



JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A Message from the ATS President

Gerhard F. Hasel

Dr. Jack Blanco's term as president of the Adventist Theological Society ended in July 1990 at the close of the two-year presidential term prescribed by the Society's Bylaws. As one of the founding fathers of the Society, Jack has given outstanding leadership, going far beyond the call of duty. The Lord of heaven and earth has blessed him mightily in his endeavors. We want to express our deepest appreciation for his leadership. He will now serve a two-year term as Past President, and we shall continue to value his wise counsel.

We want to thank Dr. Ron Springett also for his services in helping the Society get started. In July he was asked to serve as an Honorary Trustee.

The first crucial stages of organization are now in the past. The Society's Constitution and Bylaws are in place. Our mission statement provides direction. Our membership has grown to 500, comprising persons from many countries around the world—university and college professors, seminary teachers, pastors and administrators (including some Division presidents), physicians and dentists, scientists and researchers, lawyers and business persons, and others.

The first issue of the JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY (JATS) has appeared and been mailed worldwide, and now you have the second issue in your hands. We trust that the third issue will be off the press by next February. Plans have been laid in faith to print 25,000 copies of the third issue. It will contain the presentations made at the General Meeting of the Society held in Indianapolis immediately

prior to the General Conference session and attended, on the Sabbath, by as many as a thousand people.

"By their fruits you shall know them," Jesus said. Through the meetings, which are open to everyone, through the first two issues of the JOURNAL, which contain the presentations made at the first two meetings, and through the videotapes which were made at the second meeting, the "fruits" of the Adventist Theological Society can now be tested by all. We trust we shall be found faithful.

I believe that the work of ATS is a sacred work. I have accepted the presidency only after serious reflection and prayer. Our mission statement describes the Society as "centrist," and we are determined to continue on this path. We are living in the end time, when by God's grace Seventh-day Adventists are described in prophecy as the final remnant.

To serve the remnant as it should, the Society must engage in "theological evangelism," informing the church about where theology is today, how it is moving, and what foundations Seventh-day Adventism should build on if it is to move in the right direction. This is no time for panic—or for timidity; it is no time to be alarmist—or to be silent. It is time to speak clearly in a decisive and penetrating voice, a time to speak wisely and affirmingly. It is also a time to pull together, to *pull together*, on the platform of Scripture in its entirety supported by the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy, the "lesser light" that illuminates the greater one.

The work of the Adventist Theological Society is sacred—to help build the body of Christ, to foster its mission to proclaim the truth of the third angel's message in all the world and thereby to hasten the day when the church militant will become the church triumphant. To this task I solemnly pledge myself as the new President.

Sincerely,

Gerhard F. Hasel

THE PAST PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A Message from the ATS Past President

Jack J. Blanco

Without the blessing of the Lord, His providential leadings, and the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit by our members the rapid growth we have seen in our Society would not have been possible. May all praise and thanksgiving be given to the Lord Jesus Christ!

This issue of the JOURNAL contains for the most part the presentations and sermons given at the *Professional Meeting* of the Society held in San Diego, California, near the end of 1989. We met there in connection with the professional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, for whose hospitality and fellowship we are grateful. I wish to thank the participants at San Diego for their contributions of papers and sermons which made our West Coast meeting so beneficial.

However, the experience at our *General Meeting* held this past summer in Indianapolis, Indiana, previous to the 55th session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, was beyond expectation. The fellowship and spiritual uplift at this first international gathering of the Society as we worshiped with committed believers from around the world will be forever etched in our memories.

Without diminishing the value of anything else that was heard or seen at the Indianapolis meeting, I wish to mention two items that elicited outstanding response. One was the keynote address by Enoch Oliveira, Vice President of the General Conference, who spoke plainly on the present dangers which threaten our faith. The other was the recommitment of over one thousand in attendance, including nearly three hundred ordained ministers and professors, who stood and

pledged themselves to continue to acknowledge and to uphold the importance of the prophetic gift as defined in the Scriptures. This recommitment followed the presentation given by Kenneth H. Wood, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate.

The text of the papers and sermons given at the Indianapolis meeting will appear in the spring 1991 issue of the JOURNAL.

Our prayer is that God's richest blessings may rest upon the new President of the Society, Dr. Gerhard Hasel, Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, and on the Vice President, Dr. C. Raymond Holmes, Professor of Preaching and Worship at the same institution, as they guide the Society into expanded paths of scholarship, fellowship, and witness.

Sincerely yours,

Jack J. Blanco

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THE STATUS OF THE FETUS IN MOSAIC LAW

By Ron du Preez
Doctoral Candidate, Andrews University

Only one law in the Bible deals with the human fetus. This legislation, located in Exodus 21:22-25, can be considered the most crucial passage in the Old Testament in regard to the life of the unborn. Naturally, it has received close scrutiny for the light it might shed on the critical question of the nature of the fetus and its value and status in relation to its mother.

Undeniably, this passage contains several exegetical problems.¹ Nevertheless, because of the fact that many people on both sides of the abortion issue have appealed to it, and because it is the only Biblical passage used in support of the official Seventh-day Adventist position regarding abortion in the denomination's medical institutions, it deserves to become the focus of this paper.

Conflicting Translations of Exodus 21:22-25

During the preparation of this paper, 40 available English versions of the Scriptures were examined in order to see how Exodus 21:22-25 has been translated. Essentially, the translators have interpreted our passage in one of two ways.² Twenty translations, from the *Douay Version* of 1609 to the *New Jerusalem Bible* of 1985, render the text in such a way that the fetus can be viewed as of less value than a human being. For instance, the *Jerusalem Bible*, published in 1966, puts the passage this way:

If, when men come to blows, they hurt a woman who is pregnant and she suffers a miscarriage, though she does not die of it, the man

responsible must pay compensation demanded of him by the woman's master; he shall hand it over, after arbitration. But should she die, you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stroke for stroke.

Here the *Jerusalem Bible* implies that the death of the fetus can be compensated for by a fine, while the mother's death invokes the "life for life" legislation. This is seen by many as tacit approval of abortion, for the fetus is not treated as a human being but rather as a personal possession of the father.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, in its "Recommendations to SDA Medical Institutions" on the issue of abortion, bases its position partly on the interpretation of the *Jerusalem Bible*. Number 4 of the Statement of Principles in these recommendations reads in part: "The Adventist position recognizes that no Bible passage expressly condemns abortion or speaks of man as fully human before birth." After quoting Exodus 21:22-25, it draws the conclusion that "it is to be noted that the fetus was not considered a human life to the point where 'life for life' was to be demanded. Thus a distinction is made between the destruction of a fetus and the killing of a person."³

In contrast to the twenty Bible versions under consideration so far, 13 other versions are ambiguous enough to support either position, and seven versions, dating from the 1560 *Geneva Bible* to the 1984 *New King James Version*, translate the text in such a way that the fetus can be viewed as of equal value to its mother. Of these seven, the 1978 *New International Version* is the clearest, translating the passage as follows:

If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.⁴

This translation in the *New International Version* indicates that the fine is to be paid for the premature birth itself and that any serious injury to either mother or fetus requires equal punishment. Thus the fetus is placed on a par with its mother, to be treated

as a real human being and not merely as a matter of material loss for which monetary compensation can be made.

Which translation is correct? Why have linguistic experts interpreted this passage in such contradictory ways? And, what are the implications of all this for the Christian perspective on abortion? These are some of the questions that this study will consider.

More specifically, an attempt will be made to categorize, compare, and contrast the different ways in which commentators and other writers have interpreted the passage. The two main positions will be presented, analyzed, and evaluated for strengths and weaknesses. An overall summary will then be made and conclusions drawn.

Perspective One: The Miscarried Fetus

Status of Mother and Fetus

A careful analysis of all available English-language reference works makes it evident that most commentators believe that Exodus 21:22-25 deals with a miscarried fetus, i.e., a stillborn child. From the 1844 commentary of Thomas Scott⁵ through the 1986 work of Everett Fox,⁶ dozens of Biblical scholars have held this view.

Most of these commentators suggest that the passage reveals three facts: (1) that as a result of the accidental injury incurred, the pregnant woman suffers a miscarriage; (2) that a fine should be paid by the offender as compensation for the loss of the fetus; and (3) that only if the woman herself suffers serious, permanent injury or death does the *lex talionis* (the law of retribution) apply.

This fundamental understanding of the text is followed and promoted by various modern authors, writing either on ethics or on the *lex talionis*. However, this is not merely a modern notion. David M. Feldman, in his *Birth Control in Jewish Law*, shows that this position is an ancient one. He says:

Taking their cue from the Mekhilta, the early halakhic Midrash to this verse, Talmudic commentators made its teaching explicit: only monetary compensation is exacted of him who causes a woman to miscarry. The killing of *nefesh adam* alone is a capital crime, says the Mekhilta.⁷

Based on the understanding that only a fine is required as compensation for the loss of the child, two Roman Catholic com-

mentaries⁸ come to the following categorical conclusion: "The foetus is not regarded as a person, but if the woman dies the *lex talionis* is applied."⁹ None of the other commentaries I consulted seemed willing to go this far.

However, several writers, mostly Protestant, have accepted this view. Paul D. Simmons, for example, says, "The woman has full standing as a person under the covenant, the fetus has only a relative standing, certainly inferior to that of the woman."¹⁰

The Talmud, which uniformly interprets the passage as referring to a miscarriage,¹¹ together with at least one modern commentator,¹² goes one step further in saying that the loss of the child is equivalent to a property loss on the part of the father. David Chidester concurs with this view when he shows that within the Jewish tradition the miscarriage seen in Exodus 21:22-25 "is treated as if it were a case of property loss and not the killing of a human being."¹³

In the Talmudic Period, abortion, although prohibited, was not considered a transgression unless the fetus was viable.¹⁴ Even though the child is considered to be a living soul and as possessing biological life as soon as it is born, if it dies during the first 30 days of infancy no funeral services are held, because the infant is not considered to have existed at all.¹⁵ But this is not to be interpreted as license to commit infanticide during the first month of a baby's life, for Talmudic teaching clearly states that if an infant is destroyed even when it is only one day old, his killer is guilty of murder.¹⁶

Analysis of the Traditional Position

This "miscarried fetus" interpretation has both strengths and weaknesses which need to be critically analyzed and thoroughly discussed. The strengths will be looked at first.

First, as Jack W. Cottrell confirms, the majority of translations of the Bible favor this interpretation.¹⁷ Second, this has been the dominant view of Bible commentators and theologians. And third, the Jewish Talmudic commentators have from ancient times uniformly understood the passage as referring to a miscarriage.

However, when these strengths are evaluated meticulously it becomes evident that they contain serious difficulties.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE. The first argument is based on

the strength of the majority of Bible translations. But is it safe to go with the majority? A brief study of Luke 23:43 will serve to answer this question. Jesus, while hanging on the cross, was responding to the repentant criminal who had accepted Him as Messiah and Savior. Of the 63 English Bible translations investigated, 58 render Jesus' statement in a manner similar to the *Revised Standard Version's*: "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." By placing the comma before the word "today" an overwhelming 92 percent of Bible translators imply clearly that Jesus would be in Paradise with the dying thief that very day. Many have used this text in an attempt to prove that man has an immortal soul. It is an established fact, however, that punctuation marks were added to the Greek text in the ninth century A.D. Thus Seventh-day Adventists and others, demonstrating that the rest of Scripture indicates that man does not possess an immortal soul, have correctly argued that the comma should be placed after the word *today*, even though only three out of 63 Bibles have it so. Thus, a majority opinion is not necessarily a correct position.

BIBLE COMMENTATORS AND THEOLOGIANS. The second argument in favor of the "miscarried fetus" position is that it has been the position of the majority of Bible commentators and scholars. A careful check of English-language commentaries reveals that almost all of them are based upon English translations of the Bible rather than on the original languages in which Scripture was written. More than half of these reference works are based on the *Revised Standard Version*, which translates the text as a miscarriage, and the *King James Version*, which because of its imprecise rendition, is sometimes interpreted to make it support the miscarried-fetus idea. Because these commentaries for the most part have been based on English Bible translations, it is unwise to unquestioningly accept their view, even though it represents a majority position.

INTERPRETATION OF TALMUDIC COMMENTATORS. The third argument, which is based on the uniform interpretation of Talmudic commentators, turns out to be rather tenuous when we realize that, even though the Jewish law taught that a fetus becomes a living soul at birth, it also stated that "the infant is not considered to have lived at all"¹⁸ up to even 30 days after birth. In other words, we

cannot turn to the traditional Talmudic exposition of Exodus 21:22-25 to support the "miscarried fetus" interpretation without also accepting the Jewish belief that an infant is not considered to have lived at all unless it has survived for an entire month—a position that few if any Christians would feel comfortable supporting.

Besides the above-mentioned arguments that have been shown to have serious defects, several other weaknesses significantly undermine this position.

LINGUISTIC AND EXEGETICAL SUPPORT. Without exception, of the dozens of scholars who have written in favor of the "miscarried fetus" position, not one has provided any significant exegesis of the most important words of this passage in the original Hebrew. No unbiased linguistic support whatever has been offered by either commentators or ethicists in support of their position. Admittedly, one scholar does acknowledge that the Hebrew text indicates literally that "her children [a generic plural] come forth,"¹⁹ but even he proceeds to assume that it refers to a miscarriage.

EMENDATION OF THE MASORETIC TEXT. A further weakness of this position can be observed from the fact that six of the commentaries that support it follow the emendation of the Hebrew text in such a way as to further artificially reinforce the "miscarried fetus" view.²⁰ The specific Hebrew term in question is *bifelilim*, which traditionally has been understood to mean "as the judges determine." However, some scholars, following Karl Budde, have conjecturally emended it to read *banefalim*, which means "for the miscarriage."²¹ This "slightly corrected"²² text is now made to read as the *Smith and Goodspeed* translation puts it:

If men get into a fight, and hurt a pregnant woman so that she has a miscarriage, without further harm, he must pay such a fine as the woman's husband imposes on him, and so pay for the miscarriage; but if there is further harm, you must give life for life, . . .

But there is no textual support for this emendation, which actually creates more difficulties. For instance, if the first part of the verse refers to a fine for the miscarriage as most commentators hold, then the emendation of the text results in a needless repetition of the same concept.²³

COMPARATIVE WORD STUDY. It is to be noted that none of the 33 commentaries that sees this passage as referring to a stillbirth

does any etymological, contextual, or comparative study of the most crucial words in this text—the nouns *yeled* and *ason*, and the verb *yatza*. On the contrary, it seems as if most of the linguistic study that has been done has attempted to get the Hebrew text to conform to a preconceived belief that the passage deals with a miscarriage.

LAW CODES OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST. Another weakness of this view is that as many as 11 of the 33 reference works apparently base their interpretation partly on a comparison with other local laws. Laws dealing with miscarriages were found in most Mesopotamian legal collections, such as the Sumerian Laws 1-2; the Code of Hammurapi 209-214; the Middle Assyrian Laws A 21, 50-52, and the Hittite Law Code 17-18. For example, the Code of Hammurapi specified "that he who caused someone else's daughter to have a miscarriage had to pay a fine; if the woman died, the offender's daughter was to be put to death."²⁴

While most of these law codes required only a fine for the destruction of the fetus, at least two Middle Assyrian Laws apparently treated the fetus as fully human. One of these Middle Assyrian Laws stated that "if someone struck her so that she had a miscarriage, they shall put the striker to death."²⁵ These regulations, which differ from the majority of the legal codes, point out one of the difficulties of basing our interpretation of Scripture on a comparison with other local laws.

While these ancient codes should not be ignored totally or discarded, it is obvious that it is more accurate hermeneutically to compare scripture with scripture than to depend on extra-Biblical sources. This is especially true in connection with the passage being studied because this entire legal section, Exodus 20:22-23:33, is "represented as words spoken directly by God to Moses."²⁶

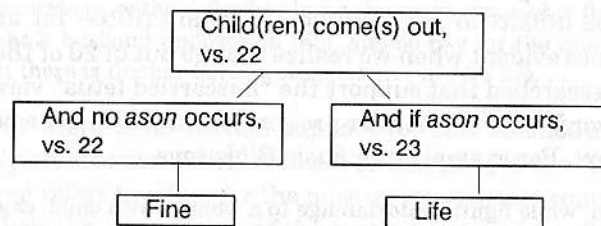
WORDS INSERTED INTO ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS. Yet another flaw becomes evident when we realize that 19 out of 20 of the Bible versions researched that support the "miscarried fetus" view have inserted words that are neither present nor implied in the original Hebrew text. For example, the *Basic Bible* says,

If men, while fighting, do damage to a woman with child, causing the loss of the child, but no other evil comes to her, the man will have to make payment up to the amount fixed by her husband, in agreement with the decision of the judges. But if damage comes to her, let life be given in payment for life, . . .

