peacefully.** The cross does more than win our salvation. It gives us a pattern for dealing with evil, that which threatens our destinies.

If the cross is your pattern, you will deal with obstacles through the patient, peaceful love revealed at the cross, rather than retaliating with violence or coercion. So, confront the teacher or boss that is unfair with kindness, truth, and compassion rather than malice or revenge. Seek reconciliation with the friend who hurts you, rather than holding a grudge. Stand up to the government that oppresses with a living witness to peace and justice rather than with bullets or bombs.

As John Howard Yoder points out, "the cross and not the sword, suffering and not brute power determines the meaning of history. . . . The triumph of the right is assured not by the might that comes to the aid of right . . . [but] is sure because of the power of the resurrection."¹

3. **See redemptive purpose in your destiny.** Taking the cross as your pattern means that you participate in its redemptive purpose. Because of what the Lamb has done you have been made a "priest" (Rev. 5:10) or minister, whether or not you've ever taken a theology course in your life!

This doesn't mean you preach next Sabbath (necessarily!). It means you make every decision based on how it will affect the redemptive purposes of the Lamb. No one can dictate to you just how sharing in his purpose will affect your decisions. The key is that that purpose become your preoccupation as you seek to fulfill your own destiny.

"Our lamb has conquered; him let us follow."²

HOW TO

Key text:

Revelation 14:

1-5

D. F. M.

1. John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, p. 238.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

The Qualification Question

by Hollibert E. Phillips

OPINION

Part 1

Key text:

1 Peter 2:21-24

Perhaps, as a preliminary comment, it should be borne in mind that the objective of this week's lesson is not to settle the question *whether* Jesus is qualified to be the Redeemer, but rather to understand *why*, according to Scripture, he is qualified to be the Redeemer. The two questions appear similar at first glance, but a little reflection should reveal that they are different in a very important way.

The first question, from a purely human standpoint, is unanswerable because it would require knowledge, understanding, and standards of judgment which no human is in a position to come by. To answer this question would require that man occupy a vantage point which is identical to God's! Only so could he act the role of divine judge of the suitability of Christ.

The second question, on the other hand, requires simply that an individual come to know or understand that which only God is in a position to reveal to him or her. Put another way, the first requires the kind of firsthand knowledge which the second does not. One reason the two questions are sometimes confused is that when one learns the answer to the second question, it is all too easy for one to come to the conclusion that one has the answer to the first as well, an altogether different question.

In pursuing the second or "why" question, since we must draw upon human analogies to assist our understanding, it is helpful to call to mind a few noteworthy things regarding what is involved when we say of a person that he or she is qualified for a particular position or role. We may say, for example, that Princess Margaret is qualified to represent the queen of England on a given occasion primarily or solely because she belongs to a specific lineage—membership in the lineage being a precondition for appointments of a certain kind. This is not normally understood to be an earned qualification.

On the other hand, we can say that Paulo is qualified to practice medicine because he has fulfilled all the requirements necessary for the practice of a given branch of medicine. To be qualified in this case is to have earned the right to practice medicine.

There is also a third possibility. We may say that Pedro is qualified to speak or act on behalf of the treasurer since he was duly appointed to do so. For all we know, Pedro's name might have been arbitrarily plucked from a hat. He is qualified solely because he was selected for the role.

So far, we see that birth or origin, attainment, or arbitrary selection may qualify one. These possibilities, which are not exhaustive (need of some kind, or a special quality, for example, may also qualify an individual), can also appear in a variety of combinations.

Just what qualified Jesus to be the Lamb of God? Was it his origin, achievement, an arbitrary choice, a combination of these, or something else?

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The Qualifying Death

OPINION

Part 2

Key text:
Revelation 5:
9, 10

In Revelation 5, Jesus is qualified to open the scroll that holds our destiny because of an action he has taken in history. He has redeemed, or bought, us by his blood. Why does his blood qualify him to be our redeemer and open the scroll of destiny? As William Barclay points out, the reasons are summed up in the doxology of praise in verses 9 and 10.

"The praise rendered to the Lamb by the four living creatures and the elders is rendered because he died. In this song there is summed up the results of the death of Jesus Christ.

"(i) It was a *sacrificial* death. That is to say, it was a death with purpose in it. It was not an accident of history; it was not even the tragic death of a good and heroic man in the cause of righteousness and of God; it was a sacrificial death. The object of sacrifice is to restore the lost relationship between God and man; and it was for that purpose, and with that result, that Jesus Christ died.

"(ii) The death of Jesus Christ was an *emancipating* death. From beginning to end the New Testament is full of the idea of the liberation of mankind achieved by him. He gave his life a ransom (*lutron*) for many (Mark 10:45). He gave himself a ransom (*antilutron*) for all (1 Timothy 2:6). He redeemed us—literally *bought us out from (exagorazein)*—from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13). We are redeemed (*lutrousthai*) not by any human wealth but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:19). Jesus Christ is the Lord that bought us (*agorazein*) (2 Peter 2:1). We are bought with a price (*agorazein*) (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23). The New Testament consistently declares that it cost the death of Jesus Christ to rescue man from the dilemma and the slavery into which sin had brought him. The New Testament has no "official" theory of how that effect was achieved; but of the effect itself it is in no doubt whatever.

"(iii) The death of Jesus Christ was *universal* in its benefits. It was for men and women of every race. There was a day when the Jews could hold that God cared only for them and wished for nothing but the destruction of other peoples. But in Jesus Christ we meet a God who loves the world. The death of Christ was for all men and, therefore, it is the task of the Church to tell all men of it.

"(iv) The death of Jesus Christ was an *availing* death. He did not die for nothing. In this song three aspects of the work of Christ are singled out.

"(a) He made us *kings*. He opened to men the royalty of sonship of God. Men have always been sons of God by creation; but now there is a new sonship of grace open to every man.

"(b) He made us *priests*. In the ancient world the priest alone had the right of approach to God. When an ordinary Jew entered the Temple, he could make his way through the Court of the Gentiles, through the Court of the Women, into the Court of the Israelites; but into the Court of the Priests he could not go. It was thus far and no farther. But Jesus Christ opened the way for all men to

God. Every man becomes a priest in the sense that he has the right of access to God.

"(c) He gave us *triumph*. His people shall reign upon the earth. This is not political triumph or material lordship. It is the secret of victorious living under any circumstances. 'In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world' (John 16:33). In Christ there is victory over self, victory over circumstances and victory over sin.

"When we think of what the death and life of Jesus Christ have done for men, it is no wonder that the living creatures and the elders burst into praise of him."¹

Jesus is the Lamb qualified to secure our destinies, not just because of his divine-human origin or because of an arbitrary selection, but because of the effective, universal, emancipating effect of his sacrificial death.

1. From *The Revelation of John*, vol. 1, Translated with an Introduction and Interpretation by William Barclay (The Daily Bible Study series. Revised edition). Copyright © 1978 William Barclay. Used by permission of the Westminster Press, Philadelphia, PA.

REACT
Lesson 5

1. Revelation 5 pictures Jesus as being the only one worthy to open the scroll that symbolically contains human destiny. What makes him uniquely worthy to take the scroll?
 2. Why do you think the death of Jesus has had such a powerful impact on human history?
 3. Do you literally picture Christ as your "brother" (see Logos, Heb. 2:11)? In what ways is the "brother" concept of Christ valid? Could it in any way lead to a distorted understanding?
 4. Does Jesus' way of winning our redemption (the cross) have any implications for your life-style? How is the conflict between the Beast and the Lamb being played out in today's world? What, in your life situation, does it mean to follow the Lamb wherever he goes?
 5. If our destinies are secure in Jesus, then how should that fact influence our attitudes and priorities? How should it affect how we feel about world concerns such as catastrophes, hunger, and even nuclear war?
 6. What implications does the scene described in Revelation 4 and 5 have for our worship (see also Evidence)? Does our worship today tend to bring one closer to the end of glorifying God and enjoying him forever? How might it better accomplish this?
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Insight From the Old Covenant

“ ‘But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written’ ” (Exodus 32:32, NIV).



The Betrayed Covenant

by Steve Dally

INTRODUCTION

There is no room in Heaven
for you,
All others will be damned;
We are the chosen few,
The kingdom won't
be crammed.

This little poem reflects an attitude of spiritual arrogance adopted by countless religious groups and organizations throughout history. These have perceived themselves to be the exclusive recipients of God's covenant promise. "God's people" have always found it easier to understand the word *covenant* in terms of exclusiveness and privilege, rather than service and responsibility.

The word *covenant* (*berith*) signifies not only loyalty to God, but also commitment to the service of humanity. According to the Mosaic or Sinaitic covenant, it was impossible to demonstrate loyalty to God while one was apathetic about issues relating to social justice, specifically the needs of the poor, widows, orphans, and strangers or foreigners (Exodus 22). Today we will set the stage for our study by briefly discussing the Old Testament conflict between kingship and covenant. Then, during the remainder of this week, we will discuss the intercessory functions of prophet and priest, as well as some individual figures in the Old Testament, in the context of our personal and corporate needs for 1984-85.

Why did Samuel plead with Israel to reject her desire to choose a king (1 Sam. 8:1-18)?

More important, why did God warn his people against such a move? The answer lies in a close examination of the Old Testament covenant. The Mosaic laws which grew out of the Sinaitic covenant provided Israel with a religious and socio-political system that was equalitarian. They included a number of protective ordinances (such as the year of Jubilee, Lev. 25:11, 50, etc.) which were intended to prevent or limit the practices of racism, sexism, classism, and parochialism, which were common in the ancient world (as they are today). The covenant was opposed to any religious, political, or social hierarchical structure or caste system that would encourage poverty, idolatry, or prejudice in the minds of the people.

Kingship, on the other hand, tended to produce a host of inequities in Israel which led to these very extremes. By the time of Solomon there was an economic and social aristocracy in Israel, which produced a wealthy elite, while the masses became increasingly poor. The priesthood was included in this aristocracy as it served to offer "divine" legitimation to the political status quo. Under the new system of kingship Israel worshiped the god of nationalism more than the God of heaven. Though a few kings were faithful to the covenant, the monarchy contributed in large degree to Israel's twofold transgression: 1) idolatry and 2) social injustice.

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Mediation Illuminated

LOGOS Upon learning of the Lord's intention to destroy Sodom, Abraham asked, "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city?" (Gen. 18:23, NIV). Because he cared deeply about people, Abraham persisted in his mediatorial efforts until the Lord agreed to spare the city if there were only ten righteous ones in it. Because of his intense concern for people, Christ, too, persists in mediation. The judgment the world deserves is thus deferred so that as many as will respond to the gospel may be brought to salvation (2 Peter 3:9).

Moses demonstrated a similar concern for people in a very impressive fashion. When his people rebelled against God, Moses offered to forfeit his own salvation as an atonement for them. "But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written" (Ex. 32:32, NIV). Surely this is the supreme human illustration of Christ's mediation on our behalf, which is made possible by his substitutionary death.

The prophet and judge Samuel declared, "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you" (1 Sam. 12:23, NIV). Samuel continually brought the needs and concerns of his people before God. What a source of assurance that Christ does the same for us, only from his exalted position at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 1:3).

The offices of prophet, priest and king in Israel were all mediatorial—means of linking the people with their God. The New Testament depicts Christ fulfilling each role in the ultimate sense. Jesus was that great prophet foretold by Moses. "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you" (Acts 3:22, NIV). The prophets had continually mediated revelation from God to Israel (Jer. 7:25), and Jesus mediates the clearest and most complete revelation.

In carrying out their sacred rites of intercession and atonement, the priests were acting as representatives of the entire community of Israel. As our high priest, Christ is our permanent representative in heaven, and is "able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Heb. 7:25, NIV).

Kings also performed a mediatorial function because they were channels through which God's rule could partially be realized in Israel. "I have installed my King in Zion, my holy hill! I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father'" (Psalm 2:6, 7, NIV). Jesus was declared "with power" to be this reigning Son by virtue of his resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4). In him God's Kingdom is inaugurated on earth and becomes accessible to everyone—right now! That's mediation in the highest sense.

D. F. M.

Figures of the One to Come

by Kevin Paulson

Using Scripture as a guide, Ellen White relates the story of certain Old Testament mediators with direct application to the antitype, Jesus Christ.

As she depicts Abraham pleading that Sodom be spared if but ten righteous people could be found, the picture of Christ as mediator comes to view:

"The spirit of Abraham was the spirit of Christ. The Son of God is Himself the great Intercessor in the sinner's behalf. He who has paid the price for its redemption knows the worth of the human soul. With an antagonism to evil such as can exist only in a nature spotlessly pure, Christ manifested toward the sinner a love which infinite goodness alone could conceive."¹

While the wicked influence of Sodom grew in the land, threatening to engulf all in corruption, Abraham still exerted his efforts and those of his household to rescue the city's possessions from foreign invaders (Gen. 14:14-16). And when finally God purposed to destroy them, his servant was seen once more to plead in their behalf. So would Christ, till the end of history, plead for the suspension of justice "just a little longer."

In the same way we find Moses, as Israel repeatedly falls into sin, pleading with God to spare them, even if it meant his own damnation (Ex. 32:32). Ellen White declares: "Moses realized how dreadful would be the fate of the sinner; yet if the people of Israel were to be rejected by the Lord, he desired his name to be blotted out with theirs; he could not endure to see the judgments of God fall upon those who had been so graciously delivered. The intercession of Moses in behalf of Israel illustrates the mediation of Christ for sinful man."²

We often wonder why God so severely forbade the entrance of Moses and Aaron into Canaan. Is he so inflexible that a single momentary collapse under pressure calls for such a devastating verdict? The answer lies in the fact that persons chosen to lead the community are to stand not only as examples, but as representatives of Christ. Says Ellen White:

"God intended that these great leaders of His people should be representatives of Christ. Aaron bore the names of Israel upon his breast. He communicated to the people the will of God. He entered the most holy place on the Day of Atonement, 'not without blood,' as a mediator for all Israel. He came forth from that work to bless the congregation, as Christ will come forth to bless His waiting people when His work of atonement in their behalf shall be ended. It was the exalted character of that sacred office as representative of our great High Priest that made Aaron's sin at Kadesh of so great magnitude."³

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Genesis 18:22-32

**"The
Intercession of
Moses in behalf
of Israel
illustrates
the mediation
of Christ."**

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 140.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 428.

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The Covenantal Triangle

by Steve Dally

EVIDENCE

Key text:

1 Kings 18:17, 18

Most of us are familiar with the truism which says, "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." History certainly bears witness to the fact that power is a dangerous thing in the hands of sinful human beings. The founding fathers of the United States demonstrated wisdom and sensitivity in regard to this problem when they suggested a political structure which contained a system of checks and balances.

The introductory article this week briefly discusses some of the abuses of power which Israel suffered when she insisted on having a king. God in his wisdom, however, provided a system of checks and balances for his people which often served as a triangle against tyranny. While the king represented and controlled the political establishment, he was not always able to exercise absolute power, because he was dependent upon the priesthood or religious establishment for "divine authentication" of his policies, and he was vulnerable to the rebukes of the prophets who often enjoyed a charismatic authority with the people that could frighten the most dictatorial king. The respective roles of prophet and priest merit our attention as we examine this triangle more closely.

"In Scripture we find a healthy tension in the church."

In Scripture we find a healthy tension that existed in the church, by divine arrangement, between the institutional establishment and the prophetic spirit. In the covenantal community of Old Testament times, God placed both priests and prophets together to exercise their respective gifts in a manner that would balance the traditional teachings of the past, which were contained in the sanctuary and cared for by the priesthood, and the progressive understanding of truth given by the Spirit and proclaimed by a prophetic minority in Israel. We need both the traditional word and the new light of the Spirit in the community of faith. The word without the Spirit is dead, but the Spirit without the word is dumb.

In Old Testament times the priesthood represented the religious establishment and performed a necessary function. It maintained the Levitical system that was inclined to protect the status quo. The prophet, in contrast to the priest, was a charismatic person who spoke out against the abuses and sins of the nation and the people. He would come down from the hills and attempt to reform the corrupted church of the Old Testament. He was often a disturber in Israel and was generally regarded as an enemy of the "system," that is, the religious establishment.

Sources:

- Johannes Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), pp. 148-165.
James Limburg, *The Prophets and the Powerless* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977).
Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956, 1963).

Men like Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos and nearly all of the minor prophets comprised a line of disturbing voices that was stifled after the Babylonian captivity ended, but revived again under John the Baptist and Christ. These men who nourished the prophetic spirit and provided a healthy dissent in their religious communities were also persecuted, rejected, and often martyred by the establishment they longed to reform. God ordained this tension between prophet, priest, and king to benefit his people and to protect them from the abuses that accompany position and authority.

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Where Have All the Prophets Gone?

by Steve Daily

HOW TO

Key text:
1 Thessalonians
5:19, 20

A careful reading of Ephesians 4, Romans 12, and 1 Corinthians 12 will not support the notion that spiritual gifts comprise a hierarchical structure of authority in the church. Paul does not refer to the gifts as if they represent a kind of military rank within the community, but rather he stresses the unity, harmony, cooperation, and equality of the gifts, which are all to build up the church and glorify Christ. The gifts are like various parts of the body which maintain different functions, but harmoniously cooperate to achieve the same goal. Therefore, the prophet is not to be elevated above all other recipients of the gifts. Just as all authority in the church belongs to Christ, so the fruit of every gift must be measured against the message of Christ.

How can the crucial prophetic gift be kept alive and functioning in its proper role in today's church? In the Old Testament, the prophet is a charismatic figure who assumes many diverse roles. The prophet is the moral conscience of the community. He boldly points out sin. He reveals specific messages from God and challenges every kind of false religion. In a few cases, the role of the prophet includes foretelling the future, but this is a relatively rare and limited role for the prophet, generally speaking. According to Abraham Heschel,¹ there are three traits that seem to characterize nearly all the prophets in Scripture. First, there is a sensitivity to evil. The prophets are deeply disturbed over social injustice and moral indifference. They make sweeping allegations to awaken conscience. No sin is trivial to them. They are just as sensitive to sin in their own lives as to the sin they see in the community. The prophets seem to be an octave above the rest of the human race in their moral sensitivity.

Second, the prophets are known for their extreme personalities. Some of the prophets are visionaries like Ezekiel, other prophets like John the Baptist proclaim a message without dreams or visions, but they all seem to have a dual personality which is both stern and yet compassionate, explosive at one moment and in deep depression the next. Their lives seem to be characterized by ecstasy on the one hand and loneliness and misery on the other.

Finally, the prophets are known for being radicals. They are willing to challenge the most holy and sacred traditions of their day. It is no wonder that the prophets were persecuted and martyred by political and religious leaders alike, for they condemned both with uncompromising force. The prophets are intolerant of a sterile religion which consists simply in forms and meaningless traditions.

The schools of the prophets played a vital role in Israel's history. It is through the *ongoing* prophetic ministry that God's Spirit is kept alive in the community of faith. This is why Paul says, "Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings" (1 Thess. 5:19, 20). So how do we go about trying to better nourish the prophetic Spirit in our own lives and in the church today?

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1. We must realize the importance of the Spirit's voice. There can be no proper interpretation of the Word where there is not a genuine sensitivity to the Spirit. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:10-14). Conversely, the Scriptures give us an authoritative basis for testing the validity of what we perceive to be the Spirit's voice.

2. We must allow God's Spirit to speak to us in an authoritative way. This is done by meditating on the nature of justice as it is found in the prophetic writings of Scripture, and speaking out as our consciences convict us when we see injustice on a local, national, or international scale in our contemporary church or world.

3. Finally, we need to see to it that we do not "quench" the prophetic spirit which presently exists in the church. While we should ever be responsive to the prophetic voice in our church's past, we should also be open to the new ways in which God's Spirit is speaking to his church today. And, we should remember that one way to quench the Spirit is to give absolute or undue authority to any one "prophetic" voice in the church.

When these practical guidelines are followed the church may see a revival of the prophetic spirit in its midst, and the schools of the prophets may again serve their function in modern Israel.

1. Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets*, pp. 3-26.

Priests and Prophets: A Necessary Tension?

by Kevin
Paulson

"Jesus, Saviour, reigneth forever and ever;
Crown Him! Crown Him! Prophet, and Priest and King!"

So runs a well-known gospel song. Therein we find the theme of our lesson—Jesus Christ fulfills through his Messiahship the triple role of Prophet, Priest, and King. The various Old Testament figures who performed these functions were intended by God to represent Jesus, however flawed their representation proved to be.

But in this writer's view, this relation between type and antitype holds a deeper meaning for the church. Often in the history of theology, the framers of Christian thought have supposed that the roles of priest and prophet were established by God to be in tension one with the other. Using a sociological perspective, they see priests as representing the establishment, prophets as representing creative challenges. Priests tend to be viewed as defenders of conservative orthodoxy, while prophets are seen as the proclaimers of fresh, new ideas. Both elements are seen as essential to the community. In the modern church this tension is perceived in confrontations between scholars and administrators.

We will not dispute the logic of this reasoning in many situations. Yet this mentality not only helps to blur the distinction between truth and error, it ignores the facts of sacred history. Most of the time the prophets were not carriers of "new light," challenging a rigid, conservative establishment. Rather, they sought to bring the community back to the old doctrines while the establishment desired to forsake them and devise something new. Moreover, some prophets, like Elisha and Isaiah, became part of the establishment, giving support in times of faithfulness, withdrawing it in days of disobedience. This is the real issue. God is not interested in counterbalancing priests and prophets, scholars and administrators, underdogs and establishments. He is concerned only that inspired truth, which alone reveals himself, be given its rightful pre-eminence.

If in fact Christ is prefigured, not only by priests and prophets, but by the function of every spiritual gift (Eph. 4:11), surely it is God's plan that such work in harmony, not in tension, beneath the unfailing banner of divine truth.

OPINION

Key text:
Deuteronomy
18:15;
Hebrews 8:1

"God is not interested in counterbalancing priests and prophets, scholars and administrators."

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What Our Priest-King Means to Us

by William G. Johnsson

SUPPLEMENT

Key text:
Hebrews 1:13;
10:12, 13

Our study this week has taken us in two directions. We have briefly seen how Old Testament characters and functions foreshadowed Christ's mediatorial work. And we've discussed what the roles of prophet, priest, and king mean for the life of our church.

To conclude this week's study, here are some comments by William Johnsson on what Christ's fulfillment of the offices of priest and king means for our outlook on life today.

As we study the references in Hebrews to Christ as King, we note a significant qualification. [Psalm 110:1] calls the Son to sit at the place of honor "till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet" ([Heb]1:13). In the allusion in [Hebrews] chapter 10 the apostle underscores the point (though without elaboration): "But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet" (10:12, 13).

So a tension arises here. Christ is King but is not yet fully acknowledged as King. The author of Hebrews balances what He has accomplished, what He now is, and what is yet to be. The flow of history cannot alter what He already has done—the One Sacrifice, once for all. Nothing can add to or diminish its superlative worth. Nor can the years as they roll change His status. He is the Son, once incarnated, now exalted and reigning. What the passage of the years can bring is but the full recognition of His act and His person. . . .

So the Christian lives in a curious relationship to time. On the one hand he looks back to an event that is the midpoint of history. The cross has determined the course of the future, the certain, eventual triumph of the reign of the good and the removal of evil. On the other, he looks ahead to the consummation, to the day when he who is King by right will be King indeed. . . .

. . . But, as Christians, we have not only the "already" and the "not yet" but the "now"—Jesus is our High Priest. Because He is our Sympathetic Mediator as well as King awaiting the realization of the kingdom in its fullness, the present is filled with meaning. The waiting time between cross and Parousia is also the period of heavenly high priesthood. . . .

Our hope in the Return is not a blind optimism. It is based on a happening. One event in time has sealed the future and made it certain beyond all question. Because the Son now sits at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, all the universe must one day come to bow at His feet and acknowledge His Lordship. . . .

But ours is not an idle waiting, a fervent expectation for things to improve. Every present moment has meaning. Even now our Lord is High Priest in the "real" world, mediating on our behalf and sympathetic to every need, every struggle, every test. And even now the doors of the temple above stand wide open for us. By faith we draw near, in full assurance of purification of our sins and our welcome home.¹

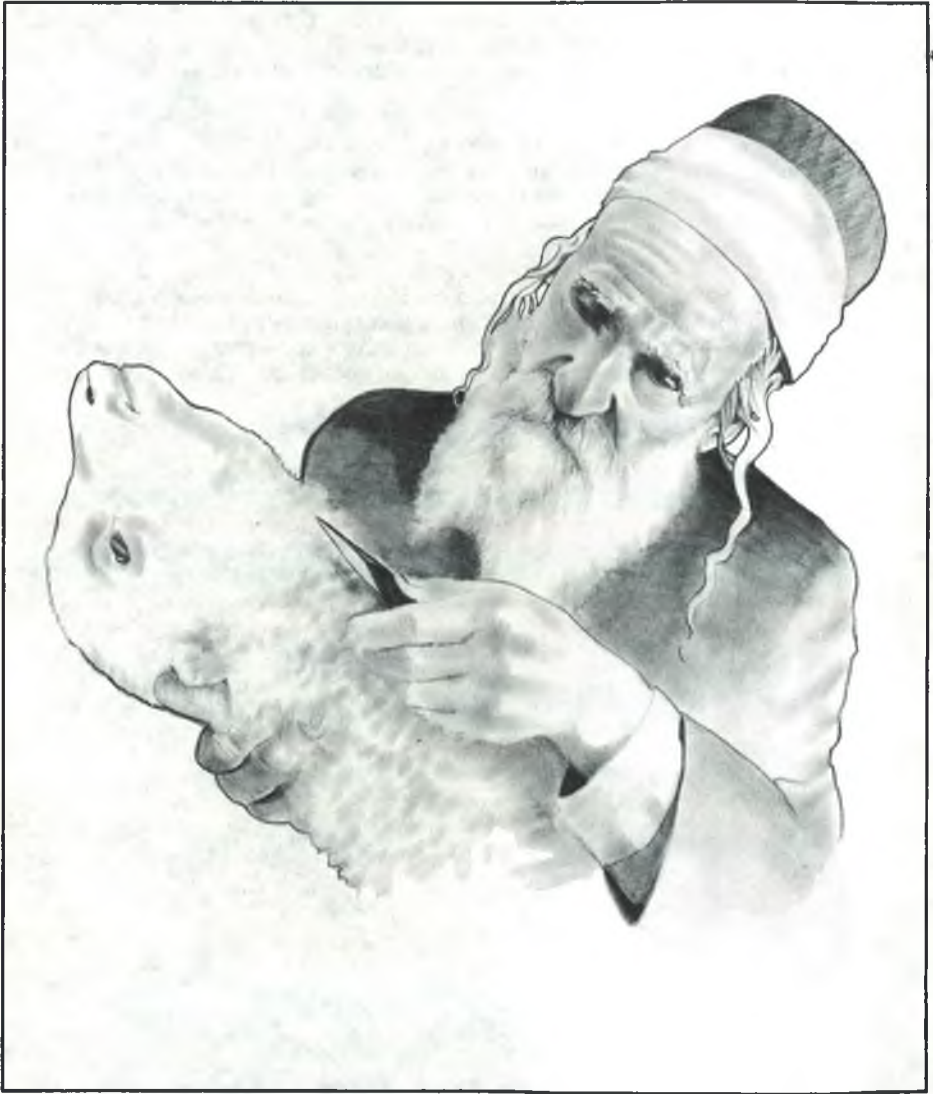
1. Excerpted from William G. Johnsson, *In Absolute Confidence* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1979), pp. 128-133.

William G. Johnsson is editor of *Adventist Review*.

1. Discuss Abraham, Moses and Samuel as mediators. In what ways was their intercession similar and/or dissimilar to that of Christ?
2. What personal significance do you find in thinking about Jesus as Prophet? Priest? King?
3. Steve Daily (Evidence) compares the roles of prophet, priest and king in Israel to the checks and balances in the U.S. government. What is your reaction to this comparison? Is, or should there be, a similar balance of power in the Adventist church today?
4. Are the roles of prophet, priest, and king functioning in the church today? If so, how and in what form? Are they functioning in proper balance? What is the relationship between these roles in the church today and the mediation of Christ?
5. Steve Daily (Evidence and How To) sees the prophetic spirit in Israel and in the church today as a radical force that challenges lifeless tradition and an inflexible establishment. Kevin Paulson (Opinion) argues that the prophets were actually a conservative force, bringing the community back to old doctrines. Which view do you think is more accurate? Explain.
6. *True or False.* The life and ministry of Ellen White constitutes the entire fulfillment of the prophetic gift in God's last church.
7. If you answered "false" to question No. 6, in what other ways do you think the prophetic gift manifests itself? How would you distinguish Ellen White's gift from the way the prophetic gift is exercised in today's church?

An Illustration for the Present Time

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, RSV).



On Celebrating Judgment Day

by Kenneth Matthews

INTRODUCTION

You stand accused of a capital crime. Worse yet, you are guilty. At your trial, the prosecuting attorney barrages the jury with a litany of arguments, evidence, witnesses. You know that only a technicality of the law can save you. Finally, it is over. The jury leaves. You wait. How do you feel? Do you feel like celebrating as the hours pass while twelve people decide your fate? Do you believe so strongly in the abstraction "Justice" that you can celebrate the fact that justice is about to be done? The bailiff reads the verdict: "We find the defendant NOT GUILTY on all counts." NOW you celebrate!

We all face the coming Judgment Day of God. Can that prospect be a positive force in our lives? Not just positive because fear of it makes us walk straight and narrow, but positive as in something we celebrate? Something we want to hasten, rather than put off as long as possible? Something that makes us want to sing and shout and dance for joy? Can such a thing be?

Only if we know the verdict in advance. Only if we know that we are acquitted. Only idiots celebrate imminent doom. Nobody celebrates before judgment is rendered. After, not before: after the bailiff pronounces "Not Guilty." Then we celebrate.

Ancient Israel did not celebrate while the high priest stood before God in the most

holy apartment on Atonement Day. They were *terrified*. They put bells on his garment so they could know if he were still alive. They tied a rope around his ankle so they could drag his body out if things went poorly. But when God accepted the high priest's mediation, when he emerged into the courtyard alive, when the people knew their sins were forgiven and that the judgment was over, and they were acceptable to God once again, they threw a party so huge the music and dancing and singing reverberated through the whole year. They knew when to celebrate judgment: after—not before.

How then, can we celebrate judgment, since it still lies ahead? But does it? When we contemplate Christ's empty tomb, a great light dawns: Christ, our High Priest, *has come out alive!* The atonement has been made. Judgment has been rendered. And, as we are constantly reminded in the book of Hebrews, Jesus is better than the ancient high priests, because whereas they had to go through this terror yearly, he did it once for all time.

We can celebrate judgment because, while we are hidden in Christ, the outcome is already decided for us. Our sins are already expiated. Judgment has already been rendered, and the sentence of death carried out. We do not look forward to the day of God's judgment—we look *back* to the day of God's judgment

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on Calvary, when all who accept Christ's righteousness in place of their own, and his death in place of their own, were judged, acquitted, and set free in the person of Christ. Only our own choice to depart from Christ can cause

us to lose the favorable verdict.

Judgment Day holds no terror for us who accept this arrangement, for we *know* the result. We live as if in the period *after* the high priest emerged from the most holy.¹ So, where's the party?

1. Editor's note: This is true even though Christ's "Day of Atonement" ministry in heaven has yet to be completed. The pre-advent judgment which this ministry involves does not jeopardize the assurance of salvation that those who are in Christ may have. Christ has already made the full atonement symbolized in the most holy place. The only question that remains is how, in the final analysis, we have related to him.

Communicating the Holy

LOGOS

Effective communication can be defined as expressing oneself in such a way that one is readily understood. Since the fall of man one of God's primary concerns has been to make himself understood. Despite God's omniscience this has not been an easy task. How is the finite to understand the infinite? Or, as Job was asked, "Can you fathom the mysteries of God?" (Job 11:7, NIV).

Through the centuries God has endeavored to make answering this question easier. To do this he has largely used signs and symbols, metaphors which we humans can readily comprehend, such as the Israelite sanctuary services. "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them." (Ex. 25:8, NIV).

Lest the Israelites become casual about the presence of God in their midst, these symbols were constant reminders of his holiness. Inside the tabernacle there were the holy and most holy places. "Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the ark of the Testimony behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place" (Ex. 26:33, NIV). The most holy place was where the presence of God, in the form of a cloud, hovered over the ark. Strict rules and rituals regulated how and when the high priest could enter this part of the tabernacle. (Ex. 28:36-43).

The center of the tabernacle services was the daily sacrifices. "This is what you are to offer on the altar regularly each day: Two lambs a year old. Offer one in the morning and the other at twilight" (Ex. 29:38, 39, NIV). These were offered by the priests on behalf of the people. Also when an individual sinned, he was to bring a sin offering, a lamb without blemish, to sacrifice. After the lamb was killed the priest sprinkled blood on the horns of the altar and poured the rest beneath the altar. Then the animal was offered as a burnt offering. "In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven" (Lev. 4:35, NIV).

These ceremonies were the promise of that which was to come—the atoning life and death of Christ. The author of Hebrews points this out. After outlining the ceremonies he says: "This is an illustration . . . indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only . . . external regulations applying until the time of the new order" (Heb. 9:9, 10, NIV). This new order, the author goes on to say, is the sacrifice of Christ made with his own blood and not with the blood of goats and bulls. "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom" (Heb. 9:15, NIV).

The sacrificial system acted as a harbinger of Christ. Now the reality is with us, and though we may not fathom the mysteries of God we know we can receive the promised inheritance.

E. R. M.

A Shadow of Heavenly Things

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Hebrews 8:5

Not only the sanctuary itself, but the ministration of the priests, was to "serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things" (Heb. 8:5). Thus it was of great importance; and the Lord, through Moses, gave the most definite and explicit instruction concerning every point of this typical service. The ministration of the sanctuary consisted of two divisions, a daily and a yearly service. The daily service was performed at the altar of burnt offering in the court of the tabernacle, and in the holy place; while the yearly service was in the most holy.

No mortal eye but that of the high priest was to look upon the inner apartment of the sanctuary. Only once a year could the priest enter there, and that after the most careful and solemn preparation. With trembling he went in before God, and the people in reverent silence awaited his return, their hearts uplifted in earnest prayer for the divine blessing. Before the mercy seat the high priest made the atonement for Israel: and in the cloud of glory, God met with him. His stay here beyond the accustomed time filled them with fear, lest because of their sins or his own he had been slain by the glory of the Lord.

The daily service consisted of the morning and evening burnt offering, the offering of sweet incense on the golden altar, and the special offerings for individual sins. And there were also offerings for sabbaths, new moons, and special feasts.

"The claims of the law, which demanded the life of the sinner, were satisfied."

Every morning and evening a lamb of a year old was burned upon the altar, with its appropriate meat offering, thus symbolizing the daily consecration of the nation to Jehovah, and their constant dependence upon the atoning blood of Christ. . . .

Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministration. . . .

Important truths concerning the atonement were taught the people by this yearly service. . . . On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering for the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood, and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, above the tables of the law. Thus the claims of the law, which demanded the life of the sinner, were satisfied. Then in his character of mediator the priest took the sins upon himself, and leaving the sanctuary, he bore with him the burden of Israel's guilt. At the door of the tabernacle he laid his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, and confessed over him "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat." And as the goat bearing these sins was sent away, they were with him regarded as forever separated from the people. Such was the service performed "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things" (Heb. 8:5).

Excerpted from *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 351-356.