This translation, apparently assuming that the fetus was miscarried, inserts the words "to her," implying that the word "evil" or "harm" (Hebrew, *ason*) was intended to refer to the mother and not to the fetus. However, a closer look at the Hebrew original reveals two things: first, that the words "to her" (*lah* in Hebrew) are not in the text; and second, that the position of the word "evil" in the sentence structure indicates that it refers to either the *fetus only*, or to *both* the fetus and its mother.

Besides the unwarranted insertion of the words "she," "herself," or "to her" by more than half of these Bible versions, additional research indicates that 14 of these 20 translations have added the words "other," "further," or "otherwise" in front of the word "harm" in either verse 22 or 23, or both. The insertion of these words implies that some harm already has been done, namely the alleged miscarriage, which is then judged to be relatively insignificant because it draws only a fine. But the original Hebrew text contains no word that can be translated in these ways. On the contrary, the Hebrew clearly states that this first contingency is a case in which no *ason* (harm) occurs, as can be seen in the accompanying diagrammatic sketch. The text indicates that even though the offspring comes out as the result of a blow to the woman's body, both child and mother are alive and well. Only in the following verse is the possibility of *ason* introduced. It reads literally, "and if *ason* occurs." The text does not say that this is "further" *ason* or that it applies only to the mother. Rather, it makes absolutely no distinction between the mother and the child.²⁷

When comparing all available evidence, it seems reasonable to conclude that the position that Exodus 21:22-25 refers to a miscar-



ried fetus is seriously problematic and stands in tension with the passage in the Hebrew Scriptures. As Jack Cottrell says, "There is

absolutely no linguistic justification for translating verse 22 to refer to a miscarriage."²⁸

Perspective Two: A Premature Birth

Legal Standing of the Fetus

Only seven out of the 42 reference works available propound the view that Exodus 21:22-25 deals initially with a premature birth.²⁹ But it is helpful to note that this concept has been held for centuries, from the sixteenth-century Reformer, John Calvin, to the 1987 work of John Durham.

A careful investigation of these commentaries reveals a basic consensus of opinion concerning the following four facts: (1) that as a result of the apparently accidental thrust against her body, the pregnant woman gives birth to a live premature baby; (2) that in verse 22 no injury or death is envisioned for either the woman or the fetus; (3) that the fine to be paid by the offender to the husband of the woman is for the hurt, trauma, danger, and/or stigma in connection with the premature birth itself; and (4) that according to verse 23 if either mother or fetus suffers injury or death, the principle of "life for life" is to apply equally.³⁰

Of the seven commentators in this camp, only John Calvin was willing to verbalize the natural conclusion to this understanding of the passage. He stated expressly that "the fetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being."³¹

When we review works that emphasize ethics, the following becomes evident. Of the 20 books and articles available, 17 move beyond the mere statement that *ason* refers to both mother and child and conclude that this passage indeed treats the fetus on a par with its mother.³² Representative of this position, Bruce K. Waltke states:

The fetus is human and therefore to be accorded the same protection to life granted every other human being. Indeed, feticide is murder, an attack against a fellow man who owes his life to God, and a violation of the commandment, "You shall not kill."³³

Exegesis of the Hebrew Text

Because the "miscarried fetus" position has been supported by the majority of Bible translations and commentators, the question naturally arises: On what do those who hold the "premature birth"

view base *their* interpretation? Undoubtedly most of them would answer that their position is supported solidly by a thorough exegesis of the passage in the Hebrew original. And it is true that the majority of *these* writers do make a careful study of the most disputed and most important words in these texts. Essentially, the Hebrew words *yeled*, *yatza*, and *ason*, are the ones most often investigated.³⁴

THE NOUN YELED. Gesenius' well-respected Hebrew lexicon says that *yeled* means "child, son, boy, youth."³⁵ It perceives no distinction between an unborn child and a child after birth in the Pentateuch, in the entire Old Testament, or in Hebrew society as a whole.³⁶ Moreover, in every other passage of Scripture *yeled* never refers to a child that lacks recognizable human form or to one incapable of existing outside the womb.³⁷ Furthermore, *yeled* is not the usual Old Testament term for the product of a miscarriage. In the case of the death of an unborn child, the designation *nefel*, meaning "one untimely born" (Job 3:16; Ps 58:8; Eccl 6:3), is used.³⁸

That the term *yeled* as used in Exodus 21:22 refers to a premature child and not to an unformed fetus or the product of a miscarriage, is the rather evident conclusion of these scholars and writers. The only peculiarity is that the word *yeled* is in the plural —*yeladeyha*. Umberto Cassuto suggests that a generic plural is used here since the fetus may be "male or female, one or two."³⁹ Gesenius indicates that the plural is used to denote an indefinite singular "where evidently only one child is thought of, though certainly in connection with a contingency which may be repeated."⁴⁰ It also has been postulated that the plural may have been used in order to indicate that this was a highly irregular birth because it was prematurely and violently induced.⁴¹

THE VERB YATZA. Another word that is studied meticulously in this disputed passage is the verb *yatza*. According to the Hebrew dictionary its basic meaning is to "go or come out,"⁴² and its consistent use in the Hebrew Old Testament bears out this meaning.⁴³ The word *yatza* when used alone in connection with human reproduction, as it is here in verse 22, ordinarily is used to describe normal birth (see Gen 25:25, 26; 38:27-30; Jer 1:5; 20:18). Whenever *yatza* is used of a stillbirth it is always accompanied by some form of *muth*, "to die," as in Numbers 12:12 and Job 3:11.⁴⁴ Because

yatza appears without any form of *muth* in Exodus 21:22, we must conclude that the passage deals with a live birth.

The Old Testament verb normally used for miscarriage and spontaneous abortion is not *yatza*, but *shakol*.⁴⁵ The Hebrew word *shakol* is not used in Exodus 21:22-25. Had Moses intended to convey the idea of a miscarriage in the passage under consideration, he most likely would have used the term *shakol*, as he did later, in Exodus 23:26. Because he did not use *shakol* in Exodus 21:22-25 but rather selected the word *yatza*, perception that he was referring to a live birth is preferable.⁴⁶

THE NOUN ASON. The third Hebrew word in this passage that is examined carefully by most scholars in this camp is the word *ason*. Outside of the two times it is mentioned here, it occurs only three times in the rest of the Old Testament, all three in connection with the story of Joseph. Lexicographers have interpreted *ason* to mean anything from "hurt, damage, mischance"⁴⁷ to a "mortal accident."⁴⁸ A thorough study of the contextual usage of *ason* in the Joseph episode indicates that it can mean some type of mishap that befalls one's offspring, causing an apparently permanent separation between parent and child.

But whom does *ason* refer to in Exodus 21:22-25? Based on the fact that the text states clearly that if the woman is struck so that her child comes out "and no *ason* occurs," most scholars of this persuasion conclude that the *ason* refers to both mother and child.⁴⁹ As further support for this conclusion some have pointed out that the Hebrew expression *lah*, "to her," which would restrict the harm to the woman as opposed to the child, is *not* present in the text. This *absence of lah* makes *ason*, in both verses 22 and 23, indefinite in its reference. Other interpreters, apparently taking into account the fact that *ason* follows directly upon "her children come out," conclude that "harm" originally referred to the offspring and not to the mother.⁵⁰ But whether *ason* refers only to the child or to both the mother and the child, there is no doubt that our passage grants to the fetus the status of a full human being under the law.⁵¹

It is clear that those who have studied the passage in this manner conclude that Exodus 21:22 does not concern an induced abortion or a miscarriage. Furthermore, this pericope makes absolutely no distinction between the mother and the fetus; both are treated equally according to the law.

Analysis of the Textual Perspective

This investigation of the "premature birth" view indicates that one of its greatest strengths is the fact that 21 of the 27 commentaries, books, and articles researched base their findings on an exegesis of the original Hebrew text. These sources also translate and interpret the text essentially as it stands, without adding or attempting to change any words, as is done by several of those subscribing to the "miscarried fetus" position. Therefore, this interpretation appears to be most consistent with the overall Biblical concept of the sanctity of life, particularly in light of the high value placed on children.

This interpretation, however, is not without weaknesses and difficulties. Basically, two problems still need to be resolved. First, it has to be admitted that the plural of the word *yeled*, "child," has been interpreted in different ways. The reason for the use of the plural form has been given variously: as a generic plural, as an indefinite singular, and as a way of describing a prematurely, violently induced birth.

Second, there is no consensus among proponents of this view as to the precise definition of *ason*. Some say that it means merely harm or injury, and others that it can refer to serious injury as well as fatal accidents. The context seems to imply that it means a mishap that results in permanent separation between parent and offspring.

Even though different views are held as to the meaning of the above-mentioned terms, none of the interpretations suggested here causes any conflict or problem with the position that Exodus 21:22-25 treats the fetus as equal in value to its mother.

Summary and Conclusions

Recapitulation of the Two Views

Essentially, the traditional position maintains that this passage in Exodus deals with a situation in which a pregnant woman is accidentally injured, resulting in a miscarriage. A fine is paid for the loss of the fetus, but if the mother suffers any serious harm or death, the law of retaliation is put into effect. This passage is thus seen to differentiate between fetus and mother, treating only the mother as a human being. Thus, because the fetus is not considered

fully human, abortion is a permissible practice and is not to be equated with murder.

The textual position, however, suggests that this passage initially discusses a live premature birth, for which a fine is to be paid; but should harm or death come to either mother or fetus, the *lex talionis* is to be invoked. The consensus of opinion is that because the fetus is treated on a par with its mother, this passage protects the sanctity of the life of even the unborn and gives no support whatever to the legitimacy of abortion.

Even though the "miscarried fetus" interpretation is supported by the majority of Bible versions and commentators, it should not be accepted for the following reasons: no significant linguistic study of the Hebrew text is done; a needlessly repetitive and insupportable emendation is attempted; words that are neither present nor implied in the Hebrew original are conjecturally introduced into the English text; and extra-Biblical sources are resorted to arbitrarily.

As previously admitted, the "premature birth" interpretation is not without its own minor difficulties; nevertheless, because most of those who support *this* view have exegeted the passage from the original Hebrew and have interpreted it in a manner consistent with the basic meaning of the key words involved, this position definitely is preferable.

The Weight of Evidence

The question now naturally arises: What is the committed Christian expected to do when faced with various options or interpretations, none of which is perfectly clear or without difficulty? The answer according to one author is as follows:

God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence.⁵²

This comparative, critical study adequately demonstrates that the weight of evidence clearly favors the "premature birth" view, which sees the fetus as equal to its mother. Thus for the Christian, this Biblically-based position should be considered carefully in

theological, ethical, and medical discussions regarding the abortion issue that so occupies our world today.

At the very least, this study shows that Exodus 21:22-25 can no longer be appealed to legitimately in an attempt to find a decisive Biblical justification for abortion. On the contrary, this passage treats as of equal value the fetus, the mother, and the person who causes the early delivery. In conclusion, it is quite clear that the Mosaic Law considers the fetus to be fully human. In the words of Meredith G. Kline,

The life-for-life formula is applied to the destruction of a fetus, with no qualification as to how young the fetus might be. The fetus, at any stage of development, is in the eyes of this law a living being.⁵³

Endnotes

- 1 See Meredith G. Kline, "Lex Talionis and the Human Fetus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20/3 (Sept. 1977): 193.
- 2 Besides these two main views there is a variant viewpoint which states that the miscarried fetus, if not fully formed, is to be compensated for by a fine; but if it is fully formed it is to be treated on a par with its mother.
- 3 "Interruption of Pregnancy (Recommendations to SDA Medical Institutions): Statement of Principles," 1971, TMs [photocopy], p. 1, proposed by ad hoc committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.
- 4 Admittedly, the NIV does add a footnote to the word "prematurely," saying "or 'she has a miscarriage'"—a distinction in translation which is the topic of this discussion. The other four translations that appear to support this position include: *Complete Bible in Modern English*, by Ferrar Fenton (1906); *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*, by Robert Young (1911); *Twenty-four Books of the Holy Scriptures*, by Isaac Leeser (1913); *King James II Version*, by Jay P. Green (1971).
- 5 Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments* (London: C. Baldwin, 1844), p. 217.
- 6 Everett Fox, *Now These are the Names: A New English Rendition of the Book of Exodus* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 120, 121.
- 7 David M. Feldman, *Birth Control in Jewish Law* (New York: New York University Press, 1968), p. 255.
- 8 Dom Bernard Orchard, ed., *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1951), p. 220; Reginald C. Fuller, ed., *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons), p. 218.
- 9 Orchard, ed., *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, p. 220.
- 10 Paul D. Simmons, *Birth and Death: Bioethical Decision-Making*, Biblical Perspectives on Current Issues Series, ed. Howard Clark Kee (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), p. 84. In the past, Norman L. Geisler in his *Ethics: Alternatives and Issues* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1971), p. 219, offered a similar view: "The unborn baby was not considered fully human and, therefore, causing its death was not considered murder." Geisler, however, has now changed his understanding, saying in his *Christian Ethics: Options and Issues* (Grand

Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1989), p. 145, that Exodus 21:22-25 "is a strong passage affirming that the unborn are of equal value to adult human beings." Analogously, Bruce K. Waltke has also changed his perception of the passage. Compare his "The Old Testament and Birth Control," *Christianity Today*, Nov. 8, 1968, p. 3 with his later "Reflections from the Old Testament on Abortion," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 19/1 (Winter 1976), p. 3.

- 11 Jack W. Cottrell, "Abortion and the Mosaic Law," *Christianity Today*, March 16, 1973, p. 7.
- 12 S. R. Driver, *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: The Book of Exodus* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. 219.
- 13 David Chidester, *Patterns of Action: Religion and Ethics in a Comparative Perspective* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1987), p. 121.
- 14 *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2:97.
- 15 John W. Klotz, *A Christian View of Abortion* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), p. 47.
- 16 *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2:97.
- 17 Cottrell, "Abortion and the Mosaic Law," p. 7. Note: This "majority" factor is true not just of English versions as the following ancient translations show: Old Latin, Vulgate, Peshitta, The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and the Palestinian Targum of Neophyti. The Babylonian Talmud and Midrash Rabbah concur on this view.
- 18 Klotz, *A Christian View of Abortion*, p. 147.
- 19 Driver, *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: The Book of Exodus*, p. 219.
- 20 Ibid.; A. H. McNeille, *The Book of Exodus*, ed. Walter Lock, *Westminster Commentaries* (London: Methuan & Co., 1931), p. 130; Charles M. Laymon, ed., *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 56; Matthew Black, ed., *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (New Jersey: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964), p. 230; George Arthur Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 1 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), pp. 999, 1000; Orchard, ed., *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, p. 220.
- 21 Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Bible*, 1:1000; and see notably Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, based on Edward Robinson, trans., *The Lexicon of William Gesenius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), p. 813.
- 22 Orchard, ed., *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, p. 220.
- 23 See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1983), p. 103; B. S. Jackson, "The Problem of Exod. XXI:22-5 (IUS TALIONIS)," *Vetus Testamentum*, 23 (1973): 278. Note: The following commentaries, however, state that the reading "judges" is preferable: John Marsh and Alan Richardson, eds., *Torch Bible Commentaries: Exodus* (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 178; Ed van der Maas, *Bible Student's Commentary: Exodus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982), p. 213.
- 24 Van der Maas, *Bible Student's Commentary: Exodus*, p. 213.
- 25 James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2d ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 184.
- 26 Wayne A. Gruden, "Scripture's Self-attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture," in D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *Scripture and Truth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1983), p. 20.
- 27 Cottrell, "Abortion and the Mosaic Law," pp. 8, 9.
- 28 Ibid., p. 8.

- ²⁹ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*, trans. Charles W. Bingham, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1950), p. 41, 42; Chr. Wordsworth, *The Holy Bible in the Authorized Version; with Notes and Introductions*, vol. 1 (London: Rivingtons, 1869), p. 278; C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 2, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978), p. 135; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1967), pp. 275-77; John H. Dobson, *A Guide to Exodus* (London: S.P.C.K., 1977), p. 123; R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 552; John I. Durham, *Exodus, Word Biblical Commentary*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), pp. 308-324.
- ³⁰ Dobson, *A Guide to Exodus*, p. 123, only implies this point.
- ³¹ Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*, 3:41, 42.
- ³² Two of the other writers look at this passage more historically than ethically; see William Whiston, trans., *The Works of Josephus* (reprint; Lynn, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1980), p. 100 note; and Michael J. Gorman, *Abortion and the Early Church* (Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1982), p. 35. The other writer gives a personal account; see Charles E. White, "Why I Joined the Fight Against Abortion," *His*, February 1984, p. 6.
- ³³ Waltke, "Reflections from the Old Testament on Abortion," p. 13.
- ³⁴ The *lex talionis* (law of retribution) is discussed by scholars of this viewpoint. While some understand this law to mean proper and full compensation, others believe the law must be applied literally. However, regardless of the interpretation, the law is clearly perceived as referring equally to both mother and fetus.
- ³⁵ Brown et al., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 409. William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 135, offers simply "boy, male child."
- ³⁶ H. Wayne House, "Miscarriage or Premature Birth: Additional Thoughts on Exodus 21:22-25," *The Westminster Theological Journal*, 41/1 (1978), p. 112; Richard A. Fowler and H. Wayne House, *The Christian Confronts His Culture* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), p. 90; Harold O. J. Brown, *Death Before Birth* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1977), p. 120.
- ³⁷ John M. Frame, "Abortion from a Biblical Perspective," in Richard L. Ganz, ed., *The Christian Case Against Abortion: THOU SHALT NOT KILL* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House Publishers, 1978), p. 54.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*; John Jefferson Davis, *Abortion and the Christian* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1984), p. 51. The KJV and RSV translate *nefel* as "untimely birth," the NIV as "stillborn child," and the NASB as "miscarriage," as do Brown et al., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 658, and Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, p. 242.
- ³⁹ Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, p. 275. Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, pp. 103, 170, concurs by saying there is a "plural allowing for several children and either sex."
- ⁴⁰ E. Kautzsch, ed., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, trans. A. E. Crowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 400.
- ⁴¹ House, "Miscarriage or Premature Birth," p. 114.
- ⁴² Brown et al., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 422; see also Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, p. 139.
- ⁴³ House, "Miscarriage or Premature Birth," p. 110.
- ⁴⁴ Jackson, "The Problem," p. 292; Davis, *Evangelical Ethics*, p. 151.

- ⁴⁵ Frame, "Abortion," p. 55; Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, p. 369.
- ⁴⁶ House, "Miscarriage or Premature Birth," p. 111; Fowler and House, *The Christian Confronts His Culture*, p. 91.
- ⁴⁷ Julius Fuerst, *A Hebrew & Chaldean Lexicon to the Old Testament*, trans. Samuel Davidson (London: Williams & Norgate, 1867), p. 126.
- ⁴⁸ Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, p. 23.
- ⁴⁹ Cottrell, "Abortion and the Mosaic Law," pp. 8, 9; House, "Miscarriage or Premature Birth," p. 118; Frame, "Abortion," p. 55; Kaiser, *Old Testament Ethics*, pp. 103, 172; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, p. 275; Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 135.
- ⁵⁰ Jackson, "The Problem," pp. 292, 293.
- ⁵¹ Davis, *Abortion and the Christian*, p. 52.
- ⁵² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 3:255.
- ⁵³ Kline, "Lex Talionis and the Human Fetus," p. 200.

THE BATTLE FOR BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY IN THE END TIME

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The nineteenth century, which witnessed the birth of the Seventh-day Adventist church, also saw the beginning of Darwinian evolution, the entrenchment of the historical-critical methodology in Biblical studies, and the rejection of Biblical eschatology. When the time arrived for God to launch His end-time movement, the enemy had his end-time instruments in place, ready to attempt to thwart it. Seventh-day Adventists should remember that (1) the belief in innate human ability to evolve (evolution), (2) subjective judgment over God's Word (historical-critical methodology), and (3) the jettisoning of belief in Christ's second advent, have a common source in Satan's final attack against God and His church (see, e.g., Rev 12:17). Each of these false concepts places human opinion above the Bible's "thus saith the Lord." Together they exalt man as developer, interpreter, and bringer in of Utopia rather than Jesus Christ as Creator, Word, and coming Lord.

These three satanic concepts all provoke the same interrogation: Is Christ Lord over man or is man lord over Christ? The concept of Christ as Lord reveals the nature of the end-time church, while the concept of man as lord unveils the nature of Satan's end-time attack against that church.

Evidently Satan knew well the 2300-year prophecy of Daniel 8:14, for he schemed to thwart God's end-time movement that was to begin in 1844 (at the end of the 2300 years) by raising counterfeits. We think of Joseph Smith and Mormonism, Mary Baker Eddy

and Christian Science, the Fox Sisters and modern spiritualism, and Helena Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society, to name a few. Some of these counterfeits claimed the prophetic gift and all have been channels for the enemy. All have worked as substitute means of revelation, taking the place of God's Word.

Schleiermacher as Judge Over God's Word

The nineteenth century has been called the "greatest century in theology since the fourth";¹ nonetheless, during its course two leading theologians, Friederich Schleiermacher² and Albrecht Ritschl,³ both gave up belief in Biblical eschatology. Schleiermacher longed to communicate with the cultured despisers of Christianity among his university students. His motive was good—but not his method. In order to reach his young skeptics and win them to Christianity, he decided to meet them where they were, beginning the study of God with a study of man. He believed that by looking at man he could prove the existence of God. In the process of attempting to avoid the criticisms of Hume and Kant,⁴ he unwittingly became a critic himself.

Schleiermacher's basic thesis was that God exists because man has a feeling of absolute dependence upon Him.⁵ In drawing this conclusion, Schleiermacher made feelings more authoritative than God's Word. The Word of God he judged by the feelings of man, and not the other way around as he should have.⁶ He jettisoned truths if feelings could not accept them. Thus Schleiermacher rejected the doctrine of the Trinity because He couldn't *feel* three Gods. (How could one feel three?⁷) Because he couldn't feel the second advent of Christ, he dismissed it also.⁸ (But how can one experience something that hasn't yet occurred?)

Scholars today speak of "before and after" Schleiermacher the way philosophers speak of before and after Kant⁹ and scientists discuss before and after Darwin. As James Richmond has observed, Schleiermacher theologically "initiated" and "dominated" the nineteenth century.¹⁰ He was a classic example of man sitting as judge over God's Word—with disastrous results. For half a century or more subjective feelings reigned supreme over God's objective revelation.

No wonder God has cautioned us about depending on our feelings. For example, in messages given through Ellen G. White,¹¹

He has warned us that we are "to base [our] faith not on feeling but upon the evidence and the Word of God."¹²

Ritschl as Judge Over God's Word

Like Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl was also a leading theologian in the nineteenth century. His *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* was for a time considered the greatest dogmatic treatise since Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith*. Ritschl also looked within, but his gaze was broad enough to include the concept that the kingdom of God would come as a result of man's moral efforts.¹³ Concerning the future kingdom Ritschl said:

Hitherto we have been accustomed to regard the early Christian expectation of the nearness of the world's end as belonging to the shell and not to the kernel. And there the matter will rest, for that anticipation has not acted prejudicially on any of the positive social duties which follow from Christianity.¹⁴

Biblical words and ideas that he regarded as time-related and hence disposable, Ritschl assigned to his category of the "shell" rather than to the kernel of the matter. Rudolph Bultmann later "demythologized" these same words and ideas. Truth, to both Ritschl and Bultmann, was like an onion core. Mere forms, the outer onion layers, must be peeled away if the real truth is to be perceived. But what Ritschl and Bultmann retained, as Hugh Ross Mackintosh has observed, was a "a purely present and mundane commonwealth" and not the real coming kingdom of God.¹⁵

Neither the immanent kingdom of Schleiermacher nor the moral kingdom of Ritschl represented the Biblical view of Christ's coming kingdom. Preoccupation with man rather than with Christ led to a focus on a kingdom *in man* (Schleiermacher) or *by man* (Ritschl) instead of on the kingdom that is coming *to man*, the one the Bible foresees. Both theologies discarded belief in the coming kingdom because they placed their judgment above God's Word.

Twentieth-century Ideas of the End

Albert Schweitzer (1906) and Karl Barth (1918) wrote two books that caused theologians to rediscover eschatology.¹⁶ Yet even in these books, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* and *Romans*,

neither theologian really accepted the Biblical view of the world's end. Both clung to man's judgment over the Word of God.

Albert Schweitzer

Albert Schweitzer pointed to Christ's promise (Matt 10:23) that He would return before the disciples had finished going to all the cities of Israel on their first missionary journey and to His promise (Matt 16:28) that the disciples would actually see Him coming in His kingdom, as promises that Jesus failed to keep.¹⁷ In fact, Schweitzer viewed Christ's going to the cross as involving a promise He failed to keep.

There is silence all around. The Baptist appears, and cries: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that He is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and He throws Himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes Him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, He has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose, is hanging up it still. That is His victory and His reign.¹⁸

Schweitzer's subjective judgment of the Word led Him to give up belief in the Living Word. Ultimately, he considered Jesus a deluded man. Indeed, he forsook Christianity and accepted a reverence-for-life philosophy instead. The missionary to Africa came to be without a message. It is ironic that the man who caused scholars to rediscover eschatology himself discarded it.

Karl Barth

Karl Barth's *Romans* fell like a bombshell on the theological world. It continued the shake-up of the nineteenth-century rejection of Biblical eschatology. Yet Barth himself had no true grasp of the Biblical picture either. Because Barth could not believe that Jesus entered human history through the incarnation, he rejected the view that the second advent could ever be an actual event.¹⁹

Coming to the Bible with presuppositions derived from Plato, Overbeck, and Kierkegaard,²⁰ Barth believed that the eternal God was distanced from man by an infinite gulf.

These two theologians, Schweitzer and Barth, who caused other scholars to rediscover eschatology, ended without an eschatology themselves. Both in different ways allowed human wisdom to sit in judgment on God's Word. The result was a too human Jesus for Schweitzer and a too divine Christ for Barth.

Three One-sided Eschatologies

A number of eschatological schools have been spawned in the twentieth century.²¹ We shall briefly consider three of them, all of which grew out of man's judging the Word of God.

C. H. Dodd's "realized eschatology" (1936) reduced salvation-history to the life and death of Jesus Christ, concluding that the goal of history had already been realized. No present or future advent of Christ can be found in Dodd's view.²²

Rudolf Bultmann's "existential" or "timeless" eschatology viewed the second advent as taking place in the everlasting present, as the Holy Spirit repeatedly encounters the Christian.²³ According to Bultmann's concept, this on-going repetition of encounters at the "coming" of the Holy Spirit to individuals is all the second advent there will ever be. Whereas Dodd's view was a one-sided focus on the past, Bultmann's was a one-sided focus on the present. Neither theology had room for a future second coming of Christ.

Jürgen Moltmann's "proleptic eschatology," outlined in his *Theology of Hope*, appears on the surface to be belief in the real second advent. It is at least forward looking. But like other views we've been talking about, it also is one-sided, inasmuch as its future emphasis overlooks appropriate consideration of the present and past.²⁴ Carl F. H. Henry has characterized Moltmann's position as one that "wholly relativizes the past and the present" and, hence, is "remarkably thin" when compared with the wealth of Biblical specifics.²⁵ Thus Moltmann appears to place his own judgment above the revelation that God has given us of end-time events, even telling us that we must be open to the "startlingly new."²⁶ His interpretation leaves him and his followers defenseless against the final delusion that will take place when Satan comes pretending to be Christ—greeting people on earth instead of welcoming them in the air (see Matt 24:5, 23-27, 30; 1 Thess 4:16-18; Rev 1:7). We have to conclude that even Moltmann's theology of hope stands above God's divine revelation of final events.

Satan's purpose in causing people to place their judgment above the Word of God has been to keep them from getting ready for the second advent of Christ, and to prepare them instead for his own counterfeit advent. In view of this, Seventh-day Adventists do well to reassess the historical-critical method of Biblical interpretation, which so effectively places human judgment above God's Word.

Dangers of the Historical-critical Method

It is helpful to note that some scholars who once used the historical-critical method have reassessed it. For example, Michael Green, rector of St. Aldate's in Oxford, after using the historical-critical method for some time, concluded that it caused men in training for the ministry to loose their faith.²⁷ He now takes the position that, unlike modern critics of the New Testament, ancient historians "almost to a man have [i.e., had] a high regard for the New Testament material." He adds:

I see a bondage to the historical-critical method, which very properly seeks to get back to the original text, the original setting and the original meaning. All too often when this is done, the possibility of inspiration is totally discounted. The biblical writers are treated as if they made no claim to inspiration, and displayed no mark of it.²⁸

Gerhard Maier, in his book *The End of the Historical-Critical Method*,²⁹ notes that "the subtle net woven by the higher-critical method resulted in a new Babylonian captivity of the church."³⁰ Commenting on Maier, Carl F. H. Henry observes,

Maier declares rightly that recent applications of the historical-critical method have brought biblical studies to an intolerable impasse through the vast array of conflicting verdicts for which its sanction is claimed. The proper response to divine revelation, he contends, is obedience rather than criticism, which elevates human reason into a judge over revelation.³¹

Karl Barth compared the historical-critical method with the teaching office of the Catholic church, observing that both replace the divine authority of Scripture with human authority. Barth said,

All exegesis may become predominantly an imposition instead of an exposition, and to that extent deteriorate into a dialogue of the Church with itself. And we shall not banish this danger, but only really

begin to conjure it up and render it acute, by making right exposition depend on the verdict of an ultimately decisive Church teaching office, or on the verdict of an historical and critical science, comporting itself with an equal infallibility.³²

C. S. Lewis, of Cambridge University, radically questioned the critics' ability to criticize. He stated:

Whatever these men may be as Biblical critics, I distrust them as critics. They seem to me to lack literary judgment, to be imperceptive about the very quality of the texts they are reading. . . . If he tells me that something in a Gospel is legend or romance, I want to know how many legends and romances he has read, how well his palate is trained in detecting them by the flavour; not how many years he has spent on that Gospel.³³

Being well acquainted with various types of literature, Lewis believed he could discern that the Biblical critics were *not* well acquainted with them:

I have been reading poems, romances, vision-literature, legends, myths all my life. I know what they are like. I know that not one of them is like this. . . . These men ask me to believe they can read between the lines of the old texts; the evidence is their obvious inability to read (in any sense worth discussing) the lines themselves. They claim to see fern-seed and can't see an elephant ten yards away in broad daylight.³⁴

Lewis observed that the critics who try to reconstruct Scripture are like the ones who had tried in vain to trace the genesis of his own writings:

What forearms me against all these reconstructions is the fact that I have seen it all from the other end of the stick. I have watched reviewers reconstructing the genesis of my own books in just this way.³⁵

Lewis added that what Biblical critics were doing had already gone the rounds among critics of non-Biblical literature. Scholars, he said, used to divide Shakespeare's *Henry VI* among half a dozen authors, but they don't do so any more. Homer was once a legend, but no longer. People can now believe in a historical Arthur too. Lewis regretfully concluded:

Everywhere, except in theology, there has been a vigorous growth of skepticism about skepticism itself.³⁶

Biblical Eschatology Is Three-dimensional

The only safe ground for any of us to take is to accept the Bible as it reads and allow it to be the only basis of our beliefs. Seventh-day Adventist eschatology is based solidly on the revelation of God's Word (and is only secondarily corroborated by the writings of Ellen G. White).

Whereas some eschatologies of the twentieth century have been one-sided, focusing primarily on the past (Dodd's "realized eschatology"), the present (Bultmann's "existential eschatology"), or the future (Moltmann's "proleptic eschatology"), the Biblical view is three dimensional, for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). Christ's promises to return have been appropriately fulfilled in the past and in the present, and those that apply to the future only await fulfillment at their proper time. Jesus said He would come again from the dead (see Matt 27:63; Mk 8:31; Lk 18:33), and He fulfilled this astonishing promise on resurrection morning. His promise to return in the present can be understood—as He explained it Himself (see Jn 16:7-16)—as being fulfilled through the coming of the Comforter. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ is now present with His people (see Jn 14:15-18) and will continue to be so, even to the end of the world (see Matt 28:20). These historical fulfillments confirm the dependability of His future coming.

Add to these considerations the fact that the promises of the Messiah's coming in the Old Testament (as in Isa 7:14) were fulfilled in the incarnation (see Matt 1:18-25).

In a qualified, poetic sense, the day of the second advent had a dawn, like any other day. The first luminescence in the eastern sky glowed over the empty tomb on resurrection Sunday. It stretched across the sky at Pentecost. All post-resurrection time can be called the dawn of second-advent day. We cannot stop the coming of the Son anymore than we can stop the rising of the sun. This certainty is trumpeted in more than 300 New Testament texts, an average of one text in every twenty-five. Such certainty must grip the church anew and fire it with expectancy, purpose, and preparation.