The Grand Inquisitor

compiled by J Niswonger

Fyodor Dostoevski's often anthologized chapter from *The Brothers Karamazov* entitled, "The Grand Inquisitor," illustrates some important points about human nature. The setting is Seville, Spain, in the sixteenth century, during the Spanish Inquisition. Jesus returns to earth "unobserved," and begins healing the sick. The cardinal, or Grand Inquisitor, recognizes him and arrests him. What follows is a monologue by the Grand Inquisitor as he visits Jesus in prison.

The Inquisitor begins by telling Jesus that the freedom he brings man is too much for man to bear: "Thou wouldst go into the world . . . with some promise of freedom which men in their simplicity and their unruliness, cannot even understand, which they fear and dread—for nothing has ever been more unsupportable for a man and a human society than freedom.'"

The Inquisitor then tells Christ that it is the Church that gives men what they want: "And we alone shall feed them in Thy name, declaring falsely that it is in Thy name. O, never, never can they feed themselves without us! No science will give them bread so long as they remain free. In the end they will lay their freedom at our feet, and say to us, 'Make us your slaves, but feed us. . . .' They will be convinced, too, that they can never be free, for they are weak, vicious, worthless and rebellious. Thou didst promise them the bread of Heaven, but, I repeat again, can it compare with earthly bread in the eyes of the weak, ever sinful and ignoble race of man?"

" . . . I tell Thee that man is tormented by no greater anxiety than to find some one quickly to whom he can hand over that gift of freedom with which the ill-fated creature is born. . . . Instead of taking men's freedom from them, Thou didst make it greater than ever! Didst Thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil? Nothing is more seductive for man than his freedom of conscience, but nothing is a greater cause of suffering. . . . Instead of taking possession of man's freedom, Thou didst increase it, and burdened the spiritual kingdom of mankind with its sufferings for ever. Thou didst desire man's free love, that he should follow Thee freely, enticed and taken captive by Thee. In place of the rigid ancient law, man must hereafter with free heart decide for himself what is good and what is evil, having only Thy image before him as his guide.

" . . . Thou wouldst not enslave man by a miracle, and didst crave faith given freely, not based on miracle. Thou didst crave for free love and not the base raptures of the slave before the might that has overawed him for ever. But Thou didst think too highly of men therein, for they are slaves, of course, though rebellious by nature.

" . . . Too, too well they know the value of complete submission! And until men know that, they will be unhappy. . . . Oh, we shall allow them even sin, they are weak and helpless, and they will love us like children because we allow them to sin. We shall tell them

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Isaiah 1:11-19

"Didst Thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice?"

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“We shall tell them that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission.”

that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission, that we allow them to sin because we love them, and the punishment for these sins we take upon ourselves! . . . The most painful secrets of their conscience, all, all they will bring to us, and we shall have an answer for all. And they will be glad to believe our answer, for it will save them from the great anxiety and terrible agony they endure at present in making a free decision for themselves. . . . Peacefully they will die, peacefully they will expire in Thy name, and beyond the grave they find nothing but death. . . . For their happiness we shall allure them with the reward of heaven and eternity. Though if there were anything in the other world, it certainly would not be for such as they.”

“The Grand Inquisitor” is a commentary on organized religion. Dostoevski employs the machinery of the Catholic Church, but the import can also apply to the Israelite sanctuary services. God had no interest in sacrifices that did not flow from contrition freely offered, and were unaccompanied by a commitment to integrity in society (see key text). Likewise today, when we lose sight of God’s original purpose and see only rituals and other religious trappings, we die spiritually.

Celestial Comfort Claimed

by Heather Evelyn
and Alfred Brown

HOW TO
Key text:
Hebrews 9:24

Even when broken down into simple, contemporary language, the concept of the judgment is still a complex idea to understand. We may grasp the beauty and vitality of this celestial service, but remain at a loss as to how to transfer its much needed grace and power to our immediate sin-ridden and confused lives. Our cry is, "Yes, the truth of the sanctuary is a theological marvel, but Lord, I need help right now." Our gracious Father did not leave us hanging in midair. His word itself is a reservoir of practical instruction.

1. **Educate yourself about Christ's work of judgment and intercession.** At a time in our church's history when so many contrasting and confusing ideas about judgment and the intercessory work being done in heaven are being tossed about, we can still claim a solid biblical foundation for our beliefs. 1 Timothy 2:5 and Hebrews 7:25 are only two of numerous texts which verify that we have a mediator in heaven, none other than the glorious Son of God, who is able to save us to the *uttermost*. This mediation process of forgiveness is being accomplished right now, and we need to have a positive awareness of this reality in order to apply it to our lives and reap its benefits.

2. **Examine yourself.** We may have gained an appreciation of the judgment and of Christ's intercessory work, but until we can confess specific sins and ask for power for victory over these sins, we will merely be performing a ritual. It may be a good idea to make a written list of our weaknesses and "the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12:1) in order to enhance our awareness of the weaknesses we really have to agonize with God about in prayer. We will have specific sins to confess, specific victories to ask for, and specific spiritual goals to reach.

3. **Confess and accept forgiveness.** The progressive decadence of human nature imposes upon man countless ills which are accepted with increasing ease today. The battlefields of yesterday are slowly becoming the playgrounds of tomorrow. Equal to our acceptance of the harsh realities of sin should be our acceptance of him who "ever liveth" to pardon us from sin and its rancid effects. The same God who granted man virtue, vigor, nobility, and unutterable contentment longs at this very moment to restore him to the same.

4. **Walk in victory.** Those cleansed of sin are to be the recipients of God's greatest gifts. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16). The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives enables us to walk in newness of life. He will remind us of the contamination we are free from, the righteousness we have procured, and the judgment day in which we shall stand blameless (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit will give us power to be free from sin as we claim the promises of God and look forward to that day in which we shall exclaim: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 25:9).

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A Tale of Two Heroes

by Dorothy Minchin-Comm

OPINION

Key text:
John 15:13

The summer I was fifteen I discovered Charles Dickens. Always an avid reader, I buried myself in Victorian England. The vivid personalities from Dickens' great gallery of characters became as real to me as anyone I'd ever know in twentieth-century America. I laughed with Mr. Pickwick, loved with David Copperfield, and worried with Scrooge. Still, I gave in to few emotional reactions.

That is, until I read *A Tale of Two Cities*. All through the last sultry days of August I contemplated the intrigues of the French Revolution. I followed the fortunes of Charles Darnay, Marquis St. Evrémonte, and of Dr. Manette and his daughter Lucie. They were all inexorably drawn from the relative safety of London into the lunatic violence of Paris in 1789. Ultimately, Darnay is imprisoned in the Bastille, and for the sins of his ancestors, sentenced to join the long train of victims going daily to the guillotine.

Meanwhile, his old friend, Sydney Carton, the sometime lawyer's clerk, arrives. With a long history of failure and indolence, Carton has traced a doleful path through the book. But now, in a single decisive moment, he manages to reach Darnay's prison cell where he persuades him to change places. For the love of Lucie Manette, the girl who will never be his, Sydney Carton will give up his life.

Thus the drama plays itself out. Together with a little seamstress, Carton rides the death cart to the place of execution. Fearlessly taking her leave of him, the pale girl goes to the guillotine, Number Twenty-two. Next the crowd looks upon Sydney Carton, transfigured. They see "the peacefullest man's face ever beheld there . . . sublime and prophetic." Then "the murmuring of many voices, the upturning of many faces, the pressing on of many footsteps in the outskirts of the crowd, so that it swells forward in a mass, like one great heave of water, all flashes away. Twenty-three" (pp. 376-377).

In an epilogue Dickens probes the doomed man's last thoughts:

I see the lives for which I lay down my life, peaceful, useful, prosperous and happy, in that England which I shall see no more. I see *her* with a child upon her bosom, who bears my name. . . I see that I hold a sanctuary in their descendants, generations hence. I see that child . . . who bore my name, a man winning his way up in that path of life which once was mine. I see him winning it so well, that my name is made illustrious there by the light of his. I see the blots I threw upon it faded away. . . It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known" (pp. 377-378).

Not until I closed the book on these last sentences did I realize that I had been in tears—for how long, I couldn't tell. One man going to the guillotine for another! The idea overwhelmed. I'd never comprehended the theme so clearly before. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13, RSV).

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Yet Jesus took the act of substitution two steps further. First, Christ, unlike Syndey Carton, didn't make the sacrifice to give a noble ending and future fame to a wasted life. Rather, he made the substitution in total innocence, wholly without taint of self-interest. Second, he came not to *friends*. He died for hostile *rebels* who, from Adam's fall to the end of time, would set themselves at enmity with God. "He was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves."¹

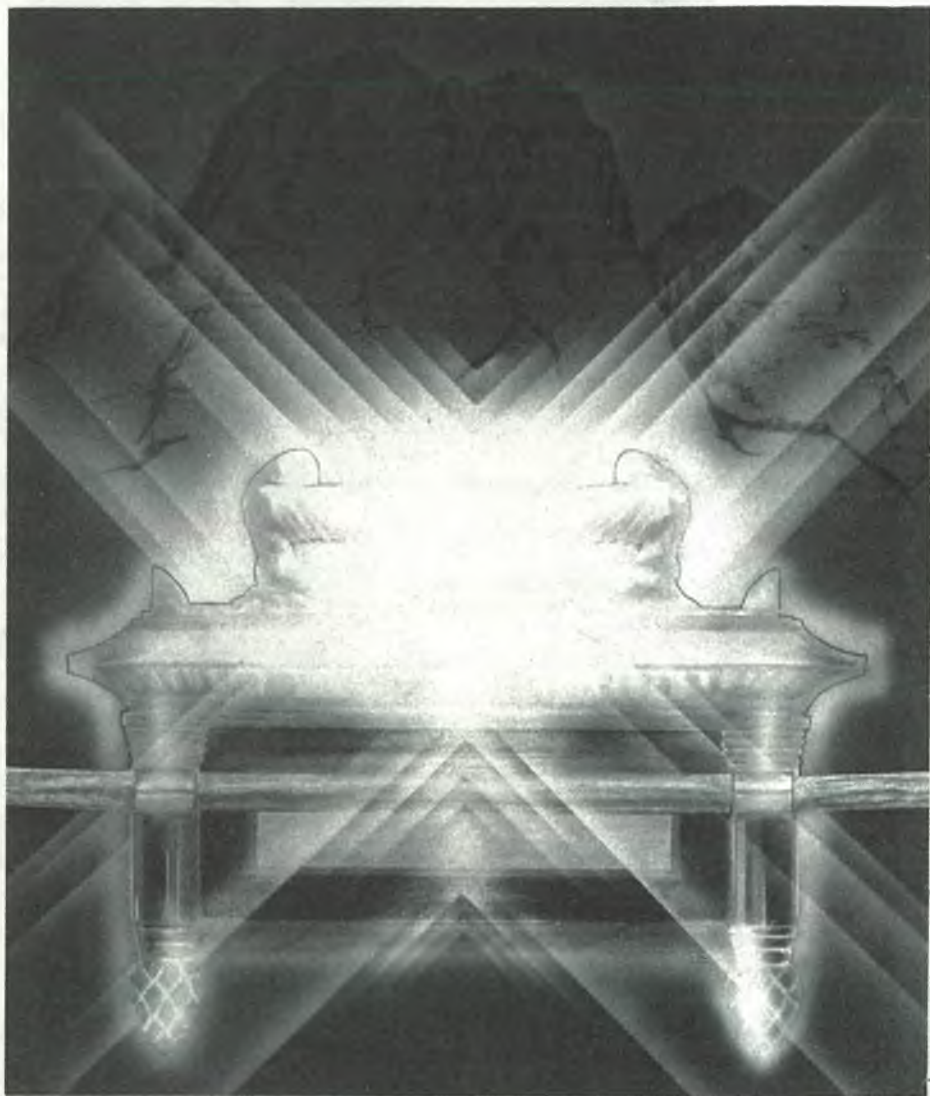
The King of Heaven laid himself open to a risk that few, if any, humans have had to take up. He risked having his sacrifice—his magnificent gift—ignored, doubted or even rejected, out of hand.

1. How effective was the Israelite sanctuary system as a communication device? What made it effective or ineffective? Did it lend itself to any distortions of truth?
2. What was God trying to teach by making the holy and most holy places off limits (on pain of death!) to the common person? Was the sanctuary intended to evoke fear (see Testimony)?
3. What emotions does the thought of the Day of Atonement stir within you? Are your feelings grounded in a balanced conception of the biblical teaching?
4. Can we truly celebrate a favorable outcome from the Day of Atonement *now*, as this week's Introduction suggests?
5. Why did God desire blood sacrifice in the sanctuary?
6. What three things does the sanctuary system teach about God that are most important to you?
7. Do most people really prefer the peace of submitting to a religious system over freedom of thought and choice (see Evidence)? What point do you think Dostoevski was trying to make in "The Grand Inquisitor" passage? Are there lessons here for how one relates to a religious system, such as ancient Israel's or that of the church today?

REACT
Lesson 7

Types of the Transcendent

"Love and Loyalty now meet, Righteousness and Peace now embrace"
(Psalm 85:10, Jerusalem Bible).



The Bread of Life

by Dorothy Minchin-Comm

INTRODUCTION

Some symbols are so basic to human experience, so timeless and so universal that we call them *archetypes*. The "meaning of food" constitutes a powerful symbolic cluster. We're never more relaxed, more civilized, or more open to benevolent impulses than when we sit down together to eat. We exchange dinner invitations with friends and acquaintances. Birthday and anniversary celebrations call for food. The bride and groom's first act after the wedding ceremony is to entertain their guests at a reception. The funeral feast gathers the mourners together after the burial. In short, the significance of food goes far beyond its material function of sustaining life. That Judas could sit with his brethren at the Last Supper, be Christ's guest at the table, and then go out to collect the silver shekels of his Lord's betrayal—this ironic blend of symbols emphasizes the enormity of his sin.

Mexican *tortillas*, Indian *chapatis*, English muffins, Scottish scones, Irish soda bread, Persian *lavash*, mid-Eastern *pita*, Jewish *challah*, Chinese rice cakes, Russian black rye, American cornbread, French *croissants*, German pumpernickle, Italian *grissini* and Australian damper—the breads of the world declare cultural uniqueness as clearly as do the flags of the nations. They come in an endless variety of shapes, sizes and textures.

Some time between 3000 and 2000 B.C. the Egyptians discovered yeast and invented ovens. They turned breadmaking into an art, creating round, cubical, braided and animal-shaped loaves in more than fifty varieties. When the Hebrews left Egypt, they carried these bread secrets with them. Bread was enshrined in the sanctuary on the table of showbread (Ex. 25:30). By the time of Christ, all the cities of Palestine had commercial bakeries.

In all its marvelous variety, bread is such a vital part of life that in both reality and symbol it speaks to some of our deepest needs. A golden-crust loaf coming from the oven breathes a fragrance and goodness that stirs our most ancient hungers. It signifies sustenance and security. No other food can arouse reverence, nostalgia, and even passion more readily. In the Lord's prayer, both our physical and spiritual survival are imaged by bread: "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11).

In John 6, following the feeding of the 5000 with two fishes and five loaves, Christ gave his disciples a painstaking discourse on bread, concerned that they not miss the vital meaning of the symbol:

"For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry." "If a man eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:33, 35, 51, NIV).

Thus the word *bread* synthesizes all aspects of food, physical and spiritual. It *amplifies* the daily and the mundane to the level of universal truth. In his poem, "Everlasting Mercy," John Masefield

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celebrates the elevation of bread from the material to the mystical. The character Saul Kane has found Christ in the night. Now in the clear morning he leans on the farm gate and watches the plowman:

O Christ who holds the open gate!
O Christ who drives the furrow straight! . . .
Lo, all my heart's field red and torn.
And thou will bring the young green corn . . .

And when the field is fresh and fair,
Thy blessed feet shall glitter there.
And we will walk the weeded field
And tell the golden harvest's yield.
The corn that makes the holy bread,
By which the soul of man is fed,
The holy bread, the food unpriced,
Thy everlasting mercy, Christ.

Bread is just one of the powerful physical symbols found in the sanctuary. In the remainder of this week's lesson, we'll also discuss some of the others, including light, incense and blood.

The Transcendent Made Tangible

This week we continue our study of the Israelite tabernacle worship system by looking at some of its specific elements.

LOGOS

The Bread of Presence

“Put the bread of presence on this table to be before me at all times’ ” (Ex. 25:30, NIV). This command was not given to alleviate God’s hunger, but rather as a tangible object lesson. The loaves represent Christ, the supplier of every need. “Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty’ ” (John 6:35, NIV).

The Lamp

“Then make its [the lampstand’s] seven lamps and set them up on it so that they light the space in front of it’ ” (Ex. 25:37, NIV). These lamps were also a symbol of Christ, a light to those in darkness. Simeon recognized this when Mary brought Jesus to the temple to be dedicated. On seeing the babe he exclaimed, “A light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel’ ” (Luke 2:32, NIV). And Jesus himself later declared, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life’ ” (John 8:12, NIV).

The Altar of Incense

“Make an altar of acacia wood for burning incense’ ” (Ex. 30:1, NIV). The incense burned on this altar represents Christ’s intercession, which assures reconciliation with God.

The Ark

“Then you shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. . . . The cherubim shall spread out their wings above. . . . And you shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark; and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. There I will meet with you’ ” (Ex. 25:17-22, RSV). The placement of the law in the ark shows that it is the eternal, moral foundation of God’s system. But on top is the mercy seat, symbolizing the unmerited grace continually available to those who have broken that law.

The Day of Atonement

The importance of this annual event, a special consecration of the whole Israelite nation, is revealed in the ceremony involving the two goats. One goat was set free and the other sacrificed. “He shall then slaughter the goat for a sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain. . . . He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover [mercy seat] and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites’ ” (Lev. 16:15, 16, NIV). Of all the Israelite ceremonies the Day of Atonement held the greatest significance, for it represented the final removal of sin by the means of a more perfect sacrifice (see Hebrews 9 and 10). “So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation” (Heb. 9:28, NIV).

E. R. M.

The Light of the World

TESTIMONY

Key text:

2 Corinthians 4:6

The expression "the light of the world" has its metaphoric roots in several biblical symbols.

First, there was the seven-branched candlestick in the original sanctuary of the Israelites. Ellen White describes it as being "ornamented with exquisitely wrought flowers, resembling lilies," and being "made from one solid piece of gold." But more important, it was an eternal flame: "There being no windows in the tabernacle, the lamps were never all extinguished at one time, but shed their light by day and by night."¹

Jesus himself helped develop this symbolism when he referred to himself as "the light of the world." As Ellen White says, "when He spoke these words, Jesus was in the court of the temple specially connected with the services of the Feast of Tabernacles. In the center of this court rose two lofty standards, supporting lampstands of great size. After the evening sacrifice, all the lamps were kindled, shedding their light over Jerusalem. This ceremony was in commemoration of the pillar of light that guided Israel in the desert, and was also regarded as pointing to the coming of the Messiah. At evening when the lamps were lighted, the court was a scene of great rejoicing. . . ."

"Religion is not to be confined between the covers of a book."

"In the illumination of Jerusalem, the people expressed their hope of the Messiah coming to shed his light upon Israel. But to Jesus the scene had a wider meaning. As the radiant lamps of the temple lighted up all about them, so Christ, the source of spiritual light, illumines the darkness of the world."²

Jesus also brought the sun into the symbolism about being a light for the world. Ellen White comments, "That great light which His own hand had set in the heavens was a truer representation of the glory of his mission." And she goes on to portray dramatically one setting for its use: "It was morning; the sun had just risen above the Mount of Olives, and its rays fell with dazzling brightness on the marble palaces, and lighted up the gold of the temple walls, when Jesus, pointing to it, said, 'I am the light of the world.'"³

This expansion of the symbol was necessary for the Jews who "thought to confine the benefits of salvation to their own nation; but Christ showed them that salvation is like the sunshine. It belongs to the whole world. The religion of the Bible is not to be confined between the covers of a book, nor within the walls of a church. It is not to be brought out occasionally for our own benefit, and then to be carefully laid aside again. It is to sanctify the daily life, to manifest itself in every business transaction and in all our social relations."⁴

If Christ is figuratively light, then "followers of Christ are to be the light of the world; but God does not bid them make an effort to shine. He does not approve of any self-satisfied endeavor to display superior goodness. He desires that their souls shall be imbued with the principles of heaven; then, as they come in contact with the world, they will reveal the light that is in them."⁵

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 348.
2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 463.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 463, 464.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 366, 367.
5. *Ministry of Healing*, p. 36.

Christ— Our Mercy Seat

by Karl Barth

In Romans 3:25, Paul describes Christ as the one "whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (RSV). The Greek word for expiation or propitiation, is hilasterion. This was the term Greek-speaking Jews used for the "mercy seat" in the sanctuary. So Paul seems to be saying that the cross of Christ is our mercy seat. In the following comments on Romans 3:25, Barth develops this theme.

In the Old Testament cultus the covering of propitiation (EV. *mercy seat*; Hebr. *Kapporeth*; LXX *Hilasterion*) was the sheet of gold, overshadowed by the wings of the two angel-figures (cherubim), which covered and marked the place where the contents of the ark, the oracles of God, were deposited (Exod. 25:17-21). In 1 Sam. 4:4, 2 Sam. 6:2, Ps. 80:1, it is the place above which God himself dwells; in Exod. 25:22, Num. 7:89, it is the place from which God speaks to Moses; it is pre-eminently, however, the place where, on the great day of Atonement, the people were reconciled to God by the sprinkling of blood (Lev. 16:14, 15). The analogy with Jesus is especially appropriate, because the mercy seat is no more than a particular, though very significant, place. By the express counsel of God, Jesus has been appointed from eternity as the place of propitiation above which God dwells and from which He speaks; now, however, He occupies a position in time, in history, and in the presence of men. The life of Jesus is the place in history fitted by God for propitiation and fraught with eternity—*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself* (2 Cor. 5:19). At this place the Kingdom of God is come nigh: so near is it, that here His coming and His redeeming power are recognized; so near, that here God dwells with men and His communing is unmistakable; so near, that here the pressure of faith is a commanding necessity. But, just as in the Old Testament the *Kapporeth* covered the testimonies of God as well as marked their presence among men, so here the Kingdom of God, His atoning activity, and the dawning of the day of redemption (3:24), are in Jesus covered as well as displayed. Jesus is presented to us unmistakably as the Christ, but His Messiahship is also presented to us as a sharply defined paradox. It is a matter for faith only. The propitiation occurs at the place of propitiation—only by blood, whereby we are solemnly reminded that God gives life only through death. Consequently, in Jesus also atonement occurs only through the faithfulness of God, *by his blood*: only, that is to say, in the inferno of His complete solidarity with all the sin and weakness and misery of the flesh; in the secret of an occurrence which seems to us wholly negative; in the extinguishing of all the lights—hero, prophet, wonder-worker—which mark the brilliance of human life, a brilliance which shone also in His life, whilst He lived a man amongst men; and finally, in the absolute scandal of His death upon the Cross. By His blood, then, Jesus is proved to be the Christ, the first and last word to men of the faithfulness of God. By His death He declares the impossible possibility

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Romans 3:25

"His
Messiahship is
also presented
to us as a
sharply defined
paradox. . . ."

Karl Barth was one of this century's leading Protestant theologians.

**“Atonement
occurs only in
the inferno of
His complete
solidarity
with all the sin
and weakness
and misery of
the flesh.”**

of our redemption, and shows Himself as the light from light uncreated, as the Herald of the Kingdom of God. 'In the picture of the Redeemer the dominant colour is blood' (Ph. Fr. Hiller), because, in the way of the Cross, in the offering of His life, and in His death, the radical nature of the redemption which He brings and the utter novelty of the world which He proclaims are first brought to light. Brought to light—nay, rather, put in the shade, when once we recognize that to comprehend either the radicalism or the novelty of God's world or the necessary transformation of the hearts of men, lies beyond our competence—*Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising up of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against—yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul—that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed* (Luke 2:34, 35). The secret of redemption by the blood of Jesus is, and remains, the secret of God. Its manifestation also, which is the invisibility of God becoming visible, is always the action of God, an act of His faithfulness, or, what is the same thing, an act of faith. In so far as this occurs and His faithfulness persists, in so far as the hazard of faith is ventured, the dawn of the new world, the reality of the mercy of God and of our salvation, of our future being-clothed-upon with our habitation not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens (2 Cor. 5:1 ff.), is displayed and announced, secured and guaranteed to us, in the blood of Jesus. We stand already, here and now, in the reflection of the things which are to come; we are perplexed, but not hopeless; smitten by God, but nevertheless, in this *krisis*, under His healing power. 'Therefore we must nestle under the wings of this mother-hen, and not rashly fly away trusting in the powers of our own faith, lest the hawk speedily tear us in pieces and devour us' (Luther).

Excerpted from Karl
Barth, *The Epistle to
the Romans* (London:
Oxford University
Press, 1933), pp. 104-106.

The Throne of God Within Us

by Cordell A. Briggs

God's desire to dwell among his children today is just as strong, I believe, as his desire was to dwell among the children of Israel. The commands that God gave to the children of Israel were clear: he wanted the Israelites to "make [him] a sanctuary; that [he] may dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8). In his commands, God gave not only the specifications of the edifice but also the specific details of the furnishings, particularly about how the mercy seat (God's throne) should be made. God wanted the best materials and furnishings that the Israelites could offer for his dwelling place among them.

God's commands remain clear today. In fact, God still wants his children to provide him with their best materials and furnishings. He does not want his children to build a physical sanctuary to symbolize their unique relationship with him. (Jesus' death on the cross provides the means by which God's children today may receive eternal life, in spite of their propensity to sin.) Instead, what God wants is for his children to build him a throne in their hearts and to establish firmly God's presence in their lives.

In two ways at least, God's children may accomplish this dual purpose. First, His children must willingly give their youth and their dedicated commitment to serve him. Some of the most vigorous workers for God are youthful Christians because they have so much energy to expend. Joseph, Samuel, the three Hebrew boys, David, Ruth, and Timothy are several biblical examples of young people whose religious beliefs were their guiding lights.

Second, if God is to reign in his children's lives, he requires that they should build Christlike characters in an age when people are far less likely than ever to think of others before they think of themselves. Referring to this dilemma of modern man, Francis A. Schaeffer writes:

Anyone with sensitivity and concern for the world in which he lives can see that man is in a great dilemma. Man is able both to rise to great heights and to sink to great depths of cruelty and tragedy. Modern man is strongly struggling with the concept of man in his dilemma. Most of the paintings of the crucifixion today . . . are not of Christ dying on the cross in history. They are using the Christ symbol to exhibit man in agony.

Of course it is possible to try *not* to get involved in man's dilemma; but the only way not to get involved in the dilemma of man is by being young enough, well enough, have money enough, and being egotistic enough to care nothing about other human beings.¹

The ability to care about other human beings is a quality that God requires of his children. Other people's problems should become our problems; their pain, our pain; their joy, our joy. Then, we shall have the throne of God within us.

HOW TO
Key text:
Exodus 25:17, 20

1. Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, p. 100.

Cordell A. Briggs is an assistant professor of English at Loma Linda University.

A Day for Coming Home

by Frank Knittel

OPINION

Key text:
Luke 15:11-32

A friend of mine was badly mangled in Vietnam during a helicopter crash and lay in the jungle, certain of death. Suddenly from nowhere there appeared at his side a fellow squad member, whom for numerous reasons my friend detested and had often belittled in the past. The despised man took no thought of past insults but instead offered physical help on the spot and then assisted in pulling the injured man to safety despite great personal risk. Moreover, the disdained squad companion made frequent hospital visits to my friend, wrote letters back home for him, and, in short, was the truest buddy possible. In fact, his instinctive desire to help an injured man demonstrated a Christian commitment that reached out to a hospital bed and broke down personal rejection and introduced the wounded man to Jesus Christ. By the time both men came back home, all personal differences were resolved by bonds of everlasting love, and each was united with Jesus.

These two men not only found friendship together, but they both came to an at-one-ment with Christ, and that is, in experiential terms, what the Day of Atonement is all about. Hosts of people get so bogged down in the ritualistic details of the ancient Jewish tabernacle and temple ceremony that they miss the glorious meaning of it all—the promise that because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross we can eventually come to an at-one-ment with him. The past is blotted out, our indiscretions are forgiven, the hates and angers are erased—we stand before Jesus as pure as the day we were born.

“For everyone ultimate cleansing was provided by the Cross.”

For the ancient Jews the Day of Atonement meant that God had taken away the sins of the past year—they were relegated to the wilderness, they were taken out of the camp by God's planning. For everyone down the corridors of time the ultimate cleansing was provided by the Cross. We, the mangled souls torn by the spiritual crashes of our own misdeeds are given a new lease on existence—eternal life—by a Friend whom we have often spurned and betrayed.

Once we understand this, we also understand that the Day of Atonement does not have its ultimate meaning in statistics, diagrams, arguments, and suppositions. It is found in how we relate to God; it is found when we, like the prodigal son, return from feeding the swine of evil passions; it is found when we come back to Jesus and say, “I am no longer worthy to be called your child.” It is also found in the translation of these emotions into our relationships with people—even those who despise and spurn us—when those people need our help. The benefits of Christ's mediation in the heavenly Day of Atonement thus becomes ours. For in all this we become partners with Jesus in the same stature as Paul and Abraham and Mary and Rahab. We will all be at-one-ment—we will be at home.

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1. What do each of the following symbols from the sanctuary suggest about how Christ meets your needs as an individual and those of the church as a whole? What does each symbol suggest about the church's outreach to the world?

For you

For the church

For the world

Bread

Light

Altar

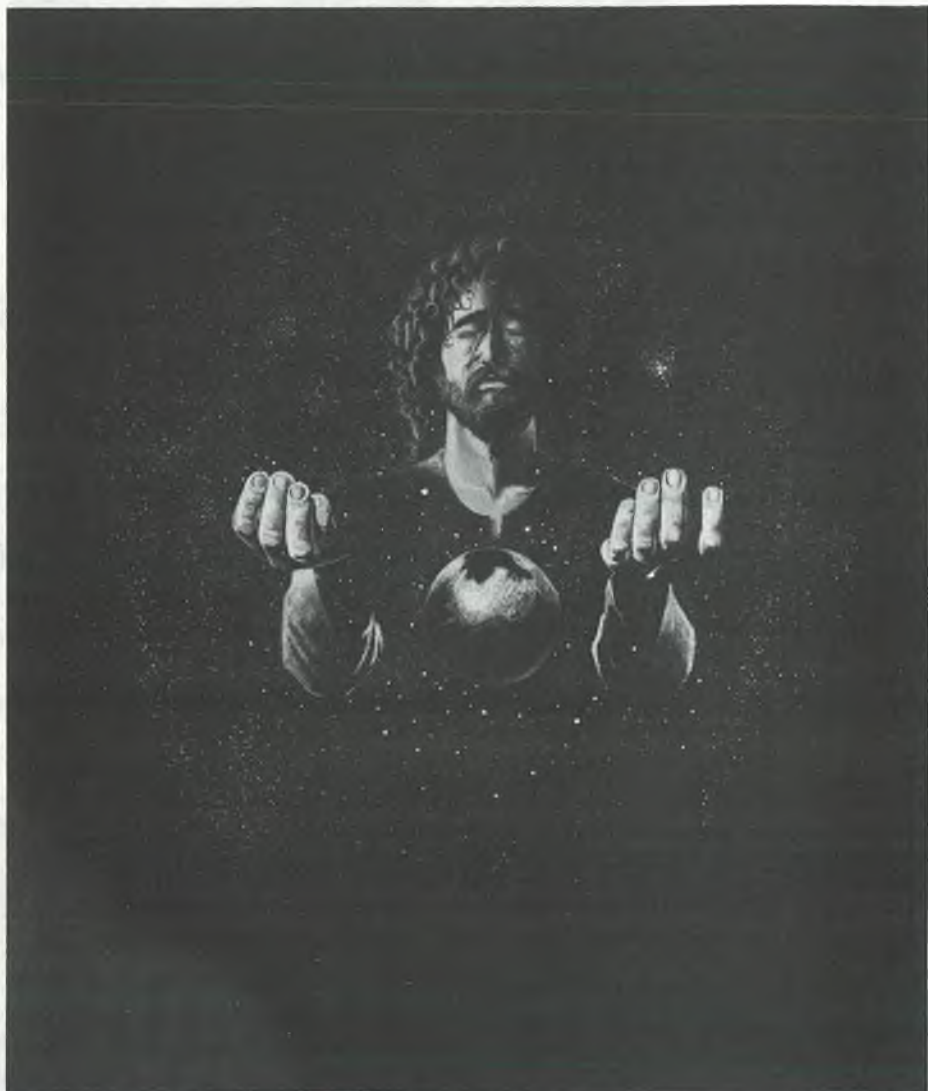
Mercy seat

Day of Atonement

2. Ellen White comments (see Testimony) that Jesus used the symbol of sunshine in order to show the Israelites that the light didn't belong to them alone, but to the whole world. Are we sometimes guilty of trying to confine the light to our own church? How can we avoid this?
3. What do you think Karl Barth means in saying that in Jesus the Kingdom of God and the dawning of the day of redemption are both displayed and hidden? Do you agree with him?
4. Do the truths symbolized by the sanctuary in any way meet the human dilemma described by the Francis Schaeffer quote in the How To section? If so, how?
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Our Advocate

“We have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One” (1 John 2:1, NIV).



Things That Go Between

by David P. Harris

INTRODUCTION

When two things are incompatible, we need something to go between them, to smooth out the differences.

Mechanics, when putting metal against metal (a screw against a metal sheet, for example) use a washer so that in the motion of the machine, sparks won't be created and cause a fire.

Chemists, when working with acids and bases, use a buffer, made from the base and its salt or the acid and its salt, to maintain a proper pH.

Computer programmers who write in a higher level language (a language closer to English), require a compiler to translate the words that they have written into machine language (language that the computer can understand).

When diplomats from two

foreign powers engage in negotiations, they usually require a translator to correctly convey the thoughts of one ambassador to the other.

Sin and our anti-sinful God are incompatible alone. Therefore, since we are implicated in sin, we need somebody who can act as a washer, controlling the possibilities of sparks flying during the divine-human encounter, somebody who can act as a buffer, keeping a proper balance of justice and mercy flowing between the two. We need somebody who can put perfect divine ideas into thoughts and ideas that we can understand. We need somebody who can communicate correctly God's will to us, and our need to God. Jesus, our Advocate is that somebody.

David P. Harris was campus ministries director and a junior biomathematics major at LLU/La Sierra at the time of this writing.

The Technicality

LOGOS The scene is distinctly reminiscent of a Perry Mason episode. The case unfolds with much the same drama and flair for the unexpected. The setting seems very similar to an earthly courtroom. Except the stakes are much higher. Instead of such paltry punishments as life in prison or a sentence to temporary death, this court deals with eternal fates: life or death. Every human being who has entered a plea of "not guilty" to Satan's charge of sedition is slated to appear before the cosmic tribunal. The "not guilty" plea, however, is farcical—the best the defendants can hope for is to be freed on a technicality.

Enter the supremely important counsel for the defense. "But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1, 2, NIV). Jesus is the one who enables our cases to be heard at all. Were it not for his argument of a "technicality" (based on what he himself has done), all could be forced to plead guilty, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23, NIV). Instead anyone can seek his assistance and plead "not guilty," trusting in his expertise to successfully argue their case. No case is too difficult for this lawyer—he accepts them all. He declares that "whoever comes to me I will never drive away. . . . And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me" (John 6:37, 39, NIV).