Christological Eschatology

The true study of final events begins primarily with Christ and not so much with the events themselves. Of course, everything the

Bible says about Christ, past, present, and future, enriches our knowledge about the Lord Himself. But should we not learn a lesson from the one-sided theologies we have discussed above and be cautious about focusing attention on future events at the cost of minimizing our study of Christ Himself and what the Bible says He has already achieved? If we begin with Christ, we can the more safely, out of an understanding of Who He is, discern earth's final events. Schweitzer and the early Barth began with their own ideas of final events and then tried to fit Christ into them, leaving Schweitzer with a too-human Jesus and Barth with a too-divine Christ. These men arrived at opposite ideas of Jesus partly because they began with end-events. Theirs was an eschatological Christology, whereas the Bible presents a Christological eschatology.

What does the term *Christological eschatology* imply? It implies at least this, that the study of final events should be more concerned with Who is coming than with what is coming. The Biblical focus is Christ-centered rather than crisis-centered. As Carl F. H. Henry once put it, "Not dates and places but Christ stands at the center of the Bible and of biblical eschatology."³⁷ Even for the Old Testament prophets, George E. Ladd reminds us, "their hope was not in the future but in God."³⁸ Much more is this so in the New Testament. As Oscar Cullmann has noted, "The 'end' as the meaning of redemptive history, however, is Jesus Christ, who has already appeared."³⁹

Why the Great Time of Trouble?

Christ, not humanity, is the primary focus of final events. If Satan's strategy has been to place human thought above God's Word through evolution, the historical-critical method and the many human views of eschatology that we have reviewed, we must not let man be placed above God in our study of final events.

As we speed toward the climactic showdown between the two sides in the great controversy, we find Satan working through *three* subversive religious avenues to thwart the *three* angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12. Says the revelator,

I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to

gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come like a thief [Rev 16:13-15 NIV]!

All the world, excepting only God's true people, will be caught up in the counterfeit. The world will impose decrees forbidding God's people even to buy or sell and will at length issue a decree of execution against them (see Rev 13:3, 14-18).

The essential difference between the two groups of followers concerns their loyalty. God's end-time people will prefer to die rather than give up their confidence in God, an attitude rooted in their confident dependence on His Word. By contrast, the rest of mankind, having placed themselves above God's Word, will appoint themselves judges over His people, even to issuing a death decree.

The controversy revolves around the question, What will you do with the man Jesus? When people reject the Living Word they always reject the written Word; and when men place themselves as judges over the written Word, they inevitably judge the Living Word and His followers. We are soon to see this axiom enacted on a global scale. Seventh-day Adventist Bible teachers must never place *their* reasoning above God's Word, or they will create a Trojan horse with disastrous consequences.

Why is there to be a great "time of trouble" for God's true people in the end time? Partly to reveal to the universe the identity of those who have really been loyal to God. "When the testing time shall come, those who have made God's word their rule of life will be revealed"⁴⁰

When is this testing to take place? After quoting Daniel 12:1, Ellen White commented:

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. They have received "the latter rain," "the refreshing from the presence of the Lord," 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."⁴¹

God's end-time people will have completed their evangelistic mission and their character preparation, but God does not yet take them up to heaven. He keeps them on earth a little longer to go

through the worst time of trouble ever endured. Why will a God of love do this? He must have a crucial reason.

The group called the 144,000, mentioned only twice in the Bible (Rev 7:1-8 and 14:1-5), are to live through the great time of trouble as a demonstration of ultimate confidence in God alone, when all earthly supports will be gone. They will demonstrate that even under the worst of conditions (see Rev. 13:3, 15), during the worst time of trouble the world ever has seen (see Dan. 12:1), they will remain dependent and trusting in their relation to the Living Word of God because they are dependent and trusting in their relation to the written Word of God. They will also demonstrate that the weakest of the race (after 6000 years of fallen heredity) from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, during the worst time ever, can by His grace remain true to God and thus disprove Satan's charge that created beings cannot be loyal.⁴²

God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. . . . Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves.⁴³

God's end-time people will know the Bible for themselves. They will have submitted to be taught of God. They will know that "an understanding of Bible truth depends not so much on the power of intellect brought to the search as on the singleness of purpose, the earnest longing after righteousness."⁴⁴ They will attest to the glorious fact that "it is the office of heavenly angels to prepare the heart so to comprehend God's word that we shall be charmed with its beauty, admonished by its warnings, or animated and strengthened by its promises."⁴⁵ To them, the Bible will not be a textbook to be analyzed but a meeting place with Christ, where He so imprints His Word on the mind that He re-creates the reader after His own image.

God's people will be hidden within the mighty protection, the impregnable fortress, of the Scriptures. To people so hidden God has promised, "I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth" (Rev 3:10 NIV). "For in the day of trouble he will keep me

safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock" (Ps 27:5). "'They will be mine,' says the Lord Almighty, 'in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him'" (Mal 3:17).

Christ-centered Demonstration

During the demonstration of Christ-likeness that we have been speaking of, the focus will be far more Christ-centered than Christian-centered. The onlooking universe will see a manifestation of what God can do in people who have surrendered completely to His will, to His Word, and to Him. By contrast, as they see the world moving against God's people to utterly destroy them, they will see manifested the spirit of human judgment against God, His Word, and His people.

The reason God's people will continue to live on earth during the great time of trouble—after they have evangelized the world—is for God to show to the universe what His Word has done in their lives, in response to their choosing to come under its power—people so settled into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, that they cannot be moved. When all hell breaks loose they stand as firm as the Word itself, for they have chosen to be transformed by it.

Through the Holy Spirit, God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. . . .

The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.⁴⁶

Discerning onlookers will realize that any judgment of God's Word by man disqualifies the judge for the final demonstration of God's character. This is where the historical-critical method is so dangerous and why it has already played so disastrous a role in the end time. The function of the Bible is more than to inform. It is to transform. When scholars try to change God's Word, they forfeit being changed by it. Only people who choose to come under the changing power of the Word will be filled by the Spirit Who inspired

it and be sealed and empowered by the latter rain to manifest the light of God to the world and the universe.

The preparation of such people with such a purpose is the supreme goal of Seventh-day Adventist eschatology.

Endnotes

1 Hugh Ross Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology* (London: Collins, 1964), p. 183. Karl Barth, *From Rousseau to Ritschl* (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 190, noted two lines of theological thought in the nineteenth century, stressing respectively reason and feeling. K. Heim, *Expository Times*, 48 (1936-37): 55-58, 132-135, sees three main lines of development: the moral autonomy of the individual, speculative theology, and that of religious feeling. From whichever of these standpoints the century is viewed, it appears as the century of anthropocentrism. Theologically speaking, Karl Barth, *Die Protestantische Theologie im 19 Jahrhundert* (Zurich: EVZ, 1947), pp. 377, 381, believed that lines from everywhere, both positive and negative, led to Schleiermacher, for it was "his century."

2 In 1889, Schleiermacher was viewed as having "almost unequalled veneration" (F. Lichtenberger, *History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1889], pp. 47, 48). From 1887 to 1937 he was studied with closer application in continental circles than anyone except Martin Luther (Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 36). Schleiermacher was the pioneer of thorough-going methodology in Christian humanism. (see D. Emil Brunner, *Die Mystik und das Wort* (Tübingen: Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr, Paul Sibeck, 1924), p. 8. Barth (*Die Protestantische Theologie*, p. 306) said of him, "The first place in the history of theology of the most recent times belongs and will always belong to Schleiermacher and he has no rival."

3 H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay, in their "Editors' Preface" to the English translation of Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1900), called this work not only monumental but also the greatest dogmatic treatise since Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*.

4 The so-called objective classical evidences for God include the cosmological (cause) and the teleological (design). Hume and Kant questioned these evidences on the basis that a person cannot now see God at work creating. Kant turned to the subjective, to man's morality, as evidence. Schleiermacher followed suit, looking within man in an attempt to escape the criticism leveled against the objective evidences.

5 Rather than the rational or moral proofs for God's existence, he maintained that God is given in and with the feeling of absolute dependence.

6 To discover doctrines, Schleiermacher looked to human nature rather than to God's Word. Note the following insights from his *The Christian Faith*. The starting point in dogmatics is the self-consciousness of the individual (p. 501), which is the God-consciousness of the redeemed person (pp. 541, 542), or the religious self-consciousness (pp. 231, 232). Thus dogmatics is an articulation of the sphere of the inner life of Christian piety (pp. 428, 485), because doctrines are but religious affections set forth in speech (pp. 66, 67). Dogmatics explains the feeling of absolute dependence (p. 198) as it argues from the redeemed to the Redeemer (p. 65).

7 Ibid., p. 144.

8 Affirmation of self-consciousness relative to the consummation of the

church are, Schleiermacher says, "most unreliable" (ibid., p. 529), for the Christian consciousness has nothing to say regarding a "condition so entirely outside our ken" (ibid., p. 697).

9 Brunner, *Die Mystik und das Wort*, p. 8.

10 James Richmond, *Faith and Philosophy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1966), pp. 54, 55.

11 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 3:108, notes that one can strengthen "unbelief by dwelling upon poor feelings." "Feelings are not always true guides" (ibid., 1:160). "It is not safe for you to trust to impressions and feelings" (ibid., 3:418).

12 Ellen G. White, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:928.

13 *Justification and Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1900), p. 11.

14 Ibid., p. 613.

15 Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 149.

16 Schweitzer forced the world of New Testament scholarship to consider the problem of the kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus Christ; see Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 28. Schweitzer also insisted that Jesus and the early Christians expected the appearance of the Messiah in glory and the consequent end of the world in a future very near to their own day. Barth's commentary, with its rediscovery of the eschatological nature of the kingdom of God, marks the great turning point in the modern understanding of eschatology after Schweitzer. Cf. Thomas F. Torrance, *Karl Barth: An Introduction to his Early Theology, 1910-1931* (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 78.

17 See Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, (reprint; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1954), p. 358.

18 Ibid., pp. 368, 369.

19 Barth revolted against the immanentism of Schleiermacher (God in man), but he went to the other extreme of positing a God who is "Wholly Other" (*Ganz Anderer*). Said he, "If I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called the 'infinite qualitative distinction' between time and eternity, and to my regarding this as possessing negative as well as positive significance. 'God is in heaven, and thou art on earth.'" (*Romans*, p. 10).

20 Barth gives credit also to Kant and Dostoevsky.

21 These include Schweitzer's "thorough-going eschatology," C. H. Dodd's "realized eschatology," John A. T. Robinson's "fully inaugurated eschatology," William Manson's "spiritualized apocalyptic eschatology," Rudolph Bultmann's "existential eschatology," and Jürgen Moltmann's "proleptic eschatology."

22 Dodd believed that the parables of Christ must be understood in the context of the life situation of Jesus (*Sitz im Leben Jesu*). He therefore argued that, with the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we have the eschatological event, the climax of all history, the coming of the kingdom—in the absolute and not provisional sense—so that the new age is inaugurated. Cf. his *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1936), pp. 7, 128.

23 In this context Bultmann suggests, "The meaning of history lies always in the present, and when the present is conceived as the eschatological present by Christian faith the meaning in history is realized. . . . In every moment slumbers the possibility of being the eschatological moment. You must awaken to it." See his *History and Eschatology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1957), p. 155.

24 Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 16, says, "From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology."

Theology begins with eschatology, so that everything is thought out from that future (*ibid.*). In fact, the medium of theology is eschatology (*ibid.*, p.41). Future focus overlooks the past and present (*ibid.*, pp. 283-288).

25 Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 2 (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983), pp. 283-305.

26 See Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, pp. 17, 25, 204, 110, 111.

27 See Michael Green, *The Empty Cross of Jesus* (Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1984), p. 158.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 157.

29 Trans. E.W. Leverenz and R. F. Norden (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977).

30 *Ibid.*, p. 48.

31 Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 4 (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1979), p. 387. Henry notes that Maier has returned to the doctrine of verbal inspiration, which seems a swing of the pendulum to another extreme, the opposite of the historical-critical method.

32 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 1/1, trans. G. T. Thomson (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1963), p. 119. In citing Barth we are not supportive of his equally devastating use of Scripture through theological presuppositions that impose on the objective Word.

33 C. S. Lewis, *Fern-Seed and Elephants and Other Essays on Christianity*, ed. Walter Hooper (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1975), pp. 106, 107.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 111.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 114.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

37 Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 6 (Waco, Texas: Word Publications, 1983), p. 498.

38 George E. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (London: S.P.C.K., 1966), p. 61.

39 Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, trans. Floyd V. Filson (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 140.

40 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 602.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 613.

42 God's true people demonstrate loyalty to the Sabbath in the face of coercive international Sunday observance. In heaven Satan "began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of worlds, angels, being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide" (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 37). "To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?" (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 594).

43 White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 595.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 599.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 600.

46 Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 414-416

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THE BOOK OF DANIEL CONFIRMED BY THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

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Two articles of sensational interest have been published recently by Professor Eugene Ulrich dealing with the Hebrew and Aramaic texts¹ of the Daniel manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in Cave 4 at Qumran. These articles, entitled "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran,"² provide rich insight into these pivotal manuscripts.

From Discovery to Publication

Let me first allude briefly to the outrageous delay which has occurred in the publication of many of the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovery of which commenced as long ago as 1947. In the past few years certain scholars have begun to complain that the few privileged researchers who control access to the Dead Sea Scrolls have been sitting on them, delaying their publication all these years. During the past four years, and especially in 1989 and 1990, *Biblical Archaeology Review (BAR)*³ has played a major role in pushing for the publication of these manuscripts, pointing to the scandal that approximately "400 separate unpublished texts arranged on 1,200 different [photographic] plates" have been hidden for some 40 years from the scrutiny of the scholarly world. Hershel Shanks, the editor of *BAR*, says that "a reasonable guess is that 100 of these [unpublished texts] are Biblical texts on 200 plates."⁴

The accusations regarding the non-publication of these Dead Sea Scroll texts were taken up in the summer of 1989 by the public press, reinforcing the outcry raised by the *BAR* article. For example,

a July 9, 1989 editorial, "The Vanity of Scholars," in the prestigious *New York Times* complained that

The scrolls were discovered in 1947, but many that are in fragments remain unpublished. More than 40 years later, a coterie of dawdling scholars is still spinning out the work while the world waits and the precious pieces lapse into dust.⁵

Fortunately, there is at last some movement toward bringing about a resolution of this problem. A number of scroll fragments and texts have recently been reassigned to qualified scholars who have promised to publish them quickly.

The significance of some of the Daniel fragments among the Dead Sea Scrolls was first made public in 1958, when Professor Frank Moore Cross of Harvard University published the first edition of his book *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, a comprehensive survey of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the second edition (1961) Professor Cross made the epochal assertion that among the fragments of the Daniel scrolls which were found in Cave 4 of Qumran:

One copy of Daniel is inscribed in the script of the late second century B.C. . . .⁶

Here was astounding news, for the text of our present book of Daniel has long been considered suspect by many scholars, on grounds we'll be reviewing below. But Cross's news left many questions unanswered, such as precisely what portions of Daniel were preserved on this particular scroll and how they compared with the other extant texts of Daniel.

It is exciting to know that in the years 1987-1989, at least 35 years after Cave 4 was explored (in 1952) and more than a quarter of a century after Cross made his tantalizing announcement (in 1961), most of the Daniel texts have finally been published. We are told that a few scraps from Cave 4, "five tiny fragments [of the scroll designated 4QDan^a], all from the prayer in chapter 9 but none with more than one complete word,"⁷ are all that remain to be published.

The fragments of the Daniel scrolls from Cave 4 were assigned for publication to Cross⁸ as long ago as 1952.⁹ Cross became a member of the original group of editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls appointed in 1953.¹⁰ But some time ago Cross entrusted the Daniel materials from Cave 4 to Eugene Ulrich of Notre Dame University,¹¹ a former student of his. In 1987 Ulrich published the materials from

one scroll found in Cave 4, a scroll designated 4QDan^a. Now he has published the materials of the two other major scrolls, the ones designated 4QDan^b and 4QDan^c. It is 4QDan^c that Professor Cross proved was written in the late second century before Christ (around 125 B.C.) Now at last we are able to see these documents with our own eyes!

Contents of the Daniel Scrolls

Though our major attention in this paper is focused on these exciting new publications, we do need to mention the other previously published Daniel materials from Qumran.

Fragments of two scrolls found in *Cave 1* were published in 1955 by D. Barthélemy.¹² They are known as 1QDan^a and 1QDan^b. These fragments contain parts of 22 verses from Daniel 1:10-17 and 2:2-6 (1QDan^a) and from 3:22-30 (1QDan^b).

In 1962 M. Baillet published a papyrus fragment from *Cave 6*, possibly containing parts of Daniel 8:16-17, 21-22 and clearly containing 10:8-16 and 11:33-36, 38.¹³

From *Cave 4* the most extensively preserved Daniel scroll is 4QDan^a. It contains large portions of the book, notably parts of Daniel 1:16-20; 2:9-11, 19-49; 3:1-2; 4:29-30; 5:5-7, 12-14, 16-19; 7:5-7, 25-28; 8:1-5; 10:16-20; 11:13-16.