When each case is heard before the court of the universe, Jesus brilliantly argues his technicality. He points out that since the defendants were originally under his own jurisdiction as their Creator, the ultimate responsibility must be transferred to him. Since he himself has already paid the penalty for their sin, the defendants must be released and the charges dropped. The technicality is thus not an abrogation of justice, but a creative way of meeting justice in view of the fact that the defendants, in themselves, are indisputably guilty. Jesus' closing statement echoes his Old Testament defense of Joshua the high priest—"The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?" (Zech. 3:2, NIV).

The defense emerges victorious. "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." (Rev. 12:10, 11, NIV).

The outcome was never really in doubt—and it never will be. The defense counsel has constructed a foolproof case that can guarantee victory to any defendant who seeks his aid.

It's only a technicality—an awfully expensive one at that. But it makes an eternity of difference.

L. R. C.

Fenced From Satan

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." How careful is the Lord Jesus to give no occasion for a soul to despair. How He fences about the soul from Satan's fierce attacks. If through manifold temptations we are surprised or deceived into sin, He does not turn from us and leave us to perish. No, no, that is not our Saviour. Christ prayed for us. He was tempted in all points like as we are; and having been tempted, He knows how to succor those who are tempted.

Our crucified Lord is pleading for us in the presence of the Father at the throne of grace. His atoning sacrifice we may plead for our pardon, our justification, and our sanctification. The Lamb slain is our only hope. Our faith looks up to Him, grasps Him as the One who can save to the uttermost, and the fragrance of the all-sufficient offering is accepted of the Father. Unto Christ is committed all power in heaven and in earth, and all things are possible to him that believeth. Christ's glory is concerned in our success. He has a common interest in all humanity. He is our sympathizing Saviour. . . .

Let us remember that our great High Priest is pleading before the mercy seat in behalf of His ransomed people. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. . . .

The blood of Jesus is pleading with power and efficacy for those who are backslidden, for those who are rebellious, for those who sin against great light and love. Satan stands at our right hand to accuse us, and our Advocate stands at God's right hand to plead for us. He has never lost a case that has been committed to Him. We may trust in our Advocate; for He pleads His own merits in our behalf. Hear His prayer before His betrayal and trial. Listen to His prayer for us; for He had us in remembrance.

He will not forget His church in the world of temptation. He looks upon His tried and suffering people, and prays for them. . . . Yes, He beholds His people in this world, which is a persecuting world and all seared and marred with the curse and He knows that they need all the divine resources of His sympathy and His love. Our Forerunner hath for us entered within the veil, and yet by the golden chain of love and truth, He is linked with His people in closest sympathy.

He is making intercession for the meek, lowly, the most oppressed and suffering, for the most tried and tempted ones. With upraised hands He pleads, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. God loves to hear, and responds to the pleadings of His Son."

TESTIMONY

Key text:

1 John 2:1, 2

"He has never lost a case that has been committed to Him."

Excerpted from *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 948.

The Threefold Provision

by John R. W. Stott

EVIDENCE

Key text:
1 John 2:1, 2

**"Justice pleads
with love for
our release!"**

The provision which God has made for the sinning Christian is now unfolded [in 1 John 2:1, 2]. It is the One, who is described first as *an advocate with the Father*, secondly as *Jesus Christ the righteous*, and thirdly (in verse 2) as *the propitiation for our sins*.

In form the word *advocate* in both its Latin and Greek equivalents (*advocatus* and *paraklētos*) is passive not active. It means literally not 'comforter' but 'called alongside' and describes anybody summoned to the assistance of another. It was particularly used in the law courts of a barrister, whose responsibility it is, as counsel for the defence, to plead the cause of the person on trial. Although the verb *parakalein*, to encourage, to exhort or to comfort, is used quite frequently in the New Testament, the noun *paraklētos* occurs only in the Johannine literature. Indeed, apart from this verse its use is restricted to the upper room discourses in the Fourth Gospel where Jesus made it a title for the Holy Spirit (Jn. xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7). A comparison of the two uses is instructive. If we have an advocate in heaven, Christ has an advocate on earth. The Holy Spirit is Christ's Paraclete, as the Lord Jesus is ours. But whereas the Holy Spirit pleads Christ's cause before a hostile world, Christ pleads our cause against our 'accuser' (Rev. xii. 10) and *with the Father*, who loves and forgives His children. . . . The person who believes in Christ already 'has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life' (Jn. v. 24, RSV; cf. 1 Jn. iii. 14, v. 12 and Rom. viii. 1, 33, 34). Once the sinner has been justified by God his Judge, he has entered the family of God and become related to God as his Father. If he should sin, he does not need another justification from the divine Judge. He is a child of God; he needs the Father's forgiveness. This is assured to him through the advocacy of *Jesus Christ the righteous*, a composite expression indicating His human nature (*Jesus*), Messianic office (*Christ*) and righteous character. In the picture of a righteous Advocate standing before the Father on our behalf, 'the case is not that of love pleading with justice.' Rather the opposite: 'Justice pleads with love for our release!' (Findlay). . . .

John . . . proceeds to describe our righteous Advocate as *the propitiation for our sins*, since it is this alone which qualifies Him for the position. . . .

The notion of the propitiation of God by the death of His Son is not at all inconsistent with the revelation we have been given of His character in His Son and in His Word, if it is rightly understood. It needs to be safeguarded, and distinguished from heathen conceptions, in two particulars.

First, God's wrath is not arbitrary or capricious. It bears no resemblance to the unpredictable passions and personal vengefulness of the pagan deities. Instead, it is His settled, controlled, holy antagonism to all evil. Secondly, the means by which His wrath is averted is not a bribe, either from us or from a third party. On the contrary, the initiative in the propitiation is entirely God's. In the

John R. W. Stott is a widely published evangelical pastor and theologian.

LXX frequently He is Himself the subject of the verb to 'propitiate'—a usage unknown in pagan writing. Similarly, in this Epistle the whole initiative is ascribed to God. 'The action of which, in some sense, God is Himself the object, has God Himself as its origin' (Law). This origin is His love, the spontaneous, uncaused love of Father and Son together. We must not imagine either that the Father sent His Son to do something which the Son was reluctant to do, or that the Son was a third party intervening between the sinner and a reluctant God. Both these views are excluded by the teaching of this Epistle. It is not reluctance but love which is attributed to both Father and Son. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (iv. 10, AV). 'By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us' (iii. 16, RSV).

Having distinguished between the pagan and Christian concepts of propitiation in these two major respects, we must now ask: what was or is the propitiation? John's answer is that it is 'Jesus Christ the righteous' Himself (ii. 2), the Father's sent Son (iv. 10). In both verses He is described not as the 'propitiatory offering. . . . A propitiator might make use of a means of propitiation outside Himself. But Christ is our propitiation. . . .' (Westcott), which is implied by the prominent he (*autos*). But in what sense is He *the propitiation for our sins*? No direct answer is given in this verse, but if John writes of 'propitiation' here and in iv. 10, and of forgiveness in i. 9, it is because he has stated in i. 7 that what cleanses sinners from their guilty stains is the blood of Jesus, God's Son, that is the laying down of His life in a violent death. 'In these passages we have a concatenation of ideas—propitiation, blood, cleansing, forgiveness—which are directly derived from the sacrificial system of the Old Testmaent, which are expressed, indeed, in technical Levitical terms' (Law; cf. Lv. xvi. 30, Heb. ix. 22 and notes on i. 7).

Moreover, Christ still is the propitiation, not because in any sense He continues to offer His sacrifice, but because His one sacrifice once offered has an eternal virtue which is effective today in those who believe. . . .

Thus, the Father's provision for the sinning Christian is in His Son, who possesses a threefold qualification: His righteous character, His propitiatory death and His heavenly advocacy. Each depends on the others. He could not be our advocate in heaven today if He had not died to be the propitiation for our sins; and His propitiation would not have been effective if in His life and character He had not been Jesus Christ the righteous.

"We must not imagine that the Son was a third party intervening between the sinner and a reluctant God."

Excerpted from John R. W. Stott, *The Epistles of John: An Introduction and Commentary* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1960), pp. 80-84. Used by permission.

As He Walked

HOW TO Key text: 1 John 2:1, 2

Writing a "how to" on "Our Advocate" presents its difficulties as the practical application appears nebulous. After all, it's not "how to advocate" or "how to be an advocate" or "how to get an advocate." The whole point of this week's lesson is that Christ is our advocate, the one who answers Satan's charges against us, the one who stands beside us to give aid. So where do pragmatics come in?

Some understand that since Christ is our advocate/savior, our role in salvation is strictly passive. Perhaps this is correct. However, the danger here is that sin might be taken too lightly. In today's key text (1 John 2:1, 2) John says two things about sin. First, if we sin we have an advocate with the Father. And second, sin is universal. Both points can be used as excuses to brush over sin. Since we have an advocate for when we sin, and since sin is universal, why worry?

John says he is writing a call against sin. "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin" (1 John 2:1, NIV). But then he adds: "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). The tone is almost casual. Don't sin, but if you do don't worry. We have an advocate—the one who paid the penalty for our sin and the whole world's.

Is this taking sin too lightly? I think not. What John seems to be saying is that sin is not something which *we* should be preoccupied with because we have a representative before God and *he* will take care of sin for us and the whole world (vs. 2).

Is salvation passive, then? Yes, as far as sin is concerned. We have an advocate who takes care of the sin problem in our lives. This is the message of the gospel—saved by grace. Yet, as previously pointed out, John is writing this so that his readers will not sin. Therefore, though removing sin is not our responsibility, we cannot ignore it. The key to our dealing with it successfully is found a little earlier in this letter John wrote so that his readers would not sin.

"This is the message . . . : God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. . . . If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:5, 7, NIV). And verse three of the same chapter points out that we also have fellowship "with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (NIV).

So, is salvation passive from our perspective? Yes. We are saved by what God has done. But yet, No, since we must seek fellowship with God. This is where the pragmatics come in. Having an advocate in heaven means that we can have a friendship with divinity. This is the basic point of all "how to's" ever written:

Be friends with God. And how is this done? "By this we may be sure that we are in him: he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 John 2:5, 6, RSV).

E. R. M.

The Analogy of Judgment

by Edward W. H. Vick

This week's study of Christ as our advocate in a judicial setting leads to reflection on a broader issue, addressed by Dr. Vick in today's lesson: How can we best understand the Christian doctrine of judgment?

OPINION

Key text:

Matthew

25:37-39, 44

A Basic Analogy

A Christian doctrine of judgment depends upon the plausibility of using a basic analogy. We define the basic analogy by speaking of two human activities: 1) the act of discrimination; 2) the act of putting into effect the discriminating decision. For example a college admissions officer decides who is qualified to embark on a particular course and who is not (act No. 1). Then that officer accepts those who are and rejects those who are not (act No. 2). Decision leads to appropriate action.

However complex the elaboration in Christian doctrine, this is the basic analogy which supports it. We move from the process of passing and putting judgment into effect in human affairs to speak about the ultimate process of discriminating between what is and is not worth preserving, ("saving" being the more familiar term), and the act of preserving it.

The detailed working out of the analogy is *relatively* important. Once admit that the basic analogy is workable, then you elaborate the details as best you can. Then all kinds of considerations arise: e.g. the relation of Father and Son; soul, immortality, death, resurrection; whether there is a moral norm which the ultimate discrimination exemplifies; reward, punishment.

"Jesus Christ already represents the decision of God in the world."

Possible Paradigms

So what is the relationship we shall take as the starting point of our doctrine? What relationships can we draw upon which might help us to understand that God is judge and is engaged in an activity of judgment? It makes all the difference where we start as to the kind of teaching we shall end up with. What have we got for possible choices? What are paradigmatic uses of the idea of judgment in our experience? I suggest the following:

1. The formal activity of judge and judgment in a Western law court.

2. The less formal approval or disapproval of others, such as friends, family, acquaintances, colleagues.

3. The act of self-evaluation (conscience), which, disapproving, produces guilt; and approving, produces satisfaction.

4. Any act of discrimination which expresses itself in producing consequences: for example, I'm moving to a new house. I ask, "What shall I keep?" I then put my decision into practice, taking this and leaving that.

Significant relationships which come to expression in the Bible suggest how we might select and present the analogy. We must, of course, ask of them as we are asking of our own, Are they appropri-

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ate and helpful? Following are two biblical paradigms which speak of God as judge. These use the analogy in particular ways.

5. God is defender, protector. He is active to put wrongs right and does so. His relationship to his creation is like the relation of the judge (of the book of Judges) to his people. The judge (*shofet*) is both warrior, political leader, arbitrator, administrator and friend: a many-sided rather than a specialized figure. He does not only decide what is right. He gets it done. God's judgment is saving, redeeming. It purifies and renews (Isa. 30:18).

6. Jesus Christ already represents the decision of God in the world. God's judgment has already come with the coming of Jesus (John 9:39). The Paraclete, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, places the world under judgment (John 16:7-11). God's judgment is now present in the activity of the Spirit. Jesus discriminated between the worthy and the unworthy. What is worth conserving is the openness of the poor, the receptiveness of the needy, the thirst of those whom the world passed by. Here we learn that, when God reveals himself, God reveals what is worthy in the human, what is worthy in history. We learn that that which is destroyed is conserved and transformed; that there is death before resurrection, but that resurrection follows death; that the meek suffer and die before they inherit the earth.

**"If God, Judge,
is God, Loving
Father, then we
have hope."**

Preferential Treatment

What happens in the working out of a doctrine of the Last Judgment is that one of these themes becomes the dominant one. *One* form of analogy gets preferential treatment. Some doctrines of judgment press analogy No. 1 and go on to elaborate the imagery of Last Judgment in terms of process of investigation, the accused in the dock, God the Father on the Bench, God the Son on the counsel for the defense, the broken law, the consultation of the recorded evidence, the observers in the public gallery, the pleading of the chief witness, the solemn pronouncing of the verdict when the process is over. The emphasis is on vindication, justice, law, mediation, offended honor, payment, satisfaction.

It is clear that such a presentation has serious weaknesses and limitations. For one thing it is modern and therefore it is anachronistic to impose it upon the ancient context and claim that this is what the biblical sources meant. Secondly, strict justice is incompatible with mercy. Thirdly, to speak of the Father as just and the Son as merciful introduces a dualistic opposition into the Godhead. Fourthly, the defendant never appears before God. Since most are dead, the talk of "appearing before the judgment seat" is obviously a metaphor. Fifthly, the analogy taken in this way leads to a highly individualistic interpretation of the relationship between God and the human, even if that is not the intention. The problem that gets the limelight is, "How do *I* stand?" rather than "What is God's purpose?" But the ultimate decision may (for all I think otherwise) go

against me and my history. Finally, the more details the approach draws from Western Law court process the more obscure becomes the appropriateness of the analogy. The more negations you need to make the more equivocal the language of judgment becomes: God the Father is not like a judge in respects a, b, c. God the Son is not like a barrister in respects a, b, c. Investigation is not judgment because a, b, c.

We must conclude that analogy No. 1 is severely limited in its capacity to express a genuine Christian understanding. While in a full-length treatment we would need to say a great deal more on each of these major points, and to take up the possible alternatives, we shall conclude with a sketch of a promising use of the judgment analogy.

A Promising Alternative

So we consider analogy No. 4. Someone with authority makes a decision and carries it out. Having authority means that he who makes an act of discrimination *can* carry it out. Evaluation leads to and is expressed in executive action. Christians speak of God as "the Father, Almighty" (two more analogies). God who is judge is also omnipotent. That means he can, does and will carry out the purpose which his decision expresses. What would be the significance of such judgment unless it were followed up, unless there were the possibility of "life everlasting"? That means that something significant hangs on the evaluative decision: The fulfilment of God's creative purpose.

If judgment involves affirmation, saying an ultimate "Yes!" to human history, and conservation of what is good, it requires an activity of re-creation. The conservation of *what is good*, once that has been decided on, discriminated from what is not good, involves the power to bring good out of what is now past. History is over but God judges it and conserves from it what is worth conserving.

But what in history is worth conserving? In the end, the ultimate discrimination, God's judgment, judges our judgment. We already see this happening in the New Testament (see No. 6 above). The process of God's judgment was taking place in the world. It led to surprise, shock, anger and murder, grief and the bitterness of abject disappointment. But it also led to joy, satisfaction and gratitude. Just think of the exclamation, "But when did we ever see it so?" in the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:37-39, 44). As it was, so shall it be. What was revealed through Jesus is a prolepsis of what will be. But at the "Last Judgment" the good will of God is done.

What is the ultimate verdict on the human enterprise? There are, as we have seen, two relevant questions: 1) Is anything worth preserving?; and (assuming the answer is "Yes!"), 2) How will what is worth preserving get preserved?

The very fact that we can raise the first question shows we have serious reservations about the enterprise we call human history, or the existence we call the self. Both are replete with unrealized possibilities, heavy with failure, with glimpses here and there of what might have been. When history comes to its end will there be anything good which should be conserved?

The Christian answer to that question is that God is Judge and will effect fulfilment, if there is to be fulfilment. Fulfilment comes from beyond history, from beyond the limits of the human. Fulfilment is not a human but a divine possibility. God is the goal as he is the ground of all human existence.

So a Christian doctrine of Judgment is a doctrine of God. It is therefore under the control of quite fundamental principles. In answer to the question, What constitutes an adequate understanding of God?, a systematic theology is necessary. God is one, active, moral, creative, gracious, powerful. These are touch-points. They qualify any understanding of God as Judge.

Taking these as reference points, it is then possible, by drawing out and filling in aspects from the analogy we choose as basic, to give a suggestive and symbolic account. We can then construct a narrative symbolism which indicates a process leading to the making and putting into effect of the discrimination that is ultimate.

This is the function of classical Christian doctrine of the Last Judgment, called the doctrine of the Last Things or Eschatology.

In answer to the question, "How will what is ultimately worth preserving get preserved ultimately?" we can, and shall if we understand aright, admit our human dependence on God. So, the "thrust" of the Christian theme of Last Judgment is to drive us to acknowledge our limitations and to shift our perspective and our prospect from ourselves to God. If God, Judge, is God, Loving Father, then we have hope. As it was in the beginning, so shall it be at the end: beginning and end of all things—God.

REACT
Lesson 9

1. Why do we need Christ as our "advocate" with the Father? Do we need someone to persuade the Father to love or pardon us?
 2. If we are acquitted in the heavenly court on the basis of Christ's perfect life and sacrificial death, then do our deeds come into consideration in the judgment at all (see 2 Cor. 5:10)?
 3. How does the promise that if we sin we have an advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1) affect your everyday living? Does it lead to a casualness about sin, knowing that the advocate is always there? Explain.
 4. Is Satan our only accuser (see Rev. 12:10) or does our sin place us under the wrath of God as well?
 5. Does God get angry? If so, what makes him angry and how does he express it? If not, how do you explain the many Bible passages that refer to his anger and wrath?
 6. Are there limitations to the courtroom analogy of how God relates to us? Are there ways in which God is not like a judge? Are there ways in which Christ is not like an attorney for the defense?
 7. Edward W. H. Vick (Opinion) discusses six possible ways of developing the analogy of judgment. Discuss the validity and/or weakness of each paradigm. What is the basis for deciding some analogies are better than others when we think about the Last Judgment?
-

At the Father's Right Hand

"Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" (Romans 8:34, NIV).



Poor Sam?

by John Elder

INTRO- DUCTION

Poor Sam. Junior executive in charge of the janitor closet. He always felt like he was at the bottom of the corporate totem pole. He had no voice in what happened around him. He was powerless. He was insecure.

Poor Sam. He worried a lot. Whenever the economy suffered he worried about being laid off. When the economy boomed he worried that he wouldn't produce enough to compete and would get fired. He worried about being demoted. He worried about getting reprimanded (the company had such high standards—who could ever live up to them all?)

Poor Sam. He was at the verge of a nervous breakdown. Then, one day, he met Joshua at the employee lunch counter. Gradually, their friendship grew. One day, in the course of conversation over a sandwich, Sam began to tell him about his fears. He explained how frightened he was that the Chairman of the Board would review his work record, find it inadequate, and fire him.

Poor Sam. That's when he found out that Joshua was the only son of the Board Chairman. He had left his privileged position voluntarily, and was working for the corporation as just another employee. As Sam understood it,

this had something to do with showing all the employees what kind of person the Chairman of the Board really was. Sam wasn't so sure he wanted to find out.

Poor Sam. He knew his goose was cooked. But as he listened, Joshua described his father. Gradually, it dawned on him that if the Chairman cared about him as much as Joshua, maybe he didn't need to worry any more.

Poor Sam. After striking up a friendship with Joshua, he discovered that Joshua would soon leave. Sam was absolutely dejected. His closest friend would soon go and leave an empty void in his life. No, Joshua explained, they could still keep in touch—and later, Joshua would come back to pick up all his friends in family limousines and they could all have a great party at the family estates.

Poor Sam. He still couldn't understand why Joshua had to leave. So, Joshua explained that he had to go to the Employee Evaluation Meeting. There he would sit down at his father's right-hand side and help him evaluate employee records. Of course he wouldn't let any of his friends get fired.

Poor Sam? No. He had a friend, seated at the right-hand side of the Board Chairman. And you?

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A Right-handed God

LOGOS The Bible's apparent bias toward the right over the left in spatial relationships intrigues me. Without exception the right side of anything seems to take precedence. Jesus placed the sheep on his right and the goats on his left (Matt. 25:33)—and it is the right arm of God which is represented as possessing saving strength (Ps. 20:6). The angel which appeared to Zechariah in the temple stood on the right side of the altar—indicating favor (Luke 1:11).

Although these examples are undoubtedly symbolic, it might be concluded that the right side of God is the right side to be on. If so, then Christ—our mediator—occupies the position of optimum accessibility and influence. "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" (Heb. 1:3, NIV). Thus we can be assured that our petitions and confessions are always given highest priority.

Furthermore, we can be confident that our mediator—or priest—possesses the highest possible credentials. For Christ is "one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared: 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek'" (Heb. 7:16, 17, NIV). Through his intercession, our status changes so dramatically that it can only be described as entering a new world. "When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world; the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun" (2 Cor. 5:17, NEB). "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13, 14, NIV).

As citizens of this new order, we, incredible as it may seem, are accounted as having the same privileged position as Christ at God's right hand. "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6, 7, NIV).

But the magnanimity doesn't end there. Christ aids in our daily struggles as well as our eternal destinies. "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8, NIV). Two of the most important gifts he gave are the Holy Spirit and the continual forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:33; 5:31). Without these, the benefits of his hard-won victory for us at the cross and his constant intercession to the Father might be easily lost in our lives. But instead we possess the priceless security of knowing that all the divine capabilities are constantly being exercised in our behalf. Christ gives his solemn promise: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28, NIV).

L. R. C.

Protection From the Throne

In his own strength, man cannot meet the charges of the enemy. In sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. But Jesus, our Advocate, presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause, and by the mighty arguments of Calvary, vanquishes their accuser. His perfect obedience to God's law has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims from His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. To the accuser of His people He declares: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning." And to those who rely on Him in faith, He gives the assurance, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (Zech. 3:4).

All who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen, and faithful, and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of the Saviour. Not one soul who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection, will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. His word is pledged: "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me" (Isa. 27:5). The promise given to Joshua is given to all: "If thou wilt keep My charge, . . . I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by" (Zech. 3:7). Angels of God will walk on either side of them, even in this world, and they will stand at last among the angels that surround the throne of God. . . .

But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves up to be controlled by the satanic agencies. They have repented of their sins, and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition; and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin and also their penitence, declares: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. I gave My life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of My hands. They may have imperfections of character; they may have failed in their endeavors; but they have repented, and I have forgiven and accepted them."

TESTIMONY

Key text:
John 10:28

"He claims from His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man."

Excerpted from *Prophecies and Kings*, pp. 586-589.

The Exalted Lord

by F. F. Bruce

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Psalm 110:1

The oracle of Psalm 110:1, "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool," is one of the most primitive Christian *testimonia*. If, as was widely held, this oracle was addressed to the Messiah, then, since in the eyes of his followers Jesus was the Messiah, the oracle was fulfilled in him.

Paul does not often use the expression about the right hand of God; when he does so, it is probably because it had already become familiar to Christians when they confessed their faith in the Christ "who died, . . . who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, . . ."—as Paul puts it in Romans 8:34, apparently quoting such a confession of faith. (That is the only place where the expression occurs in his "capital" epistles; it appears also in Colossians 3:1 and Ephesians 1:20.) Like his fellow-Jews, he knew "the right hand of God" to be a metaphor denoting supreme authority, but he may have preferred to use it sparingly lest some of his Gentile hearers or readers should imagine that it had physical or local significance. It is, of course, difficult to think or speak of exaltation or supremacy without the use of spatial imagery. Christian astrophysicists who recite the historic creeds are not charged with inconsistency for employing the terminology of the three-decker universe; this terminology provides serviceable metaphors for the expression of transcendence, or of communication in both directions between God and man. Even in the first century such terminology was recognized by many thinking people as metaphorical, and among those thinking people Paul is entitled to be included. . . .

Although Paul makes infrequent use of the metaphor "the right hand of God," he takes the oracle of Psalm 110:1 seriously as a messianic *testimonium*, and in fact in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 he gives a fuller exposition of it than does any other New Testament writer. "Sit at my right hand," ran the oracle, "till I make your enemies your footstool"—and Paul undertakes to identify these enemies. They are not flesh-and-blood enemies; they are "principalities and powers," forces in the universe which work against the purpose of God and the well-being of man. It is to forces of this order that Paul has referred earlier in 1 Corinthians as the "rulers of this age" who, in ignorance of the hidden wisdom decreed by God from ages past for his people's glory, "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:6-8). Pontius Pilate and others may have played their historic part in this, but without realizing it they were agents of those hostile forces in the spiritual realm. Now, thanks to the victory of the cross and the reign of the risen Lord, those forces are being progressively destroyed. The last and most intractable of those forces is death, which is to be destroyed at the final resurrection of which the resurrection of Christ is the first instalment.

Excerpted from F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), pp. 115-119. Used by permission.

F. F. Bruce is a prominent English New Testament scholar.

Let's Get Practical

by Rick Williams

HOW TO:

Key text:
Ephesians

4:8-16

Imagine that suddenly you become the dean of students at one of our Adventist colleges. Seriously, take a moment and think what it would be like. In one moment you become the individual who "should know" why all the rules are good for students. In the night you begin begging to sit near your Father, to gain understanding, so that you may represent his world of order in the proper way to the students. Jesus has that opportunity! He sits at the right hand of God and lovingly, through his Spirit, will mediate the advantages of making good choices to all of us who see a rather distorted picture of things. He sees and understands clearly how all things work together to ultimately indicate that God is love and that living life his way truly brings peace.

We will someday soon sit with God our Father and share with others in the universe the joys of living life God's way. However, in a little different way, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, that life can happen *now* as well. There are areas in your life in which you have gained and will gain special insight into the advantages of making choices which fit with God's overall plan. You can mediate or reveal to those around you what the Holy Spirit has helped you learn. There are at least three broad ways in which this can happen.

1. **Life work.** Every profession has something to say about God's world! I worked with a carpenter one summer who was able to draw many lessons of God's world from his daily work. He would tell me, "Make a straight cut, draw a straight line, even though it appears unclear at the moment how this is necessary to the success of the project." As we began to finish the house, the reasons for the straight cuts and lines became clear. It is often like this in life—we are frequently asked to do things God's way at a time when the beneficial and healing results are not evident to us. Only later do we see the benefits or the pains of our choices.

2. **Hobbies.** How about a hobby like bird watching? I once spent a few hours on Walney Island in England with a professional bird watcher. He explained how and why the sea gulls lived, loved and fought in their unique ways. The lessons for life that he could draw from his insights were dramatic. All hobbies can say something about God's world. Be sensitive to what God would have you learn so that you can share it with others.

3. **Special life experiences.** Anyone who has read many *Reader's Digest* "Drama in Real Life" articles knows that God often uses special life experiences to teach us what is genuinely important. Each of us has stories that we like to share with others about unique times in our lives and what God meant to us then.

Each of us has a special opportunity to "sit quietly with God through His Holy Spirit." What we learn about God's world we can share with others so that they will want to be with him for eternity.

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So What?

by John Elder

OPINION

Key text:
Romans 8:28-39

We've just spent the week studying another doctrine, another approach to Christ, the Mediator. More theology, more ideas, even a few practical suggestions (see How To).

Practical suggestions? More like glittering generalities! Mediating God to the world through our work, hobbies, and special experiences—that's rather vague. We read, concur, then forget. If that's all that Christ at the Father's right hand has to say to us, who cares?

An essential problem with humankind (even converted Christians) is insecurity. We are all too ready to rise up and defend our egos—even at the expense of another. No matter how committed my life is to God, no matter how much I care for you, if you threaten my ego, I will lash out in self-defense.

It's a part of human nature—underlying insecurity which poisons our mortal attempts to love. Mediate God through our work and hobbies? We are mortal. We are fallible. We are vulnerable. We are afraid. What we show of God is veiled beneath our own existential insecurity.

But, Christ at the Father's right hand is indeed a doctrine which can bring us hope. In the midst of our insecurity, we find security: Christ at the right hand of the Father.

Does our mortality, our human fallibility worry us? In Christ our future is assured. Do we feel vulnerable? Our Christ is *invulnerable*. Are we afraid? If God be for us, what is there to fear? Ultimately, we are secure.

As we come to understand this, not only with our minds, but also with our emotions, we become free to mediate God—through our work, our hobbies, and even our special life experiences—to a world that needs him desperately.

John Elder is currently studying math at Loma Linda University and holds a B.A. in ministerial studies.

REACT
Lesson 10

1. Has anything, other than the fact of his divinity, merited Christ his position at the Father's right hand? Explain. What are the implications of this for our lives?
2. What do you think the apostle Paul means in saying that when a person is "united to Christ, there is a new world" (2 Cor. 5:17, NEB, see Logos)? Is there a relationship between this "new world" and the concept of Christ being at the right hand of the Father?
3. Paul also says that through Christ's intercession we are rescued from the "dominion of darkness" and "brought into the kingdom of the Son" (Col. 1:13, 14). In specific, experiential terms how would you contrast what it means to be in the dominion of darkness with what it means to be in the kingdom of the Son? Indicate below the things that are involved in being in each kingdom.

Dominion of Darkness

Kingdom of the Son

4. Do you view Jesus' close accessibility to the Father as making a practical difference to you personally? If that link was less certain, would your life-style and attitude change? In what ways?
 5. Was Christ's installment as our mediator at God's right hand truly necessary in the redemptive process? Why does the all-knowing God need constant reminders of his own merciful action? Have we overspecialized the roles of the Godhead?
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Judgment From the Sanctuary

“ ‘He has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed’ ” (Acts 17:31, NIV).



A Call to Judgment

by Charles Teel, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

"Yes, Virginia, there is a judgment!" says I.

"So what?" responds Virginia.

"So we must live in light of the judgment," says I.

"So what does that mean?" responds Virginia.

How to answer Virginia's question? What *does* it mean to live in light of justice/judgment? How does the teaching of the sanctuary call us to live in light of justice/judgment?

One Answer. The sanctuary teaching of judgment tells us that there is a goal toward which history moves. We live for something. We are a part of something bigger. There is purpose to our lives. Human-kind is not merely lost at sea. Martin Luther King, Jr., put it this way:

I refuse to believe that man is no more than flotsam and jetsam on the ocean of life. The "isness" of man is ever confronted by the divine "oughtness." The arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

Another answer. If history indeed "moves" toward something, we are all caught up in this cosmic sweep of history *now*. The universe "bends toward justice" *now*. The divine oughtness confronts us *now*. As the earth spins and as night becomes day and as minutes extend into hours God's people have opportunity to demonstrate that they are on God's side. Justice/judgment hap-

pens this very day.

Another answer. The nature of that justice/judgment which the people of God are called to make happen is wrapped up in how we view God acting in history. The Judeo-Christian picture of God is not one of who stands *apart from* the action: God is not merely a blindfolded muse holding scales in one hand and a sword in the other. Rather, God is seen as a *part of* the action: the sanctuary doctrine in fact pictures our Lord as priest who is very much on our side. This sanctuary teaching of God as part of the saving action is like the Swiss sculpture of Justice in which Justice holds a chick protectively in her hands while implanting her heel firmly on the neck of a serpent. Beneath the sculpture are the words: "Justice is protecting the defenseless weak from the predatory strong."

So what, Virginia?

So *proclaiming* a God who is actively involved in this type of justice/judgment is good news to many. So *enacting* this type of justice/judgment in God's world will be welcomed by many as good news. So living in light of judgment/justice is to echo the cry of those prophets who peopled history during centuries past and in decades present: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream." Now.

But keep reading, Virginia. There's more to come.

Charles Teel, Jr. is chairman of the Department of Christian Ethics at Loma Linda University.

A Call to Moral Seriousness

by Niels-Erik Andreasen

LOGOS

"It cannot be that I ought to die. That would be too terrible," wrote Tolstoy, thereby summing up the modern response to death. Ancient people responded in much the same way. For example, the people in Amos' time (750 B.C.) considered themselves quite secure from misadventure because they were God's chosen. Then the word of the Lord came: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2). This sentence is elliptical, perhaps left that way for greater dramatic effect. The missing middle sentence would have read something like this: "with you I established my covenant which you broke." Understood this way a relationship is set up between God's call, his covenant, our obligation, and the judgment. God's call leading to a covenant relationship brings with it ethical obligations (Amos 2:2-6), and when they are neglected, judgment follows.

This brings us to the prophet Micah who spoke of God's judgment from the heavenly sanctuary (1:2f.) upon his own people Israel (6:1-8). Why does God judge his people? Because they have failed to serve him with sacrifices and other religious obligations? Certainly not, for no amount and quality of gifts would be adequate in any case, not even "thousands of rams" and "ten thousand rivers of oil" (vs. 7). Rather the judgment is based upon the degree to which God's people have met their ethical obligations of justice, kindness, and humility (vs. 8). The first of these refers to the fair and honest treatment we give each other, the second to the kindness with which we treat those who have failed us, and the third to such humility in us that we consider fairness and kindness to be nothing but God's normal and reasonable expectations of us.

Now we can turn to Ezekiel 9 where God again is seen judging his people, beginning at the sanctuary after he has marked by a mark of ownership those who will be spared (vss. 4f). Who will bear this mark? Those who "sigh and groan" over the abominations in the city (vs. 4). Their mark (seal) indicates that they belong to God (Rev. 7:1-3), and they are spared because of their loyalty.

Now we come to the conclusion. What does it mean to live in the time of God's judgment, the judgment from the sanctuary, the one that separates those who belong to God from those who do not? Does it mean to live in fear of death, as Tolstoy wrote? Does it mean to live in complete confidence of religious superiority that nothing can happen to us? Neither answer is adequate. We must face the judgment of God with neither terror nor arrogance. Rather the judgment calls us to moral seriousness. So we will approach the judgment bar of God to seek his forgiveness, to renew our loyalty to him, and last but not least, to accept anew the ethical demand placed upon God's covenant people.

Niels-Erik Andreasen is professor of Old Testament and the associate dean of the Division of Religion at Loma Linda University.