4QDan^b contains Daniel 5:10-12, 14-16, 19-22; 6:8-22, 27-29; 7:1-6, 11(?), 26-28; 8:1-8, 13-16.

4QDan^c, the copy made around 125 B.C., contains Daniel 10:5-9, 11-16, 21; 11:1-2, 13-17, 25-29.¹⁴

All told, we now have at our disposal from the Dead Sea Scrolls parts of all the chapters of Daniel except for chapters 9 and 12—and we're told that the unpublished 4QDan^c, soon to be published, contains a few words from various parts of Daniel 9.

There is duplication of a number of passages in Daniel 1, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11. Further, a reference to Daniel 12 appears in the remains of a scroll known as 4QFlorilegium, an anthology of midrashic materials on 2 Samuel and on Psalms 1 and 2.¹⁵

Significance of the Daniel Dead Sea Scrolls

It is joyously surprising that remnants of no fewer than eight manuscripts of Daniel have been identified among the materials discovered in three of the eleven caves at Qumran. In order to

appreciate the significance of this fact, we need to compare it with the manuscript finds of other Biblical books in the Qumran caves.

To my knowledge, the most recent listing of *published* Dead Sea Scroll materials appeared in 1977. It speaks of fragments of 13 scrolls representing the Psalms, of 9 scrolls representing Exodus, of 8 scrolls representing Deuteronomy, of 5 scrolls representing Leviticus, of 4 scrolls each representing Genesis and Isaiah—but of no fewer than 8 scrolls¹⁶ representing Daniel! Although we have no sure knowledge yet of the total number of Biblical scrolls that were preserved at Qumran, it is evident from this comparison that the book of Daniel was a favorite among the Qumran covenanters.¹⁷

At this juncture we need to make the point that according to current historical-critical opinion with its “Maccabean hypothesis,” the book of Daniel originated in its present form during the time of the Maccabees and the crisis brought about by Antiochus Epiphanes, that is between 168/7 and 165/4 B.C. It seems difficult to believe that such a significant number of Daniel manuscripts would have been preserved in a single desert community, if the book had really been produced at so late a date. The large number of manuscripts can be much better explained if we conclude that the book of Daniel had a much earlier origin.

Dates of the Daniel Scrolls and Their Significance

Dates for the Daniel scrolls that were published in 1955 were given by J. C. Trever as the Herodian period for 1QDan^a and the late Herodian period for 1QDan^b.¹⁸ In other words, *these* manuscripts can be dated around A.D. 60¹⁹ and somewhat earlier.

This dating for these manuscripts is significant because the Masoretic Text (MT), the main basis for our current Old Testament translations, is represented mainly by a manuscript dated as late as A.D. 1008.²⁰ This means that with the Dead Sea Scrolls before us, we are now able to compare the Hebrew and Aramaic of the MT book of Daniel with manuscripts that are about 1,000 years older than the MT. This presents a phenomenal opportunity.

Comparisons between the MT and “the Daniel fragments from Caves 1 and 6 [1QDan^a, 1QDan^b, and 6QDan] reveal on the whole that the later Masoretic Text is preserved in a good, hardly changed form. They are thus valuable witnesses to the great faithfulness with which the sacred text has been transmitted.”²¹ These fragmen-

tary textual witnesses demonstrate that the MT was in fact faithfully preserved. They thereby reassure us that the Hebrew and Aramaic text we possess in the MT book of Daniel is reliable.

The dates for the three Daniel manuscripts most recently published are of even greater importance than the dates of the ones published in 1955. Although 4QDan^b is about the same age (around A.D. 60) as the two we were just mentioning,²³ the date assigned to 4QDan^a is about 60 B.C.,²² and the date assigned to 4QDan^c, as we noted at the beginning of this article, is as early as around 125 B.C.²⁴

Scholars who theorize that the book of Daniel wasn't written until the Maccabean crisis (around 165 B.C.) are being compelled to admit that 4QDan^c comes from “only a half century later than the composition of the book of Daniel.”²⁵ This means that these scholars will now have to demonstrate that a mere forty or fifty years was sufficient time for all the editorial and other processes needed—according to their traditio-historical and redaction-critical theories—for the book to be developed into its present form *and* become canonical!

The Daniel Scrolls and the Original Hebrew-Aramaic Text

We have pointed out above that the Masoretic Text (MT) from which our Old Testament is basically translated is datable to the year A.D. 1008. Before the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered many scholars questioned the faithfulness of this text and took great freedom in emending and adjusting it. Their freedom has been curtailed significantly by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In particular, many scholars have regarded the partly Hebrew, partly Aramaic MT of the book of Daniel as particularly suspect—indeed, as of no greater authority than the Septuagint, the oldest Greek *translation* of the Old Testament. In the Septuagint, which was translated apparently in the third and second centuries B.C., the treatment of Daniel is less literal, less closely related to the MT than is the Septuagint's treatment of most of the other Old Testament books. This fact has led some scholars to assume that the MT of Daniel is of relatively little value.

Incidentally, the Septuagint translation of Daniel—which is available in only two ancient manuscripts²⁸—contains considerably more material than the MT does, including “The Story of Susanna,”

"The Prayer of Azariah," and "The Song of the Three Young Men."²⁹

Around A.D. 180, another notable Greek translation of Daniel appeared, this one attributed to Theodotion, an Ephesian. This translation, which made use of some previous translated materials,³⁰ was widely regarded as superior to the Septuagint and enjoyed "the distinction of having supplanted the current version of the book of Daniel. . . ."³¹

Further, around A.D. 400 Jerome, who translated the Latin Vulgate out of the original languages, ventured the opinion that the Septuagint "differs widely from the original [Hebrew], and is rightly rejected."³²

Professor Klaus Koch is a supporter of the hypothesis that no authoritative, original text of the book of Daniel is available. He suggests that, whereas we have a Hebrew-Aramaic text and two Greek translations, none of the three is original, making it essential that an original text be reconstructed with the best tools available.³³ L. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella hold essentially the same view—and point out ominously that there are "no iron rules or golden rules" to guide the process of textual reconstruction.³⁴ These and some other scholars assume that the entire book of Daniel was originally written in Aramaic and that the Hebrew parts of the book are translations from the Aramaic.³⁵ Other scholars, however, oppose this hypothesis.

It is evident that we are looking at a complex picture. It also seems evident that the newly published Daniel materials from Qumran shed important new light on the issue—for there is *great harmony between the MT and the Daniel texts found in Cave 4*. Thus it no longer seems permissible to dismiss the Hebrew-Aramaic text as unreliable.

We need to take the following points into consideration:

1. The eight Dead Sea Scroll Daniel manuscripts, for the most part, are quite close to one another when it comes to variants.

2. There is no significant abbreviation and no lengthy expansion in any of the manuscript fragments. "The text of Daniel in these [Cave 4] Daniel scrolls conforms closely to later Masoretic tradition; there are to be found, however, some rare variants which side with the Alexandrian Greek [Septuagint] against the MT and Theodotion."³⁶

3. These manuscript fragments do *not* contain any of the additions we mentioned a moment ago, "The Story of Susanna," "The Prayer of Azariah," and "The Song of the Three Young Men."

4. The shift from Hebrew into Aramaic that occurs in Daniel 2:4b in the MT appears in 4QDan^a, just as it does in the previously published fragment, 1QDan^a. Thus we now have two different Dead Sea Scroll manuscripts that give evidence of this shift. The reverse shift from Aramaic back into Hebrew, present in the MT of Dan 8:1, is clearly manifested in both 4QDan^a and 4QDan^b.³⁷

In view of the overwhelming conformity of these Qumran Daniel manuscripts to one another and to the MT (despite a few insignificant variants that agree with the Septuagint), it is evident that the MT well preserves the text of Daniel. An eclectic approach that uses the MT text and the Greek (and other) translations as if they were all on the same level without giving priority to the MT text, is no longer supportable, if it ever was. The Hebrew-Aramaic Masoretic Text of Daniel has stronger support now than at any other time in the history of the interpretation of the book.

The Daniel Scrolls and the Canonical Book of Daniel

When Professor D. Barthélemy in 1955 published the first fragmentary Daniel manuscripts from Qumran Cave 1 (1QDan^a and 1QDan^b), he ventured the opinion that "certain indications permit the thought that Daniel had perhaps not yet been considered at Qumran as a canonical book."³⁸ His doubts were perpetuated for several years. But in 1964 F. F. Bruce stated that the book of Daniel "may well have enjoyed canonical status among them [the Qumran sectaries]."³⁹ And the most recent Daniel commentary, written by John Goldingay and published in 1989 before the newest publications of the Qumran Daniel manuscripts were accessible, states that "there are no real grounds for suggesting that the form of the Qumran manuscripts of Daniel indicates that the book was not regarded as canonical there, though neither affirming that it was.

..."⁴⁰

These doubts and uncertainties about the canonicity of Daniel among the Qumran people can now be laid aside for good. They have been based largely on the "roughly square proportions of the columns of 1QDan^a and because pap6QDan is written on papyrus."⁴¹ But Professor Ulrich now says,

From Cave 4 we now have overriding evidence on both points from manuscripts of books indisputably authoritative or "canonical," including Deuteronomy, Kings, Isaiah, and Psalms. . . . However one uses in relation to Qumran the category of what is later called "canonical" the Book of Daniel was certainly in that category.⁴²

Canonicity is supported also by the fragment known as so-called 4QFlorilegium, which actually employs the quotation formula "which is written in the book of Daniel the prophet."⁴³ This formula is typical of introductions to quotations from canonical Scripture at Qumran. It is similar also to Matthew 24:15, where Jesus refers to "Daniel the prophet."

In 1969, based on the evidence available at that time regarding the Qumran Daniel texts, Roland K. Harrison concluded that the second-century B.C. dating of the book of Daniel is rendered absolutely impossible by the evidence from Qumran. There was, he said, insufficient time for Maccabean compositions to be circulated, venerated, and accepted as canonical Scripture by a Maccabean sect.⁴⁴

Harrison has since reiterated his conviction, based on the Qumran manuscripts:

There can no longer be any possible reason for considering the book [of Daniel] as a Maccabean product.⁴⁵

The Daniel Scrolls and Daniel 8:14

Daniel 8:14 has been of great importance to Seventh-day Adventists since the beginning of the Advent movement. From time to time the question has been raised in certain circles as to whether the Hebrew text of Daniel 8:14 has been well preserved. If not, those raising the question suggest, we should be cautious concerning using it to support the Seventh-day Adventist sanctuary doctrine.

As far as the evidence from Hebrew manuscripts of the MT is concerned, there is no variation. As far as the number 2300 is concerned, there is no evidence in the MT or in the Greek versions for any variation.

Now we should be able to check the Daniel 8:14 against the fragment from 4QDan^b which contains parts of Daniel 8:13-16. Unfortunately only two Hebrew words are preserved from vs. 14 and the number 2300 is not among them. The two Hebrew words

that are preserved in Daniel 8:14 are *wnsdq qwds*,⁴⁶ the same words translated traditionally, "the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

The editor's statement concerning this fragment is decisive: "No variants are preserved on this fragment."⁴⁷ There is but one orthographical difference from the MT, in that the word for "sanctuary" (*qds* in the MT) has the longer spelling *qwds*, with a waw (*w*) between the first two letters. In Ulrich's edition such an orthographic difference, which does not change the word or its meaning in any way whatsoever, is not considered a variant worth listing.⁴⁸ In short, the two crucial words of the last part of Daniel 8:14, traditionally rendered "the sanctuary shall be cleansed,"⁴⁹ are now available from before or about the time of Christ. They are identical to the wording of the MT of 1000 years later. Here is extraordinary confirmation of the textual veracity of Daniel 8:14. Speculation based on anything else is now proven to be totally worthless.

The Daniel Scrolls and "the Saints of the Most High"

In Daniel 7 "the saints of the Most High" are referred to four times (in verses 18, 22, 25, and 27). The customary identification has been that these saints are God's people, but in 1955 a new hypothesis challenged this identification. A German scholar identified the saints of the Most High as angels in heaven and not as human beings on earth.⁵⁰ Some other scholars have followed his lead, particularly Roman Catholic ones.⁵¹ Obviously, when the "little horn" power attacks "the saints of the Most High" under the new hypothesis, its attacks can no longer represent a persecution of God's people on the earth! The implications are rather clear.

In 1975 I published a paper in which the identity of "the saints of the Most High" was discussed at length. I concluded that they have to be human beings.⁵² My conclusions have been confirmed independently by other scholars,⁵³ although the new hypothesis continues to be held by some.

A most important item for consideration is found in Daniel 7:27. There the term "people" is used in connection with the phrase "saints of the Most High" in the combined expression, "the people of the saints of the Most High." The term "people" (*am*) is brought into such a syntactical relationship to the "saints of the Most High" that the meaning is "the people consisting of the saints of the Most

High."⁵⁴ To circumvent this view, those who argue that the "saints" are angels have made a variety of proposals, one of which is that the word "people" is an insertion of an editor at a later time when he wanted to make the saints human beings.⁵⁵

This matter can now be cleared up. Among the Cave 4 discoveries there are fragments of two manuscripts that contain parts of Daniel 7:25-28. In both 4QDan^a and 4QDan^b the term 'am, "people," is present, harmonizing directly with the MT, which says, "the *people* of the saints of the Most High."⁵⁶ The opinion that it can "never be proved" that 'am, "people," is a part of this passage⁵⁷ has now been shown to be emphatically wrong. The Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt that the term "people" is part of the original text. This settles the question. "The saints of the Most High" are *people*.

Thus the Dead Sea Scrolls that are finally available give us reason to praise God for the new light they shed on the matters discussed in this study. These manuscripts give us ample reason to have solid confidence in the Hebrew-Aramaic Masoretic Text on which our current translations of Daniel are principally based. But even if we did not have these new discoveries, we should still believe that the Word of God has been faithfully preserved.

Endnotes

1 The book of Daniel was written in two languages. The Aramaic language appears in Dan 2:4b-7:28 and the Hebrew everywhere else.

2 Eugene Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran. Parts 1 & 2: Preliminary Editions of 4QDan^a and 4QDan^b," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research (BASOR)*, 268 (Nov. 1987): 3-16; 274 (May 1989): 3-26.

3 Hershel Shanks, "At Least Publish the Dead Sea Scroll Timetable!" *Biblical Archaeology Review (BAR)*, 15/3 (1989): 56-58; idem, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Scandal," *BAR*, 15/4 (1989): 18-21, 55; idem, "What Should be Done About the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls?" *BAR*, 15/5 (1989): 18-22; idem, "New Hope for the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls," *BAR*, 15/6 (1989): 55-56, 74-75; "Dead Sea Scroll Variation on 'Show and Tell'—It's Called 'Tell, But No Show,'" *BAR*, 16/2 (1990): 18-21.

4 Shanks, "What Should be Done About the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls?" p. 20.

5 Quoted in *BAR*, 15/5 (1989): 20.

6 Frank Moore Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (2d ed.; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1961), p. 43.

7 Ulrich, "Manuscripts from Daniel. Part 2," p. 3.

8 Frank Moore Cross, Jr., "Editing the Manuscript Fragments from Qumran: Cave 4 of Qumran (4Q)," *Biblical Archaeologist*, 19 (1956): 86.

9 P. Benoit, "Editing the Manuscript Fragments from Qumran," *Biblical*

Archaeologist 19 (1956), p. 76, notes with precision that the Daniel fragments from Cave 4 were given to Professor Cross for future publication. The scientific excavations of Cave 4 took place on Sept. 22-24, 1952.

10 Shanks, "What Should Be Done About the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls?" p. 18.

11 Shanks, "The Next Generation of Scroll Scholars," *BAR*, 15/3 (1989): 57: "Ulrich received all of Patyrtick Skehan's unpublished plates after Skehan died in 1980. Ulrich has also received most of Frank Moore Cross's biblical manuscripts with the understanding that he could reassign them."

12 D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, *Qumran Cave I. Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), pp. 150-152. The plates were published subsequently by John T. Trever, "Completion of the Publication of Some Fragments from Qumran Cave I," *Revue de Qumrân*, 5 (1964-66): 523-44, pls. 5-6.

13 M. Baillet and J. T. Milik, *Les 'Petites Grottes' des Qumrân. 1. Texte. 2. Planches. Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan 3* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), pp. 114-15, pl. 23.

14 Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran: Part 1," p. 18.

15 The most recent extensive publication of this material is in George J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 29 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), pp. 84-128.

16 Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Major Publications and Tools* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 11-39.

17 This holds even if Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, p. 43, is correct in asserting that in Cave 4 there are 14 MS copies of Deuteronomy, 12 MS copies of Isaiah, and 10 MSS copies of the Psalms. There are four MS copies of Daniel.