A Call to Tabernacle

by David Larson

TESTIMONY

Key text:
John 1:1-17

Ellen White saw the sanctuary as a symbol of God's nearness, a symbol that became even richer with the coming of Jesus. Speaking of the journeys of the people of Israel, she wrote: "Through all their weary wandering in the desert, the symbol of His presence was with them. So Christ set up His tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment. He pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life. 'The word became flesh, and *tabernacled among us* (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.' John 1:14, R.V., margin."¹

The practical benefits of understanding God to be so near were clear to Ellen White. "Since Jesus came to dwell with us," she wrote, "we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs." One significant thought here is that, contrary to the opinions of many traditional religious thinkers, Ellen White held that God's own life is changed by God's participation in human events, a thought that should put to rest the idea that God is wholly unaffected by what happens in our existences. The divine judge is not a foreigner but a friend, one who understands very well the deserts through which we all wander. "Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is a friend of sinners. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour's life on earth, we see 'God with us.'"²

**"God
tabernacled
with us to
encourage us."**

In another place, Ellen White developed the same thought. "God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men."³ God tabernacled with us to encourage us with Good News about the kind of judge God really is.

The sanctuary as a reminder that God tabernacles with each one of us also indicates that there is no sharp distinction between the common and the sacred. "Religion and business are not two separate things; they are one. Bible religion is to be interwoven with all we do or say. Divine and human agencies are to combine in temporal as well as in spiritual achievements."⁴

1. *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 23, 24, emphasis supplied.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
3. *Steps to Christ*, pp. 10, 11.
4. *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 349.

David Larson is associate professor of Christian ethics at Loma Linda University and associate director of the Center for Bioethics.

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A Call to Accountability

by Richard Rice

EVIDENCE
Key text:
2 Corinthians
5:10

Emil Brunner is one of the great "neo-Reformation" theologians of this century. With Karl Barth, he emphasized the importance of divine revelation and helped the Christian world recover a sense of God's transcendence. In the following comments Brunner argues that the idea of judgment is indispensable to an adequate understanding of both God and man.

"What is the theological foundation of the thought of judgment? It is a necessary inference from the knowledge of the holiness of God. God is the One who takes His Will in deadly earnest. . . . The holy God tolerates no opposition to Himself. He sets His face against all opposition to Himself and asserts His absolute authority. . . .

"The God who makes Himself known to us in the revelation of the scriptures is not light *and* darkness, life *and* death. The thought of judgment brings to light the original God-given connection between obedience and life. To be with God is life, to be against God is death. As unity with the divine will is salvation, so resistance to it is perdition. . . .

"In the same way the foundation of our responsibility comes to light in the thought of judgment. When man really recognizes his responsibility, he knows that it is not merely a human responsibility. Responsibility means to be summoned to give an account, to be reckoned responsible. What could this authority be, which calls us to account, if not God? and for what should we be reckoned responsible if not for our whole life? To take our responsibility seriously means nothing else than to stand before the face of the divine Judge. To have to answer for oneself before God is the highest expression of moral responsibility. Only this thought of judgment gives ultimate depth to the concept of responsibility and therefore makes clear the relationship between God and man. . . .

"Only if we understand responsibility literally as the necessity of giving an account to the Judge who judges impartially and knows everything—only then do we understand ourselves as really responsible. . . ."¹

Brunner's thoughts raise a number of important questions. To begin with, what do you think of the claim that we need a concept of divine judgment in order to understand our responsibility? Are people who don't believe in God inevitably irresponsible? And is "fear of judgment" a praiseworthy motive for doing something?

Second, how does the idea of judgment affect our understanding of God? If we ignored this divine activity, what would it do to our overall view of God? Would it make him more or less worthy of our worship? Is there an important connection, as Brunner suggests, between the ideas of God as creator and God as judge?

Finally, how does the thought that you are personally accountable to God affect you? Without it, would you feel more, or less, important as a human being?

Richard Rice is professor of theology and Christian philosophy at Loma Linda University.

**"God tolerates
no opposition to
Himself."**

1. Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation*, Dogmatics: Volume III, translated by David Cairns in collaboration with T. H. L. Parker (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 418, 419.

A Call to Respond

by V. Bailey Gillespie

The so-what questions are always the hardest. Moving from theology to praxis or the practice of theology into life itself is where the "rubber meets the road."

But if living with the knowledge of the judgment of God against evil is a theological/historical reality, and that judgment is being declared by the voices of God's people now, then the practical implications become obvious.

HOW TO
Key text:
Ephesians
2:17-19

1. **Some of the realities of the judgment are cosmic in nature.** For example, we live in a new world today in many ways. We have a broader view of the nuclear family. Family does not now mean Mom and Dad and 1.5 children with one dog called Spot. Family includes the interdependency of all the peoples on earth. We are a global village—a world community—a common family, "humanitas." Our interdependency is shown when Arab oil ministers regulate our gas prices and garbage collectors modify the quality of our lives in the cities. Proclaiming judgment/justice means sensitivity and involvement in global issues. Concerns such as hunger, poverty, and human rights involve the saints in judgments against such global evils. Global issues are often the easiest to identify, and often the hardest to cure.

2. **The proclamation begins now.** More personally, Jesus suggested that he "came and proclaimed the good news: peace to you who were far off, and peace to those who were near by; for through him we both alike have access to the Father. . . . You are no longer aliens in a foreign land, but fellow-citizens with God's people, members of God's household" (Eph. 2:17-19, NEB). This text moves concern for others closer to home. We can now say, "I choose to be involved with issues I can change and influence." From local church policy to school administrative structures to neighborhood action, the Christian proclaims the new-age mentality that cannot cope with evil winning any longer! Oppression is eliminated and caring fills its void, if the saints are proclaiming God's judgments now and are working for God's peace.

3. **We begin somewhere.** Recognizing the unique time of judgment in which we live, we also recognize what God is trying to teach us through the events of the world. These meanings become clear when we see the real world with its problems, its challenges, and its varied textures and needy faces. The meaning in these things becomes clear when we get involved sometime, somewhere. Action is needed, decisions must be made, game-plans clarified, proposals written, arguments honed, and progress begun. These how-to suggestions are only theory until *you* begin to make judgment/justice happen. *You* must communicate the good news that God has won and that God keeps winning. Then maybe, just maybe, the good news will be received as just that!

V. Bailey Gillespie is professor of theology and Christian personality at Loma Linda University.

A Call to Responsibility

by Charles Teel, Jr.

OPINION

Key text:
Exodus 25:8

Four days ago my eleven-year-old daughter brought home Lesson 28 of her fifth-grade Bible workbook entitled "Making a Model of the Sanctuary." She can earn one hundred points for this project. Let me share with you how this week's articles are going to inform our sanctuary-building endeavors.

First, we are going to shape two clay tablets representing the Decalogue. We will be writing "worship" on one tablet and "ethics" on the other.

Second, we will build the sanctuary as an example of how tablet one of the covenant was given hands and feet and made to walk in the experience of God's people. Through holy days (holidays) and priesthood and feasts and offerings it is abundantly clear that the worship tablet of the covenant makes demands on social structures. Worship is not merely "private devotions." Worship involves "communal devotion."

Third, we will try building that type of society which tablet two calls God's people to fashion around the sanctuary. To take the model sanctuary to school and have it nakedly displayed on the teacher's desk or sitting atop the upright piano is to miss the whole point of sanctuarity. The sanctuary cannot rightly be viewed apart from the society within which the God of the covenant was to dwell.

"Worship
involves
'communal
devotion.'"

What type of buildings will my daughter and I construct near the sanctuary to demonstrate that the demands of the ethics tablet are no less social in nature than the demands of the worship tablet? For starters, we will build a Boaz family farm by way of noting that any people who take the sanctuary seriously will need to provide a social welfare system for the Ruths of this world—the defenseless weak that the covenant singled out as "the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the resident alien." We will build sewers by way of symbolizing that the covenant has much to say about public health. A title company building will lead us into a discussion of the Sabbatical years (and in grand fashion, the year of Jubilee) when property was to be returned to its original owner as a means of keeping a check on inherited wealth. A chamber of commerce building will offer opportunity for us to review the covenant demands upon Israel's business community, and a bank will be necessary as well if we are to understand the usury laws of God's people.

It is thus my fond hope that my daughter and her classmates come to see that God tabernacles among us in human history; that the sanctuary calls us to personal trustworthiness as well as to social ethics.

In short, the sanctuary is set in the midst of commerce and industry and congress and agriculture and conference office and medical center and university. The sanctuary calls us to personal and corporate responsibility as we structure our individual and social lives in light of God's righteous judgment.

Charles Teel, Jr. is chairman of the Department of Christian Ethics at Loma Linda University.

REACT
Lesson 11

1. In the *Logos* section Niels-Erik Andreasen quotes Amos and other Old Testament prophets in viewing the sanctuary message as "a call to moral seriousness." What does he perceive Amos to be calling for? What might Dr. Andreasen and Amos be calling you to be morally serious about?
2. God "tabernacled" or dwelt with Israel in a physical structure. Does he "tabernacle" with us today? If so, how?
3. Discuss the questions raised by Richard Rice at the end of the Evidence section.
4. Sanctuary news is the news that God has won and that God keeps winning, according to Bailey Gillespie (How To). What persons or groups of persons especially need to get this good news?
5. Charles Teel (Opinion) argues that "to take the model sanctuary to school and have it nakedly displayed on the teacher's desk or sitting atop the upright piano is to miss the whole point of sanctuarityness." Why? Do you agree with him? Explain.
6. What specific things can you be involved in to enhance "sanctuarityness"?
7. If it is God who ultimately will bring about justice, do you think this week's lesson authors are correct in saying that the sanctuary teaches us that *we* must work for social justice?

The Final Crisis

“ ‘There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered’ ” (Daniel 12:1, NIV).



Inquest of a Deceiver

by Lynn Neumann McDowell

INTRO- DUCTION

So you're back again, Word. I saw you today, fording a stream that looked like blood to soothe the boils of a man who hates you. We've been putting you out for centuries, one inquest after another. But you never seem to learn.

The Judean Inquisition was amateurish, I admit—one man hung up on some crude boards outside Jerusalem. We didn't realize then that your contagion could spread through eleven cowards.

Now we know.

It's a disease of the mind you spread. "Come, let us reason together," you say, but you're not reasonable. "Turn the other cheek" is madness not reason when Romans are bloodying up the streets of your hometown. No wonder they hung you up!

See, your approach is all wrong. You ask them to reason, to think, but when they do that they become responsible—and uncomfortable.

Ethics, issues, serious discussion—they're not for the work-a-day man! And many of the pious realize this—even some who think they're the remnant. Rather than risk making a wrong choice, they let their leaders decide what is right. After all, they're Spiritual Specialists. To put it another way, why talk to a G.P. about your heart condition

when you can consult a specialist? Your "freedom"—the responsibility to reason and choose—is really an uncomfortable, antiquated yoke.

My way, on the other hand, is easy: Just respond. No endless discussions, no big moral decisions, just instinctive action. It's so easy my way.

So why is your corruption still spreading?

Your goodie-two-shoes "reasoning" is sickening. We put you out in Judea, in Spain, in the Swiss-Italian Alps, but brighter than ever I see you shining in people's eyes. Wake up to the real world! If you look at the evidence, you'll see you have no right on this planet. You pose as Saviour of the Earth, but here's the real test: What difference did you make in the course of human history?

You've been leading people on for centuries, and it's got to stop. As champion of the People, it's my duty to expose your lies and ineffectiveness.

You didn't make any difference. I don't care if the sun is scorching or if the rivers are bloody, they're going to see that you didn't make any difference. Your reason is ineffectual and you have no right to their love.

I'm going to unmask you, Deceiver.

This is the Final Inquisition!

Lynn Neumann McDowell is a free-lance writer living in Calgary, Alberta.

Coming, Coming Soon I Know

LOGOS

When I was a child, my friends and I would sometimes add an Adventist twist to the old hide-and-peek game. The "Adventists" would hide while the "bad people" would hunt us down. We called the game "Cattle-ticks against the Protestants." It was fun and we had little concern for the inappropriateness of the name or for the events that inspired the game. Oh, the heated sermons, with their hellfire and brimstone hue, did at times trouble our childish dreams, but our fears evaporated with morning when everything became a game once more. In the seeming timelessness of youth the future was a long way away.

The game is probably not familiar to all, but to some the attitude may be. We have all heard the sermons, read the books, and even seen some signs that herald the events prefacing Christ's second coming. But each new day brings with it a comfortable, habitual sameness, and we project the future further into the distance. And slowly an unconscious apathy begins to loiter in the fringes of our minds.

Misunderstanding God's slowness (see 2 Peter 3:9), we live the routine of the passing days which diminishes a call that was once louder in our minds. "Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on earth. . . . He said with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come' " (Rev. 14:6, 7, NIV).

God's patience will not last forever. When that patience is forced to desist, the results of apathy or blasphemy against the Spirit will become clear. " 'If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark . . . he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury. . . . There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast' " (Rev. 14:9-11, NIV). Finally to those who looked beyond daily routine and to those who muffled the loud cry (Rev. 14:6, 7) will come the words: " 'Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; . . . let him who is holy continue to be holy' " (Rev. 22:11, NIV). Final decisions for or against God having been made by all, Christ's work of mediation will cease. Then, "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time . . . everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered" (Dan. 12:1, NIV).

So the question is raised: How does one avoid the restlessness and torment resulting from devotion given to the beast, and receive the deliverance of those whose names are written in the book? "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus" (Rev. 14:12, NIV).

With patient endurance apathy is avoided and hope is kept alive, despite the passage of time. And with patient endurance the questions "when?" and "how soon?" lose their significance to remaining faithful to Jesus.

E. R. M.

When Mediation Ceases

by Grace Fedak Saruk

Christ, our mediator, is in the heavenly sanctuary pleading for each one of us. "God, far from actively willing the death of the sinner, has done all in His power to save him from death (John 3:16)."¹ But, salvation is not forced upon us. "The free will of man is not to be interfered with. Men are to be permitted to live the life of their own choosing, so that their true character may become apparent."²

Time is short, and we will not know when intercession ceases, until it is too late. "When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work . . . and they are prepared for the trying hour before them. . . . An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received 'the seal of the living God.' Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, 'It is done;' and all the angelic host lay off their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.' Revelation 22:11. Every case has been decided for life or death. Christ has made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. . . .

"When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. . . . God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation. . . . Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose."³ The seven last plagues have begun.

Preparation to rescue souls and to purify our character must take place now. "I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of 'refreshing' and the 'latter rain' to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord. . . . Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then we see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. . . . We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let us remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence."⁴

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Revelation 22:11

"We should be drawing nearer to the Lord to enable us to stand."

1. *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 615.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 896.
3. *The Great Controversy*, pp. 613, 614.
4. *Early Writings*, p. 71.

Grace Fedak Saruk is a horticulturist living in Calgary, Alberta.

Persecuting Saints

by Richard Bottomley

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Matthew
13:24-30

The book of Revelation and several parables of Christ paint a stark portrait of the end of time. Some Adventists deal with the vivid imagery by making charts of the events and worrying about the terrors foretold. Some just ignore thinking about end-time events, while others try to come to grips with the issues raised and apply them to our present lives and times.

One striking characteristic of the biblical apocalyptic picture is its ethical simplicity. There are only two types of people: the sheep and the goats. Perhaps it is not surprising then that some true believers of all ages have yearned for the simple polarization depicted in Revelation. Spurred on by the belief that they were living in the last days, these saints tried to help God along by persecuting those they identified as goats. They would not rest until the goats either recanted or were put to the sword.

No longer comfortable with the sword, our generation seeks to accomplish the task by driving our foes from the church. Oddly, this energy is not focused on the consciously wicked—the cruel and greedy—but upon other believers, our brothers and sisters whom we perceive as having dangerous doctrine. In our zeal to fulfill prophecy and God's will, we have strangely turned the tables on the scenes of Revelation. In our age, it is sometimes the saints who persecute the "wicked."

But does God call us to polarize ourselves in this way? Several of Christ's parables speak to this point (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43; and Matt. 25:31-46) as does Christ's tolerance of diversity among The Twelve. We can respond to opposing ideas within a flock in two general ways: (1) We can tolerate divergent but related views and allow free dialogue, trusting that truth and logic will eventually prevail, or (2) we can attempt to dispose of opposing views and limit dialogue and public access to discussion.

The first option is more difficult to choose because it goes against human nature. It is human nature to see divergent views as a negative judgment on our position. But tolerance requires introspection, confidence in our own beliefs, and Christian self-esteem not to feel threatened by the beliefs of our brothers and sisters.

Doctrinal differences often make it hard for us to trust each other. Yet these differences may not be all that important. The usefulness of doctrine is that it paints a picture of God which makes a Spirit-filled life easier to live. Good doctrine is simply a better picture of God that is bad doctrine. As Christ points out in Matt. 25:31-46, it is not right doctrine but just and loving behavior that is the test of a Christian life.

We often ask, "Why does Christ wait?" No church has yet been able to combine a belief in tolerance with a strong sense of mission and change. If these two traits were as fully manifest in our lives as they were in Christ's, then we truly would be a people who reflect God's character.

Richard Bottomley is a geophysicist living in Calgary, Alberta.

"The usefulness of doctrine is that it paints a picture of God."

God's Assurance in the Final Crisis

by Richard D. Ferguson

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46, NIV). Jesus' words on the cross reflect his inner turmoil. God's actions torment him with doubt. Yet at the moment of death, he trusts his Father's care (Luke 23:46). Jesus' crisis at Calvary is related to our final crisis. How can we trust God to save us and love us despite our mortality and corruptibility?

HOW TO
Key text:
John 5:24-27

1. **Recognize that the Good News, manifested by his Son, is the basis on which God's acts must be understood.** God is clear about his intentions, for the testimony of the Word and the Spirit are unequivocal (Rev. 22:12-17). But because we look to ourselves and see failure or labor under the delusion of self-righteousness, we are susceptible to a distorted picture of God. Our fear of death and judgment alienates us from him. Therefore it is critical, especially at this time in earth's history, to understand that the Father's objective is to give us life and heaven, if we so choose (John 3:16-18).