18 Trever, "Completion of the Publication of Some Fragments," pp. 323-336.

19 Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, Anchor Bible 23 (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1978), p. 72.

20 E. Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979), p. 35.

21 A. Mertens, *Das Buch Daniel im Lichte der Texte vom Toten Meer*, Stuttgarter Biblische Monographien 12 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1971), p. 31. The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:477, comes to the same conclusion on the basis of a study of 1QDan^a and 1QDan^b: "The list [of variants] shows that the differences [between the MT and these two MS fragments] are so insignificant that they would not be noticeable in translation. This is a strong proof that the Hebrew text of Daniel is now in substantially the same form as it was at least in the time of Christ."

22 Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran. Part 1," p. 17: "The date of 4QDan^a is about one century . . . later than the book's composition" (which he puts about 168-165 B.C.).

23 Ibid.

24 Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, p. 43.

25 Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran. Part 1," p. 17.

26 A recent example is the commentary by Klaus Koch, *Daniel*, BKAT, 22/1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), pp. 20-24.

27 Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran. Part 1," observes that 4QDan^a, with its very early dating, "is thus, for the Hebrew Bible comparable to the Rylands manuscript of the Johannine Gospel for the New Testament." The papyrus fragment of the Gospel of John (published in 1935) known as Rylands 457 and as P⁵² and dated to the first half of the second century A.D., was made about as few

years after John was actually written as 4QDan^c was made after Daniel was allegedly written—according to those scholars who insist that Daniel wasn't written till around 168-165 B.C., during the Maccabean period.

²⁸ Codex 88 (9th-11th centuries A.D.), as edited by H. B. Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint* (4th ed.; Cambridge: Clarendon, 1912) 4:498-593; and the Cologne fragments of Papyrus 967 from the early 3rd century A.D. published by A. Geissen, *Der Septuaginta-Text des Buches Daniel 5-12 sowie Esther 1-2, 15* (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1968); Winfried Hamm, *Der Septuaginta-Text des Buches Daniel 1-2* (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1969); idem, *Der Septuaginta-Text des Buches Daniel 3-4* (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1977).

²⁹ See C. A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah: The Additions*, Anchor Bible 44 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977).

³⁰ A. Schmitt, *Stammt er sogenannte "Theodotion"-Text bei Daniel wirklich von Theodotion?* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966).

³¹ Sidney Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 84.

³² Quoted in *ibid.*

³³ Klaus Koch et al., *Das Buch Daniel*, Erträge der Erforschung 144 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), pp. 22, 23; idem, *Daniel*, pp. 16-21.

³⁴ Hartman and Di Lella, *Daniel*, p. 75.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73; Koch, *Daniel*, pp. 16-18. Among earlier scholars who took this view are H. Preiswerk, R. H. Charles, and H. L. Ginsberg, as mentioned by Koch, *Daniel*, p. 16.

³⁶ Cross, "Editing the Manuscript Fragments from Qumran," p. 86.

³⁷ Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran. Part 2," pp. 3, 4.

³⁸ Barthélemy and Milik, *Qumran Cave I*, p. 150.

³⁹ F. F. Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), p. 57.

⁴⁰ John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary 30 (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), p. xxvii.

⁴¹ Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran: Part 1," p. 19.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Cited in George J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran*, p. 93.

⁴⁴ R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969), p. 1127.

⁴⁵ R. K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979) 1:862.

⁴⁶ Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran: Part 2," p. 16.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁹ For the issues of translation and meaning, see Gerhard F. Hasel, "The 'Little Horn,' the Heavenly Sanctuary and the Time of the End: A Study of Daniel 8:9-14," *Symposium on Daniel*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 2 (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute/Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1986), pp. 426-461.

⁵⁰ This essay was translated and published in English under the title, "The Holy Ones of the Most High" in Martin Noth, *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 215-228. A similar suggestion had been made as early as 1927 by O. Procksch and subsequently by S.

Mowinckel in 1953, but Noth's essay brought it to the attention of the scholarly world.

⁵¹ J. Coppens, "Les Saints du Très-Haut sont-ils à identifier avec les Milices célestes?" *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 39 (1963): 94-100; L. Dequeker, "Daniel VII et les Saints du Très-Haut," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 36 (1960): 353-392; idem, "The 'Saints of the Most High' in Qumran and Daniel," *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, 18 (1973): 108-187; John J. Collins, "The Son of Man and the Saints of the Most High in the Book of Daniel," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 93 (1974): 50-66; idem, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 16 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), p. 123-153.

⁵² Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Identity of 'the Saints of the Most High' in Daniel 7," *Biblica*, 56/2 (1975): 173-192.

⁵³ Among them are C. H. W. Brekelmans, "The Saints of the Most High and their Kingdom," *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, 14 (1965): 305-329; R. Hanhart, "Die Heiligen des Höchsten," *Hebräische Wortforschung: Festschrift für W. Baumgartner* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), pp. 90-101; A. Deissler, "Der 'Menschensohn' und 'das Volk der Heiligen des Höchsten' in Dan 7," *Jesus und der Menschensohn: Festschrift für A. Vögtle*, eds. R. Pesch and R. Schnackenburg (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 1975), pp. 81-91; V. S. Poythress, "The Holy Ones of the Most High in Dan VII," *Vetus Testamentum*, 26 (1976): 208-213; P. M. Casey, *Son of Man* (London: SPCK, 1979); C. C. Caragounis, *The Son of Man*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 38 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); P. R. Davies, *Daniel* (Sheffield: JOST Press, 1985), pp. 101-104.

⁵⁴ See my arguments for the explicative (epexegetical) genitive of this construct chain in Hasel, "The Identity of 'The Saints of the Most High' in Dan 7," pp. 186, 187. These arguments have been adopted by others, such as John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, p. 146.

⁵⁵ Dequeker is followed in this by Otto Plöger, *Das Buch Daniel* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1965), p. 119.

⁵⁶ Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran: Part 1," p. 33. "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran: Part 2," p. 15.

⁵⁷ Brekelmans, "The Saints of the Most High and their Kingdom," p. 329.

Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength (1 Cor 1:20-25 NIV).

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HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITY: DOES ROMANS 1 CONDONE OR CONDEMN IT?

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Those who have assumed for years that Paul condemns homosexual activity in Romans chapter 1 might be rudely awakened if they read much of the modern literature on homosexuality. Today, the idea that homosexual activity is not condemned in Scripture is prevalent in the world and present even in the church. This article takes a brief look at the background and context of anti-homosexual-activity statements in the New Testament. In particular, it attempts to determine what Paul meant—and didn't mean—by his references to homosexuality in Romans 1.¹

The Social Background of Early Christianity

Christianity took root first in Roman provincial towns and cities, as the titles of some of Paul's epistles indicate, e.g., Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

The apostle Paul walked Roman roads and sailed Roman trade routes. The aim of Roman policy was the education and unification of the provinces in Roman ideas. In the process, Rome worked in alliance with Greek civilization, especially in the Eastern provinces, for as Ramsey has observed:

The Greek influence was, on the whole, European and Western in character; and opposed to the oriental stagnation which resisted Roman educative efforts.²

Christianity as a force in the social life of the time was doubtless perceived by many as arrayed on the side of imperial policy.

Christianity worked against ignorance, stagnation, social anarchy, and the enslavement of people to priests. At the same time it stood for universal citizenship, universal equality of rights, and universal religion, concepts also being worked out over time by the empire.³

Paul appears to have made use of certain basic elements of Greek education. He did not disdain the best in Greek ethics, learning, and courtesies. Nothing in his speeches at Lystra and Athens is overtly Jewish or Christian. When he wished to, Paul could express the truth of Scripture in the language and ideas of an educated Roman as well as in those of a Christian.

The first churches were formed in cities and towns, and the first Christians were urban dwellers. Though the cities were certainly small by modern standards, their population density in many cases equaled that of a modern slum. Privacy was rare. Thus Christians were very sensitive to public opinion. Their safety as Christians depended to a certain extent on their religious activities' largely escaping public attention. Abnormal behavior in any Christian community could feed willing rumors to the discredit of the entire Christian community. E. A. Judge is of the opinion that "the basic problem for Christians was thus not their relations with the government, but with the communities within which they lived."⁴ Early Christian apologists responded to social as well as to state criticism.

It is a mistake to consider the triumph of Christianity as tantamount to the triumph of the lower classes (the "proletariat") over the upper classes. Early Christian churches were composed of a cross-section of society and have even been described as being mostly middle-class.⁵ It has been suggested that "the triumph of Christianity in a hierarchically organized society necessarily took place from the top down."⁶

The structure of early Christian communities was inevitably influenced to some extent by the environment. Christians built no churches but met in private homes, as frequent references in the New Testament attest. Further, the conversion of a person along with an entire "household" is mentioned several times in Acts. In New Testament times a household likely included relatives outside the immediate family, and slaves, freedmen, and hired hands as well—and even business partners. It could be extended to include virtually anyone who depended on the group for a livelihood. Thus

the household was a basic political unit and the householder was charged with legal responsibilities for the group's members.

Not unsurprisingly, the loyalty of household members to one another could easily rival their loyalty to the state. As Abraham J. Malherbe points out, the solidarity of such groups was based "on economic, and especially psychological, social and religious factors."⁷ In respect to religious factors, households were often centers of a cult under the patronage of the household's head.

So the new Christian groups were superimposed on an existing network. Households, many small, others numbering at most perhaps thirty, forty, or fifty, afforded privacy, intimacy, and the stability of place for early Christian communities.

Of course, when a Christian community contained several households, a potential for factions existed, which may help explain the problems Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians 1-4. On the other hand, the solidarity of Christian groups as a whole was remarkable and points to the fact that cohesive factors were at work in the church besides those that held a single household together.

Christians did not forbid social intercourse with non-Christians, but they did draw a clear line between the ethical-moral behavior allowed to those outside the group and that expected of members (see, e.g., 1 Cor 5:9-13); and, for obvious reasons, Paul strongly discouraged involvement in non-Christian cults (see, e.g., 1 Cor 8 and 10).

That Paul considered the Christian community a pure and holy place as compared with the impure and profane world outside is clear from the advice he gave Christians to avoid the abhorrent vices and sexual practices of the pagan world. His regulations in Ephesians 4:17ff. reveal what he expected of members of the Christian communities and were, in fact, essential for the solidarity and cohesiveness of Christianity as a whole (see also 1 Cor 1:2). These regulations highlight Paul's conviction that the purity of the community was in danger "only from within, not by contact with outsiders, even though the latter are considered typically immoral."⁸

The Popularity of Vice Lists

It is notable that regulations for Christian ethical behavior appear frequently in a negative form in the New Testament. Many

lists of vices are found for Christians to avoid.⁹ C. H. Dodd has suggested that such lists may have been used in catechetical instruction from a very early period.¹⁰

Somewhat similar lists were employed in the popular moral teaching of the day, and in these popular lists Stoic influence was unmistakable. This is not to suggest that Paul took his ideas directly from the teachings of the great classical schools of philosophy. Though Paul's teachings had much in common with philosophical thought, Judge thinks they cannot be identified with any regular philosophical system¹¹ but that Paul rather made use of the popular ethical instruction of the day—not a system of ethics as such “but the way in which a loose body of general principles for life develops among thoughtful people in a community.”¹²

Christians surely found precedent for ethical lists in Hellenistic *Jewish* literature. In such literature vice lists were abundant, as for instance in the writings of Philo. An excellent example of a vice list is found in *Wisdom* 14. 25, 26:

Blood and murder, theft and fraud, corruption, faithlessness, tumult, perjury, troubling of good, unthankfulness for benefits, defilement of souls, confusion of sex, disorder in marriage, adultery and wantonness.

Burton Scott Easton observes that in accord with Jewish custom this list in Philo's *Wisdom* is concerned with actions rather than thoughts, whereas Stoic lists centered on sins of disposition.¹³ Also characteristically Jewish is the emphasis in *Wisdom* on “idolatry” as the cardinal defect, whereas Greek and Roman moralists emphasized “ignorance.”¹⁴ Paul's line of thought in Romans 1:26-31 resembles the thesis and language of the *Wisdom* list but does not simply repeat it. Of the fifteen terms in the *Wisdom* list and the twenty-one in the Romans list, only two, “murder and deceit,” are common to both.

Because most lists were conventional, particular listed sins had little to do with the immediate context within a given document where a list appeared. Stoic and Jewish precedent informed most New Testament lists. Easton finds non-Jewish precedent highly likely for Romans 1:29-31 and only less likely for 2 Timothy 3:2-4.¹⁵ Other lists most likely had Jewish-Greek influence as their imme-

diante background. Neil J. McEleney finds no pattern of terms followed in the vice lists of the pastoral epistles and concludes:

The vice lists of the Pastorals have been influenced by more or less of these elements: (1) reference to the Decalogue or other commands of the Law; (2) polemic against immoral pagan idolaters; (3) Hellenistic conceptions of virtue and vice as qualifications of a man; (4) moral dualism due to various inclinations of spirits in a man causing him to walk in one of two ways; (5) the theme of eschatological punishment.¹⁶

Here again Stoic and Jewish backgrounds are observable. However, similarities with Stoicism should not be overemphasized. The pagan concept of *philanthropia* “love for mankind” while present in *Wisdom* is notably absent from the New Testament. On the other hand, the Christian concept *makrothymia*, “patience,” is absent from Stoicism, and qualities such as *eleos*, “mercy,” and *tapeinotes*, “humility,” are Christian virtues but Stoic vices.

The differences may be explained by noting differences in concepts of man, his nature, and his purpose in life. Because the Christian concept of man's relationship to God is determinative in Christian lists, it is vital to understand the conceptual framework in which the terms are used in the New Testament—and also, that these terms are not used in such a framework outside the New Testament. As Easton has noted:

Avoidance of the sins cataloged in these lists is never identified with Christian morality. Life as a Christian hardly begins until such temptations have been put to death.¹⁷

It is highly significant that all major references to homosexuality in the New Testament occur in vice lists. Nowhere does Paul issue positive instructions for the happiness of homosexual couples or indicate how such couples are to be integrated into the church. Paul does give instruction in respect to slaves, to families where only one spouse is a believer, to persons coming in from pagan cults and worldly associations, to women who are virgin and those who are not, and to Jews and Pharisees with all their religious and cultural baggage. But he consistently lists homosexual activity among the lifestyle elements that are to be left behind and discontinued when one becomes a Christian.

Conclusions to Be Drawn So Far

For the most part, the apostle Paul evangelized Roman provincial cities. Most early Christians were city dwellers. Cities at the time were overcrowded, with the consequence that early Christians were seriously concerned about their place in local society and the influence society might have on them.

The ethical regulations given to Christians in the New Testament are found in both positive and negative forms. Negative lists of vices to be avoided were common in both pagan and Jewish societies. But in contrast to Stoic thinking, Christians did not suppose that mere avoidance of vices made a person moral. Instead, Christians taught that morality and ethics cannot begin until vicious acts are removed from the lifestyle. Christian ethics and morality involve the doing of positive things and not merely the removal of the negative.

Even though numerous worthwhile activities are mentioned in a positive way in the New Testament, homosexual activity is never treated positively. References to homosexual activity appear in the New Testament only in the lists of vices to be avoided, a fact that must not be overlooked if the Bible's teachings on homosexuality are to be taken seriously.

Romans: Text and Context

As promised earlier, we turn now to a study of Romans 1, beginning with verses 24-28 RSV:

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and improper conduct.

These verses are followed immediately (in vss. 29-32) by the longest vice list in the New Testament. This particular list mentions no sexual sins; Paul apparently was satisfied with his treatment of

sexual sins in verses 24-28, so that the whole passage, from verse 24 to verse 32, should be viewed as one extended vice list.