2. **Realize that the execution of God's judgment means a time when truth and righteousness will finally triumph, and not a time of terror for deserted saints without a mediator.** The Father let his only Son die, so we could choose heaven. In this light, Revelation 22:11 is a declaration of hope for us. To understand this and the implications of Christ's mediatorial work, we must view it from its forensic (legal) context.

In the heavenly court, our Lawyer, by his intercession, obtains a verdict for us: NOT GUILTY. Our case is decided. We no longer need a lawyer (mediator). But more follows than a simple verdict.

The judge of all people is also the King of the universe, whose word is law, unalterable. By royal decree, he speaks:

The righteous ARE righteous;

The holy ARE holy. (Rev. 22:11, adapted)

Not only do we have a verdict in our favor, but the force and strength of divine law pronounces everlasting righteousness and holiness for us. *God is always with us and for us, even at the end of earth's time* (Matt. 28:20).

3. **Remember that we are loved and judged in Jesus Christ** (John 5:24-27). Who we are, what we are, and what we do merit us nothing. Our right to eternal life is solely dependent on knowing the Father and his Son. By faith, we exercise that right, believing what God has accomplished for us, in spite of our failure and success. Our earthly experience is not our salvation, but a time to trust Christ's promised deliverance. "Now we can look forward to the salvation God has promised us. There is no longer any room for doubt, and we can tell others that salvation is ours, for there is no question that he will do what he says" (Heb. 10:23, LB).

Richard Ferguson is an electrician in Calgary, Alberta.

Facing the End

by Jaelene Mannerfeldt

OPINION

Key text:
Matthew 28:20
(last part)

As far back as my memory allows me to recall, I have feared the end of time. It is a fear that grips me every time "The End" is mentioned. Ministers who enthusiastically preach sermons on "The End," admonishing me to pray for the closing of time, all seem a touch masochistic with their apparent pleasure in describing the "final events." To me it seems that some people actually enjoy the thought of pain, torture, and discomfort. Personally, I have envied people who were dying now because they would never have to live through the "seven last plagues."

There are many ways of dealing with this fear. One of these is to avoid the issue. Don't speak directly about "The End" but jest and talk as if it doesn't affect you. I shall never forget the friend in Switzerland who casually mentioned that during the "time of trouble" I could come and stay with her. By then her parents would be gone and she would have inherited the family chalet, in what she referred to as a remote area of Switzerland. The chalet did not seem a refuge or sufficiently remote to me with a village only two kilometers away.

Another way of dealing with the end is to develop survival skills for remote areas. Not only are Christians doing this, but there are a number of people outside the Christian community that fear the end. After the movie "The Day After" was televised, individuals began stockpiling copious amounts of dehydrated food in their garages and basements along with other necessary survival equipment.

"I have envied people who were dying now because they would never have to live through the 'seven last plagues.'"

Possibly, how one deals with the end directly corresponds with how one relates to God. If my relationship is not what it should be, then I could be the recipient of sores, third-degree sunburns, and with all of this discomfort, be plunged into darkness, as described by Revelation 16. Those who don't know God face an even bigger time of trouble than those who do know him, and maybe that is what my fears are all about. Will I be on the right side?

My relationship with God will be right if I know him as a friend. As a friend he will indeed protect me, maybe not physically, but he will protect me emotionally, from the trials of the end. And with my inner self at peace with God, I will truly have a calm, rejoicing heart, looking forward to the end.

I hope someday to find that calm expectancy, if indeed the feeling is real, for predictably my child will soon express her own fears of "The End." I am preparing now to reassure those fears in a way mine never were.

Jaelene Mannerfeldt is pursuing a graduate degree in biochemistry in Calgary, Alberta.

REACT
Lesson 12

1. How do you react to the thought of living without a mediator in the last days? What exactly does this concept mean? Are the conditions of salvation different for those who die before Christ returns than for those who live through the final crisis?
2. How can we avoid the "unconscious apathy" about the end referred to in the Logos section? Is it by being continually hyped up on last-day events, looking diligently for signs in contemporary events? Or is it some other way? Explain.
3. In the first part of the Opinion section the author discusses two coping mechanisms for dealing with "The End." Are these valid? Is "The End" something we have to "cope" with?
4. Some "Last-Day Events" charts and books are extremely detailed. Are such attempts to chart the last days valid? How detailed a scenario of the final events of the earth's history does the Scripture give us? Explain.
5. Should we be making special preparation now for the time when Christ's mediation will cease? How?
6. Is it really persecution to seek to remove from church office or employment those whose theological views we consider heretical (see Evidence)? Doesn't the church have a responsibility for seeing that the integrity of its basic doctrines is maintained?

The Consummation

“The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light” (Revelation 21:23, NIV).



Heavenly Hash

by Lynette Jordheim

INTRO- DUCTION

I took the carton out of the freezer. The grocery store had advertised the product as the hot new best-seller of the month. I looked at the fancy lettering on the side of the box: "Heavenly Hash." I scooped a large helping of the chocolate ice cream, marbled with marshmallows and peppered with chocolate covered almonds into a bowl. Letting it soften just enough to prevent the cold from numbing my taste buds, I set about to see what heaven was really like.

Going back for my third bowlful, I noticed the box was nearly empty while my stomach was ballooning. Oh, but the experience was heavenly! It suddenly occurred to me that perhaps the ice cream was misnamed. Here I was enjoying myself, being a glutton, and worst of all—I was keeping the Heavenly Hash all to myself.

I honestly admit, I would have done the exact same thing if the carton bore the name "Satanic Stew," except perhaps with a twinge more guilt. But I began to think how we are always trying to conjure up images of heavenly happenings when such things are unimaginable to us. We can only compare and magnify what we know here on earth and realize that we are still way off in left field, stargazing.

But we do know some facts about heaven. Heaven is where Christ has prepared a home for those he lived and died for on earth. Heaven is what Christ has prepared for

all those who thirst after truth enough to come at his invitation. Heaven is where Christ is waiting to accept us into his heavenly family. Heaven is where the largest and longest-lasting wedding will take place, and we are all invited guests. Heaven is where pain and sorrow and hate are eliminated. Heaven is where communication with the Godhead is face to face without fear.

There is no harm in trying to compare the streets of gold and the sea of glass to a scene from the Czarist era of Russian history. Perhaps, however, we wouldn't have to overload our already bombarded minds with these feeble comparisons if we were in closer communion with God each day.

When we are in heaven we won't have to get on our knees and screw our fists into our eyes until we see a beautiful figure to whom we can pour out our hearts. We won't have to get up in the wee hours of the morning to bury our noses in our Bibles for a few short minutes just to fit him into our busy schedules. We won't have to dress up and go out to fight Saturday morning traffic on our way to and from church. We won't have to depend on stilted gimmicks to provide a sense of divine glory. God the Father, and the Son will be visible to us, accessible to our minds, and close to our hearts. Heaven will be very, very real. No more hashing.

Lynette Jordheim works in the Foothills Hospital, Calgary, as a staff nurse.

Happily Ever After

LOGOS

As a senior anticipating graduation several months from the time of this writing, I am presently engaged in a number of activities characteristic of people in this position—job hunting, contingency planning, and general contemplation of goals and the meaning of life. All of this is hinged upon one basic assumption: that I will indeed graduate on schedule. Now this probably should not be taken for granted considering the enormity of the requisite work yet to be done as well as my natural propensity for overlooking minor details. Even so, an assessment of my past indicates an excellent chance that all the prerequisites for graduation will be ultimately completed—in however haphazard a fashion—and that I will indeed graduate on schedule. I do not know it for a fact, but all my planning is based on this extrapolation of the future from the past.

The collective attitude of God's people should be much the same as they await the impending consummation of the conflict over sin. The future is guaranteed only by the past—the "already" insures the "not yet." "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ will all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:20-22, NIV). So we can conduct ourselves with the certainty of knowing the future. Knowing that the mediator will indeed become the victorious warrior (Rev. 19:16)—knowing that an eternal kingdom of justice, peace, and righteousness will soon replace this nightmarish detour into sin (Isa. 11:4, 5; Micah 4:2, 3).

The joyful anticipation and celebration of the graduation experience also parallels the consummation of the cosmic conflict—when raised by an infinite factor. In John's words: "Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: 'Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready'" (Rev. 19:6, 7, NIV). There certainly will be infinite reason for celebration, for all of heaven and earth will be made new (Rev. 21:1). Furthermore, God promises, "He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son" (Rev. 21:7, NIV). This inheritance has no expiration date, no restrictive clauses, no limitations at all. It cannot be revoked—nothing will tarnish it. "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27, NIV).

Heaven can be an indisputable fact in our future. Better yet it can be that way today. Starting now we can live happily ever after.

L. R. C.

Excitement Plus

by Sharron Schaber

There it is—that little turned-up nose pressed against the windowpane, waiting, watching. Suddenly, he runs to the front door shouting, "Daddy, Daddy, Daddy's home!" Oh, the excitement of a little child waiting for his favorite person to come home and share affection and fun times.

As we anticipate entering the heavenly kingdom, we should also be filled with a powerful, all-consuming excitement. We have the prospect of total peace: Satan will no longer be able to deceive and tempt the inhabitants of the earth. And God is much more eager to share face-to-face fellowship with us than a father is eager to return home to an expectant child. The excitement that awaits us is beyond imagination. "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."¹

The fears of falling prey to Satan's devices are forever done away with. "One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought."²

What joy, love, and peace the inhabitants will share in communion with each other and with the Saviour. "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. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise. . . .

"The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. 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."³

We'll, at long last, be truly home.

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Isaiah 26:3

"Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous."

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 675.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 674.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 678.

Sharron Schaber is working as a community health nurse in Calgary, Alberta.

Your New Jerusalem Mortgage Policy

by Karen Bottomley

EVIDENCE

Key texts:
Isaiah 11:4-6;
Revelation
22:1-5

My friend cried bitterly when she became a Seventh-day Adventist. She was convinced she was following the truth, but the Christian life was so difficult and required so many sacrifices she did not expect to find much personal happiness until the second coming. Have you ever thought this is what heaven stands for, compensation for a life of troubles here on earth?

The idea that a Christian's life is bleak in this world, but will improve enormously when we move into our heavenly mansions has been prevalent in Christian circles for centuries. For millions of people who face a grim struggle to find adequate food, clothes, and housing, or endure irrational suffering and death, the Bible holds out the promise of a New Earth where material wealth will be abundant, and death and sorrow will be eliminated forever. But if we limit our understanding of heaven to this idea of compensation, religion does become "the opiate of the masses," for it only offers a means of escaping this world, not of living within it.

For Seventh-day Adventists, heaven does offer more than an escape route. We believe that when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, he will also establish a new society based on love and justice. Here we will be able to commune with God, and we will be free to live creatively, joyfully. This suggests two important ways heaven affects our lives on this earth.

First, heaven teaches us how to live on this earth. If the society on the New Earth is to function, its citizens must be totally convinced that the principles of God's Kingdom offer the best way to live happy, fulfilled lives. Christ summed up these principles by stating we must love God and our fellowman. When we internalize this guideline, we become citizens of the Kingdom even while we continue to live on this earth. This is one of the things Christ meant when he preached, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." Furthermore, when we live by the principles of the Kingdom, we find that Christ's promise of an abundant life is as true for our lives on this earth as it is for our future lives in heaven.

"Heaven teaches us how to live on this earth."

Second, heaven offers us a model for our communities on earth. We may be entranced by visions of streets of gold and friendly lions, but what really captures our imagination is the promise of a just society. In the New Jerusalem neither our sex nor the color of our skin will determine our opportunities, no one will starve to death while others squander food, and tanks will not be used to settle disputes. If we long for this future, can we do less than to strive to mold our communities on its pattern today? Can we be indifferent about the quality of life of our neighbors on this earth?

My friend was wrong. God does not expect us to mortgage our present lives in exchange for eventual happiness in heaven. The promised New Earth is more than a reward. It is the model for our lives on earth today.

Karen Bottomley works for a seismic exploration firm in Calgary, Alberta.

Life Before and After Consummation

by Gary Jordhelm

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines the word "consummation" as "the desired end." What is your desired end?

What do you want out of life?

What do you want after life?

I know what I want. I want to enjoy myself now and forever. I can't tell you exactly how to do this, but I can share some ideas that may help.

1. **Derive joy from service.** Christ told his disciples that if they obeyed his commandments their joy would be complete. His command is that we love each other as he loves us (John 15:10-12). How did Jesus love? He lived not to be served but to serve (Matt. 20:28). And how is this joyful? It is joyful in that it gives us a sense of purpose. Problems caused by the lack of love and caring are all around us. What greater purpose can life offer us than to love and care for others? Life is a bit like a roller-coaster ride. We rise in moments of ecstasy and then sink as the stimulation fades. For me the sense of purpose I derive from service fills in my low points and makes the ride much smoother.

2. **Develop a relationship with God (Matt. 7:22, 23).** This admonition has become a Christian cliché. We've also been told that we develop a relationship with God by prayer, Bible study, meditation, confession, and removal of cherished sins, and by sharing what Christ has given us. Although we've heard this all before we must remember that God is omnipotent, and that his name has been equated with love. If we really want to enjoy life, can we afford not to develop this relationship?

3. **Think for yourself.** Some time ago a friend described Adventists as "people who have trouble thinking." I'm sure we hold no monopoly here, but many people, Christian or otherwise, often let the "experts" make their decisions for them. This can lead to two problems. First, if we don't think for ourselves we run the high risk of repeating the mistakes of the past. Second, conviction comes from within, not from without. God gave us minds, and he expects us to use them (Matt. 25:14-30).

4. **Don't fear your doubts, face them.** God told Israel they would find him when they searched for him with all their hearts (Jer. 13:29), and I believe this holds true for us. But in order to search one has to admit that he has a need (Rev. 3:17). Rather than equating doubts with a lack of faith, admit your doubts, search, and thus increase your faith.

5. **Be happy (Ps. 100:1, 2).** "An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up" (Prov. 12:25, NIV). We too often fail to realize that one of the greatest gifts we have to offer is a pleasant personality.

Happiness and joy, with a faith that comes from true conviction, will be what we can take with us to the consummation of Christ's kingdom, where, with Christ, we will be ready to enjoy eternity.

HOW TO

Key text:

John 15:10-11

Gary Jordhelm is a third-year education major at the University of Calgary.

Metaphors of Deliverance

by John McDowell

OPINION
Key text:
Revelation
22:1, 2

The story of the final consummation of Christ's Kingdom in the last chapters of Revelation is a story of victory. Christ's function as a mediator has ended, the human and the divine are reunited. To tell the story of "a new heaven and a new earth" the apostle brings together images that have been a part of the biblical story from Genesis on. These images help us to understand the central meanings of Scripture. The consummation is really a restoration, what man lost in Eden is restored. The tree of life is returned (Rev. 22:14).

The patterning of images in the last part of Revelation is complex.¹ There is no room here to discuss them all, but one of the images that speaks of deliverance is that of *water*, "the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God" (Rev. 22:1, RSV). Water, fountains, wells, seas, and rivers form an important metaphoric pattern throughout Scripture. The water imagery can be both good and bad. In both cases the images climax in the last part of Revelation. The water of *life* comes from the throne of God. The demonic side of the water metaphor, the water of *death*, begins with the Flood and ends with "the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:10, 14).

"In the New Earth no temple of stone is needed."

The positive images of water are many. Genesis 2:6 speaks of a "mist" or "flood" ("fountain" in the Septuagint). This is possibly the source of the river which flows out of Eden (Gen. 2:10). Isaac's wife, Rebekah, is found by a "spring of water" (Gen. 24:13). At Marah, the bitter water is made sweet. A little later Moses strikes the rock at Rephidim so that the "people may drink" (Ex. 17:6). This incident connects water with another important biblical metaphor—the *rock*. Christ's body becomes identified with the rock. He is the "stone rejected by the builders" (Acts 4:11; see also Ps. 118:22). On the cross Christ's body is pierced, and out of his body water flows (John 19:34). This metaphorically connects Christ with both "water" and "rock."

Ezekiel, like the book of Revelation, is concerned with judgment. And the prophet has a vision of water that is similar to the one in Revelation. The prophet sees a vision of a restored temple from which water flows that forms a mighty river, and this river heals the land (Eze. 47:1-12). Again the images link this with Christ, who in Revelation becomes the temple. In the New Earth no temple of stone is needed for Christ has become the living stone (Rev. 21:22). This takes us back to 1 Peter where the apostle speaks of Christ as our cornerstone, and we are to become united with Christ by becoming "living stones . . . built into a spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:5, RSV).

With the woman at the well, Christ speaks of water that "will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14, RSV). On the last day of the feast of Tabernacles Christ declares that if any are thirsty they should come to Him. "He who believes in me . . . out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38, RSV).

1. For a fuller discussion of metaphors in the Bible see Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (Toronto: Academic Press, 1982), pp. 137, 138.

John McDowell is working on his doctorate in English at the University of Calgary.

Thus, by Revelation, Christ is strongly linked with both "water" and "stone." In victory Christ is now the "living temple" and the "water of life." This metaphorical linking makes the final invitation of the Bible particularly moving: "And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price" (Rev. 22:17, RSV).

The images of rock and water underscore the essential story of the Bible: the story of deliverance. United with Christ in the Kingdom reality will replace metaphor. What we know now by images, we'll know "face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12).

1. Some Christians in almost every generation since Christ's ascension have expected Christ to return in their lifetime. What effect does this have on you? How do you deal with this?
2. What if Christ doesn't come for another century? What effect would this have on your faith, Christian witness, and service?
3. Is putting aside Christian service (feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, peacemaking) ever excused by the belief in Christ's imminent return? Is the second coming ever a deferral of responsibility in your life?
4. Does the Adventist understanding of heaven have anything special to offer other churches?
5. If you were explaining your concept of heaven to a non-Christian friend what would you emphasize? How would this change with a Christian friend? Would your focus be on material splendor?
6. What do you look forward to in heaven?
7. Is it possible to make Christ's second coming happen sooner? Can we delay the second coming?

REACT
Lesson 13



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a
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