Numerous interpretations of this passage have been offered that see it as totally condemning homosexual activity. On the other hand, numerous interpretations perceive these verses as condemning only a certain kind of exploitative homosexual activity; and of *these* interpretations, most conclude that Paul did not oppose all homosexuality but only homosexual lust. These latter interpretations claim that Paul could not have been opposing "natural" or permanent, constitutional homosexuality because he was ignorant of it.¹⁸ Thus, they say, Paul was concerned only with exploitation, prostitution, and unbridled homosexual lust. As proof, these interpretations point to the fact that Paul was talking against homosexual activity carried on contrary to nature, whereas it is not contrary to nature (they say) for a constitutional homosexual to indulge in homosexual activity, even though it would be against the nature of a heterosexual to do so. Thus, they conclude, Paul was not speaking against the loving homosexual relationship of the constitutional homosexual couple whose affection and responsibility are the marked criteria of their relationship rather than unbridled lust.¹⁹

A third interpretation, sometimes held in conjunction with the second view just outlined, is that Paul in this passage condemned homosexuality associated with idolatry, rather than mere homosexual activity as such.²⁰ Various assumptions are involved here, among them that homosexuality was practiced in conjunction with idolatry in Paul's day and was, therefore, a conscious voluntary choice. Another assumption of this view is that homosexuality was in some way the result of idolatry, or that it was God's punishment for idolatry.²¹

Still other interpretations focus on the word "nature." Some of these interpretations protest the view that Paul's use of the word was tied to Greek philosophical usage.²² Others read it as simply meaning convention, the generally accepted practice in a particular time and place, and cite in their support 1 Corinthians 11:14, where Paul says, "Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him?" In this passage Paul uses the word "nature" in what these interpretations regard as a merely conventional sense, inasmuch as in Graeco-Roman culture it was generally

accepted that men should have short hair and be close shaven, whereas among the Jews the practice was for men to have long hair and (if they so chose) to wear beards. If, then, "nature" means only the custom of a current time and place, the homosexual activity which Paul condemns on the grounds that it is contrary to nature is simply activity not acceptable in one society but which might be acceptable in another.²³ Thus, these interpretations conclude, Paul is not saying that God condemns homosexual activity but that contemporary Jewish culture opposes it.

Finally, some interpreters minimize the references to homosexuality in Romans 1. They claim that Paul mentions many other sins as well, including covetousness, malice, envy, deceit, and gossip. We are all sinners, and Paul doesn't select any group of sinners as more worthy of condemnation than another, and all sinners may be saved by Christ. If fornicators, adulterers, and thieves are accepted into church fellowship, why not homosexuals? Bartlett paraphrases Galatians 5:6 to encapsulate this view: "In Christ Jesus, neither heterosexuality, nor homosexuality—in themselves—are of any avail, but faith working through love."²⁴

So What Does Paul Really Mean?

Let us begin our own exegesis of the passage (Rom 1:24-32) by reviewing the broader context in which Paul wrote it.

As almost any reader of this article is aware, the principal theme in Romans is the doctrine of justification by faith. In Romans 1:16, 17 this theme is announced in the declaration that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel and that "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Paul proceeds at once to illustrate our need for God's righteousness by showing that our sin brings retribution while we live and eventually culminates in death.

The arena in which sin operates is universal. God's righteousness is needed not only by those who drink the dregs of pagan vice and crime but also by the pagan moralists who consider themselves superior to such outcasts of society. Even the Jews, the chosen people of God who consider themselves supremely enlightened in contrast to the rest of mankind, fall under the stern judgment of God. In short, all mankind is found guilty before God. There is no room anywhere for complacency and congratulatory self-righteousness.

Paul's aim is to show that the whole of humanity is morally bankrupt, . . . He begins with an area of human life whose moral bankruptcy was a matter of general agreement among moralists of the day—the great mass of contemporary paganism.²⁵

It is important to understand that by placing the pagan moralists and the Jews in the same category as the pagan masses, Paul was not saying that moralists and Jews were involved in the same forms of immorality. What he was saying was that the most degraded pagans could know enough from creation itself to avoid confusing the Creator with His creatures. But because they deliberately confused the Creator with His creatures, they fell inevitably into further errors of thought and action.

Paul was not suggesting that the pagan masses or any other group were not intelligent enough to understand what was right, but that in consequence of their resolute moral obduracy, they failed to do what was right. The Jews as a group demonstrated that the essential problem was not ignorance. The Jews were placed under the judgment of God because, as they boasted, they were indeed supremely enlightened and in consequence truly should have done better than those who were not. But even *they* failed.

Righteousness was not to be found among the pagan masses, or among the moralists, or even among the Jews, for all showed the same fundamental failure, a stubborn disobedience to what they knew to be right. It is here that Paul reintroduced the gospel into the picture (see Rom 3:21-5:21). God does not expect man to become righteous before He declares him such. Rather God declares a man righteous and initiates a right relationship and then helps a man grow up to his full potential. For Paul, freedom from religious activity as a means for getting right with God, and freedom from death (see Rom 7:1-8:39) are preceded by freedom from sin (see Rom 6:1-23). Paul vigorously opposed the idea that the outpouring of God's grace means a life of continued sin. In baptism, we die to sin; and, changing the analogy, Christians are like redeemed slaves, purchased by Christ's blood in the slave-market of sin and now working for their new master, God, and no longer for their old master, sin.

Paul's arguments encompass all of humanity. He writes not against a merely Jewish or Greek background but against a cosmic background. He deals with the broad canvas of creation, sin, fall,

and redemption. Because everyone has sinned and come short of God's original glorious intention for the race, God offers to all of us the opportunity to come into a right relationship with Him through Jesus. The relationship once accepted is to be maintained (on man's part, that is) by our cooperating with God to the best of our ability in good faith. The ultimate aim or ideal is that man may be restored to God's image as God intended when creating us.

In the section under consideration, Paul shows how far mankind has fallen from the ideal or original state. In Romans 1:24 he uses the words, "God gave them up," for the first of several times. It is doubtful that these words, repeated in verses 26 and 28, are intended to imply that the abandonment of the heathen to the dominion of sin represents a punitive act inflicted by God. If God withdraws the restraints of His providence and grace from the wicked, He may be described in Biblical terminology as giving them over to sin. But "the permission to sin is not necessarily a judicial or punitive act."²⁶ The sin of Adam was permitted, but scarcely as a judgment or penalty for sin.

The issue here is the free relationship between God and man. God allows the wicked to "enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and [they] are, therefore, self-enslaved."²⁷ Sin is exposed and to some extent punished by its own results, but this is because God has so constituted natural processes that wrong inevitably gravitates to wretchedness. God leaves men where they place themselves—in the fatal region of self-will and self-indulgence.²⁸

There is a moral law in life that men are left to the consequences of their own freely chosen course of action; and unless this tendency is reversed by divine grace, their situation will go from bad to worse.²⁹

It is not helpful, then, to consider homosexuality as merely a punishment for sin. Such an opinion can lead to the judgmental question asked by the Pharisees, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" (John 9:2). As with blindness, so with the homosexual condition, the reality may be that "it was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (John 9:3).

There is no doubt that in Romans 1:25 Paul saw the vices of paganism to be a consequence of idolatry. This perception was

commonplace in Jewish apologetic of the time (see, e.g., *Wisdom of Solomon*, 12-14 and *The Epistle of Aristeeas*). For Paul the vices of paganism, with their inevitable results, were in themselves a retribution for the fundamental error of taking up an irreligious attitude toward life—that is, of placing the reasoning and will of the creature at the forefront in spite of the knowledge of God which is native to the human mind. In this context, idolatry cannot be reduced to pagan practices and cultic life. Rather, paganism in essence is seen to be an attitude toward God that places human will above God's will, and human authority above God's sovereignty (see Rom 1:28, 32). Therefore, to say that homosexuality is a result of idolatry is to say that it is the result of the sinful human condition in which we all live.

In Romans 1:26 Paul specifies some of the things that result from as well as contribute to the fallen existence which is our common lot. God gives us up to the dishonorable passions which spring from our basic attitude toward Him. Paul specifically mentions homosexuality as a dishonorable passion—though not the only dishonorable passion, for he lists others in verses 29-31. It is part of the irony of idolatry that people actually believe they can serve God by indulging in these passions. Here is the ultimate foolishness of those who claim to be wise (see vs. 19). Paul begins with the women ("females," *thelus* in Greek) who exchange natural relations for unnatural—a characterization that becomes clearer in verse 27, which refers to the men who analogously give up natural relations with women and are consumed with passion for one another, men ("males," *arsen* in Greek) committing shameless acts with other men.

The two key terms in these verses (Rom 1:26, 27) are the expressions "natural" and "unnatural," and much depends upon what Paul meant by them.

For many commentators, the crux of the issue concerns the sources on which Paul may be presumed to have been dependent for his judgment that homosexuality is unnatural. He used the terms *kata phusin*, "according to nature," and *para phusin*, "against, beside, or contrary to nature."

There is no doubt that these terms were used by other Greek writers when expressing an ethical judgment on homosexuality. For example, in the classical period prior to Paul's day, Plato, the

influential philosopher, in his *Laws*, 1. 636 and 8. 836-841 many times described heterosexual intercourse as “natural” and homosexual intercourse as “unnatural.” Plato attempted to give a reason why homosexual intercourse is unnatural, namely, because men ought not to fall below the level of the animal world, where (he believed) homosexuality does not take place (*Laws*, 8. 841).

From the later Hellenistic period, other writers could be cited to show that the phrases in question were common enough. For example, Diodorus Siculus (ca. 49 B.C.), in his *History*, 32. 10. 8-11 used *kata phusin* for natural intercourse with a woman, but in the case where the woman was in reality a man he spoke of the intercourse as having taken place “as with a man” and the marriage as “against nature” (*para phusin*). In this event the woman (in reality a man) had to submit to “unnatural (*para phusin*) embraces.”

Musonius Rufus, a Roman Stoic philosopher sometimes referred to as the Roman Socrates, was a contemporary (ca. A.D. 30-101) of Paul’s whose works show “the typical characteristics of the popularized philosophical treatise.”³⁰ For Musonius, life in accordance with nature was life in accordance with virtue. Thus he identified *kata phusin zen*, “to live according to nature,” with *en arete zen*, “to live according to virtue.” Men and women can have equal virtue, he said, and should have equal education, a concept that led him to consider marriage between a man and a woman as the most worthy of human relationships. Such a marriage was definitely “natural,” *kata phusin*. “In the later Stoics marriage was always said to be *kata phusin*”³¹ and homosexual acts were considered contrary to nature. Thus Musonius allowed for sexual intercourse only within marriage and for procreation. All other instances of intercourse he considered “indecent relationships” (adultery) and unlawful. In his Fragment 12,³² which deals with sexual relationships, Musonius referred specifically to pederasty as *para phusin tolmema*, “an outrage against nature.”

Another contemporary of Paul’s, the Jewish historian Josephus (ca. A.D. 37-97), spoke of sodomy as “unnatural (*para phusin*) vice” and as “unnatural (*para phusin*) pleasure.”³³

We pass by the various authors who used the terms *para phusin* and *kata phusin* but did so without clearly defining what they meant by them, and proceed to ask what Paul did *not* mean by

these expressions and in what way Paul’s usage was distinct from that of the later Stoics.

Paul’s God, like the classic philosopher Aristotle’s, was transcendent, completely above and beyond the world. Like Plato’s God, Paul’s God was also the Creator of nature and separate from it. The Stoics, however, believed in a God who was immanent in nature in ways which Paul could not have agreed with at all. For the Stoics, God not only controls the world but in the last resort is the world. For them, too, existence continues forever in endlessly recurring cycles following the fixed *logos* (“law” or “formula”) known to the Stoics as Fate and Providence—which is ordained by God. The Stoics said that the *logos* in fact is God or is at least the mind of God and the universal world soul. Thus the Stoic system was basically determinist. The Roman orator, statesman, and Stoic philosopher, Cicero (106-43 B.C.), claimed that according to Zeno “the law of nature is divine,” that Cleanthes held that “the world itself is god,” and that Chrysippus said that “the divine power resides in reason and in the soul and mind of the universe.”³⁴ There is little doubt that the late Stoics deified Nature. The Emperor philosopher Marcus Aurelius spoke of Nature as “the eldest of deities.”³⁵

It is clear that in Romans 1 and 2 Paul used terms that Stoic philosophers also used, but it is equally clear that he did not use them with the same meanings they had in Stoicism or even in Hellenism. That when using “nature” Paul included the providential ordering of the natural world, as the Stoics did, is probably correct.³⁶ Apart from this agreement, however, the term has a completely different function for Paul. The direct influence of non-Jewish Hellenistic thought on Paul’s thought has been exaggerated. Paul’s main background was Jewish, or more precisely, Hellenistic Judaism.

For Paul, nature and man were created perfect by God and subsequently fell away from perfection, suffering the blight of sin. Thus nature as it now stands cannot be determinative for man’s essence, and any appeal to it as if it were determinative is at best relative and at worst harmful. Within fallen nature only relative distinctions between the natural and the unnatural can be made. For the Christian, this fallen natural life is preliminary to life with Christ and has validity as “natural” only because Christ entered

fallen natural life through His incarnation. From Paul's point of view, then, the "natural" was the form of life preserved by God for the fallen world. It is that life which is directed toward justification, redemption, and renewal through Christ.

Now human reason, being embedded as it is in the natural, is nothing more than the conscious perception of nature that presents itself to man. Thus this side of the fall, reason itself is fallen.³⁷ From this observation the crucial conclusion follows that the truly natural can never be determined by any single authority within the fallen world.

Paul's perspective in Romans 1 and 2 is not limited to relative distinctions between natural and unnatural in our present fallen world. Only God's original intention for man can be considered determinative for man's essence, and this original intention is revealed in Scripture. The "unnatural" came as a consequence of the fall and does not reflect God's original intention for us. That Romans 1:18-32 takes in all the world since the creation and the fall is recognized quite generally. Thus when Paul refers here to homosexuality, he is not treating it merely as an expression of idolatry. Rather he is tracing both homosexuality and idolatry back to the bad exchange man made in the first place when he originally departed from the Creator's intention.

In writing about "natural relations," Paul is not referring to individual men and women as they are. His canvas is much broader. He is taking the argument back, radically, to man and woman as God created them. By "unnatural" he means "unnatural to human beings according to God's creation pattern," a pattern Paul understood to be heterosexual. So the modern distinction between pervert and invert is completely undercut.³⁹

In this light, Paul has in mind not only the casual and capricious sex swapping of the pervert driven by lust and desire for fleshly stimulation but also the basic divergence from God's original creation scheme that all homosexual behavior represents. The invert or constitutional homosexual may be seen as an aberration of God's original creation. He may be considered depraved in the theological sense (as we all are to some extent) even if not in a moral sense.⁴⁰ The constitutional homosexual who has physical and emotional attraction to other males may be less culpable morally than the lustful heterosexual who constantly fantasizes adulterous

relationships. The excessive sexual drive of a heterosexual may be due to some physical predisposition, but it is nonetheless a perversion of God's original intention and design. Both homosexual and heterosexual persons are culpable when they act out their "unnatural" drives. The same must be said about the nymphomaniac, whose sexual impulses cannot be satisfied by one man.

Paul uses the homosexual practices of his day as an appropriate illustration of the depravity which results from mankind's departure from God's will. If in our fallen state homosexual acts could be accorded divine approval in any sense, surely Paul would have indicated this and drawn any needed distinctions.⁴¹ A variety of homosexual activities was commonly practiced and widely known in Paul's day. Paul must have been aware of distinctions among the various homosexual practices as found in the writings of Plato, for instance, and in the city of Sparta, and as carried out in prostitution and in pederasty. He must also have known about adult relationships of the more permanent kind.

But he made no distinctions in Romans 1. In the total absence of distinctions and exceptions, interpretations of his words that allow for homosexual activity must be seen as allowing exceptions for all the listed vices which follow.

At the same time, we ourselves need to make a distinction. Paul speaks only of homosexual activity, not of temptations to homosexuality or of a disposition to homosexuality. Paul concludes verse 27 with the observation that those who *practice* the various vices in his list receive "in their own persons the due penalty for their error."

By this "due penalty" the apostle may be speaking of moral erosion in the life or of the physical deterioration which results from a dissolute life, or of both.

Finally, in verse 32, at the end of the vice list, Paul notes that "they not only do them but approve those who practice them." Here is a reminder that among people who were not philosophers, male-with-male sexual relationships not only went largely uncondemned in the ancient world but were sometimes glorified as a stage of love higher than that between man and woman.⁴²

Richard F. Lovelace observes,

Paul's target in Romans 1:26 and 27 is, therefore, not a few

dissolute heterosexual experimenters, but the Gentile culture whose male aristocrats could use women as chattel and child rearers but reserve their most refined erotic passion for other males."⁴³

It may seem logical to a commentator to assume that Paul was a conservative Jew who merely reacted to the Gentile culture around him in typical Jewish fashion. Paul, however, was no reactionary conservative. He was the most liberated of the apostles. He was very accepting of Gentiles and was openly willing to reject Jewish traditions whenever he saw that rejecting them was God's will. The evidence appears to be that no "Pauline privilege" for homosexual activity is to be found in Romans 1:26-28.

Summary

In reference to homosexual activity, Paul employed terms current in his day. The question has been raised as to whether he used the terms according to their Hellenistic or their Hebrew meanings, or less likely, according to unique definitions of his own.

The evidence discussed above leads to the conclusion that under the concept of what is "natural" Paul did not include the modern concept of permanent, constitutional homosexuality. For both Hellenistic Greek and Hebrew thought patterns, homosexuality was considered "unnatural." Likewise, in Romans 1 Paul did not use "unnatural" solely to refer to heterosexuals who break over into homosexual activity. Nor is it probable that Paul used "nature" to refer merely to social convention or local mores, or to the *logos* determinism of Stoicism.

We have argued that Paul used Greek words with Hebrew meanings, a methodology that has been widely recognized for Paul and other New Testament writers. The immediate context in which he used the terms in question was that of a world which God made perfect but which subsequently fell into sin. The book of Romans as a whole demands this broad understanding. Modern commentators who suggest that Paul approved or even permitted homosexual activity must make their case within this broad context. The burden of proof at the moment lies with those who challenge the historic interpretation of Romans 1 rather than with those who uphold it.

The evidence is that Romans 1 does not condone homosexual activity. It condemns it.

Endnotes

- 1 This article is excerpted and revised from Ronald M. Springett, *Homosexuality in History and the Scriptures* (Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1988).
- 2 W. M. Ramsey, *St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904; reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 131.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 138.
- 4 See, e.g., E. A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups in the First Century* (London: Tyndale Press, 1960), pp. 71, 73.
- 5 Robert M. Grant, *Early Christianity and Society* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 11.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, Rockwell Lecture Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 69.
- 8 Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 105.
- 9 New Testament vice lists are found in Matt 15:19; Mk 7:21-22; Rom 1:18-32; 13:13; 1 Cor 5:10-11; 6:9-10; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 4:31; 5:3-7; Col 3:5-9; 1 Tim 1:9-10; 6:4-5; 2 Tim 3:2-5; Tit 3:3; 1 Pet 2:1; 4:3-4; Jude 8:16; and Rev 9:20-21; 21:8; 22:15.
- 10 C. H. Dodd, "The Ethics of the New Testament," in *Moral Principles of Action: Man's Ethical Imperative*, ed. R. N. Anshen (New York: Harper Bros., 1952), pp. 544, 545.
- 11 E. A. Judge, *St. Paul and Classical Society*, p. 32. The extent to which the philosophical vice lists had penetrated the popular consciousness may be seen in Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, trans. L. R. M. Strachan (New York: G. H. Doran Co., 1927), pp. 314-317. Roman game pieces contain all of Paul's vice list in 1 Cor 6:9, 10 except for two words.
- 12 Judge, *St. Paul and Classical Society*, p. 33.
- 13 Burton Scott Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 51 (1932): 2.
- 14 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 2. 1: "Say to thyself at daybreak: I shall come across the busy-body, the thankless, the overbearing, the treacherous, the envious, the unneighborly, all this has befallen them because they know not good from evil."
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 16 Neil J. McEleney, "The Vice Lists of the Pastoral Epistles," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 36 (1974): 218.
- 17 Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," p. 8.
- 18 Derrick Sherwin Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (Hamden, Conn.: The Shoestring Press, 1975), pp. 38, 157.
- 19 H. K. Jones, *Toward a Christian Understanding of the Homosexual* (New York: Association Press, 1966), p. 70.
- 20 R. W. Wood, "Homosexual Behavior in the Bible," *Homophile Studies: One Institute Quarterly*, Winter 1962, p. 16; N. Pittenger, *Time For Consent, a Christian's Approach to Homosexuality* (London: SCM Press, 1976), p. 82.
- 21 Jones, *Toward a Christian Understanding*; also, D. L. Bartlett, "A Biblical Perspective on Homosexuality," in *Homosexuality and the Christian Faith: A Symposium* (Valley Forge, Penna.: Judson Press, 1978), pp. 30, 31.

²² Particularly Plato's view that homosexuality was "unnatural" because animals do not do it.

²³ John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 110, 111; also T. D. Perry, *The Lord is My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay* (Los Angeles: Nash Publishing Co., 1972): 152. J. Robert Wright, "Boswell on Homosexuality: A Case Undemonstrated," *Anglican Theological Review*, 66 (1984): 86, 87, points out that no fewer than twenty-two recent critical commentaries fail to make the distinctions on which Boswell bases his interpretation here. Most of them actually reinforce the opposite point of view.

²⁴ Bartlett, "A Biblical Perspective," p. 39.

²⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale Press, 1969), pp. 81, 82. Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, reports homosexual activity on the part of all the emperors he writes about except one, Claudius.

²⁶ W. G. T. Shedd, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980) p. 25.

²⁷ C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1961) pp. 115 ff.

²⁸ H. C. G. Moule, *The Epistle to Romans* (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1925) p. 49.

²⁹ Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, p. 81.

³⁰ A. C. Geytenbeck, *Musonius Rufus and Greek Diatribe*, trans. B. L. Hijmans Jr. (Assen, Holland: Van Gorcum and Co., 1963), p. 13.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³² Fragment 12. 8-10; Greek text with translation and introduction in C. E. Lutz, *Musonius Rufus, "The Roman Socrates"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947).

³³ Josephus, *Against Apion*, 2. 273, 275.

³⁴ Cicero, *Of the Nature of the Gods*, 1. 14, 15. On Stoic determinism see, e.g., E. Bevan, *Stoics and Skeptics* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), p. 53.

³⁵ Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 9. 1.

³⁶ A. J. Herschbell, "De Virtute Morale (Moralia 523c-528b)" in *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature*, ed. H. D. Betz. = *Studia ad Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti*, vol. 4, ed. H. D. Betz, G. Dellling, W. C. Van Unnik (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), p. 167. For the Stoics to be in agreement with nature was to be in harmony with God. For Paul this would not necessarily be so, for nature too was fallen. Even for the Stoics what is natural for animals is not necessarily natural for man; see Bevan, *Stoics and Skeptics*, p. 55.

³⁷ Cf. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, ed. E. Bethge (New York: Macmillan Co., 1968), p. 146.

³⁸ Robin Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality: Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 110.

³⁹ David Field, *The Homosexual Way: A Christian Option?* (new ed., Bramcote, Notts., England: Grove Books, 1980), p. 16.

⁴⁰ Helmut Thielicke, *The Ethics of Sex*, trans. J. W. Doberstein (Greenwood, S.C.: The Attic Press, 1978), p. 282.

⁴¹ Paul is able to draw fine distinctions at other places in his epistles. We cannot entirely agree with V. P. Furnish, *The Moral Teaching of Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), p. 81, when he says, "To Paul it represented a rebellion against

the Creator and his creation, a surrender to one's lusts, the debasement of one's own true identity and the exploitation of another's. It is no longer possible to share Paul's belief that homosexual conduct always and necessarily involves all these things."

⁴² Ernest Best, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 23.

⁴³ Richard F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1978), p. 92.

BALANCED PREACHING: AVOIDING THE EXTREMES OF LEGALISM AND LICENTIOUSNESS

By C. Raymond Holmes
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When a man in a crowded bus vigorously scratched his head, a fellow passenger, disturbed by his vigor, asked what he was doing. The man answered, "My foot is itching, but I can't get my shoe and sock off to scratch it, so I'm scratching my head instead."

This man's problem was not with methodology, because scratching is a most appropriate response to an itch. But the way in which he went about dealing with his condition did not adequately reflect the reality of the situation. Is it possible that Seventh-day Adventist preachers sometimes, like the man in the bus, "scratch where it doesn't itch"?

The recent commemoration of the 1888 General Conference served to focus attention on the problem of legalism faced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1888. But legalism is not our major problem today. Our major problem today is licentiousness. It seems that some of us have come to the place where we think we can sin with impunity and still consider ourselves justified and redeemed.

Francis Schaefer identifies the contemporary view that all restraints and limits are intrinsically evil as cutting out the moral foundation from human society.¹ If we still believe in the Bible as God's Word, we must acknowledge that Christ sets us free from the forces that would hinder us from living in harmony with God's law. To believe this is one thing, of course; to preach it is another.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once sighed, "How difficult it is to draw

the line with certainty between spiritual wisdom and worldly astuteness!"² As a professor of preaching, I am forced to ask myself whether I am teaching ministers-in-training worldly astuteness and homiletical cleverness rather than how to preach a balanced message of law and grace.

I believe that Seventh-day Adventists don't want preaching to produce dead legalists, people who, resting on their own self-righteousness, cause no end of difficulty for those who seek to move the church to fulfill its mission. On the other hand, we don't want preaching that produces licentious church members who, in their spiritual illiteracy and undisciplined life-style, distort the Biblical model of the Christian disciple.

One way to seek the balance we desire is to pay attention to the homiletical implications of Romans 7 and 8. What follows is a brief comparative summary of these two chapters, intended to demonstrate the necessity of balanced preaching that avoids both legalism and licentiousness.

Romans 7

Romans 7 is basic to the doctrine of man.³ It teaches that human beings are sinners, an insight that has serious implications for preaching. Spiritual awareness of our fallen human condition is lacking unless God reveals our sin. And how does He reveal our sin? Through His law. Paul says,

I would not have known what sin was except through the law. I would not have known what it was to covet if the law had not said, 'Do not covet' (Rom 7:7 NIV).⁴

Was the law the cause of Paul's coveting? Of course not. Instead, "sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment," "produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead" (vs. 8). Paul explains that "when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died" (vs. 9). "Sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death" (vs. 11).

Paul continues, talking about the law, "Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it [the law] produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become

utterly sinful" (vs. 13). The "law is spiritual" Paul observes (vs. 14). When it exposes a person's true condition it does its spiritual work. Sin is a killer, so sin needs to be exposed if there is to be hope of salvation and a new life.

The law makes sinners aware of their true condition for the purpose of persuading them to seek the divine solution. Commenting on Romans 7, Ellen G. White says that after the law did its spiritual work in Paul, Paul's "self-esteem was gone."⁵

Once the law revealed to Paul his true condition, the spiritual warfare began that's described in Romans 7:14-23. Paul realized at last that in his natural condition he was "unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin" (vs. 14), and that because he was what he was, he actually did the very things he hated (see vs. 15). But Paul didn't blame the law. He agreed that it had exposed his sin. He took the position that the recreative spiritual work of the law is "good" (vss. 16, 22).

Furthermore, Paul now understood the devastating truth that by himself he could do nothing to improve his condition: "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing" (vs. 19). And the force behind his contrary behavior was "sin living in me" (vss. 17, 20). He described his inner struggle: "I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members" (vs. 23).

Having reached a critical level of spiritual awareness, Paul became alarmed and cried out, "What a wretched man I am!" (vs. 24). He now understood that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23). Because God's holy and righteous law had accomplished its spiritual work, Paul's desperate need had become apparent to him. Paul the sinner recognized the need for grace and sought it. Then, and only then, was he in a position to hear and understand the gospel, the message of righteousness by grace through faith.

What was the nature of this sin that "killed" Paul, awareness of which made him feel so wretched? It was not lack of self-esteem or a failure to live up to his full human potential. Lack of self-esteem and failure to achieve one's potential are misleading humanistic definitions of sin. God's definition is, "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness [transgression of the law]" (1 Jn 3:4).

Sin is not merely a decision not to love God. It is defiance of God's holy and righteous will. Sin is the cause as well as the result of a break in our relationship with God (Is 59:2). When God's law is broken, the relationship is broken. Because of our sinful, selfish human nature, we are prone to commit sin. And apart from the grace of God, nothing can be done about our condition.

It is true that "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8) and that love is the essence of His character. Yet, because of its holy and just nature, God's love makes demands of Him. It demands, first, that He tell us, supreme objects of His love as we are, the truth about our spiritual lostness and hopelessness. Second, His love demands that He be willing to make the sacrifice required to redeem us from our hopeless lostness. Yet, powerful as His love and grace are, He does not exercise their power to the point of converting us against our will. God does not force His love on anyone.

"God's kindness leads you toward repentance" (Rom 2:4); but who is it that His kindness, operating in the spiritual use of the law, leads to repentance? Is it not those who have received the knowledge of being hopeless sinners? Jesus said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt 9:13 KJV). Thus, is it not a supreme act of God's kindness to help the sinner realize his hopeless condition, repent, and reach out for grace?

Only when sinners want and seek salvation can the love and grace of God save and transform them. God hears those who cry out, "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24). When the law exposed to Paul his sinful condition, guilt, and heartache, Paul didn't ignore what the law told him but faced it squarely and allowed it to bring him to Christ. In his extreme moment of desperation and surrender he turned for rescue to the substitutionary Lamb of God and exclaimed, "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom 7:25). Through the law he was enabled to recognize his need of grace and to turn to the Lord who alone could supply his need.

In discussing the crucial role of God's law in both conversion and sanctification, Ellen G. White has observed that

it is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among His professed people.⁶

Without the preaching of God's law, she said elsewhere, the gospel

loses its value and importance in the minds of men, and soon they are ready practically to cast aside the Bible itself.⁷

Romans 8

Romans 8 is basic to the doctrine of grace and like chapter 7 has serious implications for preaching.

Not only did Paul receive knowledge of sin through the law (Rom 7), but he also received knowledge of God's love and grace through the gospel (Rom 8). He states:

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death (Rom 8:1, 2).

Jesus is the "sin offering" pointed to in verse 3. "The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. . . . The gospel of Christ alone can free [the sinner] from the condemnation or the defilement of sin."⁸ Spiritual knowledge of the divine solution is lacking unless God reveals it, and God reveals it by means of the gospel.

Paul makes it clear that "those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God" (vs. 8). But at the same time there is no question that the redeemed sinner is to live a life that is pleasing to God. Jesus Himself said that it is not enough even to call Him 'Lord'; we must actually obey what He taught.⁹ Just how we are to obey is the thrust of verses 5 through 39. In the same way that the gospel is the antidote for legalism, obedience is the antidote for licentiousness. Salvation results from knowing Jesus Christ as both Saviour and Lord.

Redeemed people have a mind "set on what the Spirit desires" (vs. 5). Sinners who have been saved by grace are no longer controlled "by the sinful nature but by the Spirit" (vs. 9), and "the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (vs. 16). Notice that the redeemed are controlled not by themselves but by the Spirit. The redeemed *are* controlled; they are not independent of divine instruction. Newborn Christians have "an obligation . . . by the Spirit" to "put to death the misdeeds of the body" (vss. 12, 13).

Obedience to God's law does not come merely from a sense of duty but as the consequence of being indwelt by Christ and controlled by the Holy Spirit. The demands of the law are inward demands that call for an inward obedience that the unconverted are incapable of. True inward obedience can come only from the Spirit. It involves participation in spiritual struggle and sharing in the sufferings of Christ in order that "we may also share in his glory" (vs. 17). Thank God, "the Spirit helps us in our weakness" (vs. 26).

Paul's assurance of victory rested on the victory of Christ, on the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and on the heavenly intercession of Christ at the right hand of God (see vss. 32-34). All the resources of heaven are at the disposal of those who have been convicted of sin and have surrendered to the grace of God in Christ.

Paul bore witness not only to a change in his relationship with God but also to the fact that he had been changed inwardly by the power of the gospel. The same person whom the law first revealed as wretched and hopeless was now able to testify that "we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (vs. 37) and that nothing is "able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs. 39).

Speaking about God's law and the sinner's response to that law, Ellen G. White has written:

All who comprehend the spirituality of the law, all who realize its power as a detector of sin, are in just as helpless a condition as is Satan himself, unless they accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who is our atonement—at-one-ment with God.¹⁰

In writing of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the sinner's response to that grace, she says:

When He gives us a bitter draught to drink, He also holds a cup of blessing to our lips. He fills the heart with submission, with joy and peace in believing, and enables us to say submissively, Not my will, but Thy will, O Lord, be done.¹¹

Conclusions Thus Far

The problem with preaching today is less with homiletical method and more with Biblical content. Preachers must be accountable to the teachings of Scripture. If what Paul describes in Romans

7 and 8 is what must happen in order for a sinner to experience salvation, both Romans 7 and 8 need to be preached today.

Because people who don't realize they are sick feel no need for a physician, there can be no spiritual victory without spiritual warfare and no healing without first knowing pain. Such observations should seem axiomatic and self-evident on the basis of our knowledge of the Word of God and of life itself.

Preachers who love God and the hearers of their message will be constrained to tell the truth about the truth—the truth about man and God, about sin and grace, and about the human predicament and the divine solution.

Preaching God's love to those who have not been convicted of sin distorts the Biblical message of salvation. Such preaching can produce a religious experience that is not in harmony with the Scriptures. It ordinarily results in a one-sided relationship, which is a contradiction in terms. There can be no relationship, with God or with anyone else, that is not mutual. God loves us and we are to love Him, demonstrating that love by obeying His Word. Lack of obedience indicates lack of love for Him. Jesus said: "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me" (John 14:23-24).

On Heaven's side of the relationship, God reveals His love by His willingness to give His Son for our redemption. On the sinner's side of the relationship, love is revealed by willingness to surrender our will completely in obedience to God's will. Contemporary preaching often distorts the Biblical message by one-sidedly saying too little about the way redeemed sinners should express their love for God.

Of course, the law must not be preached in a way that misleads unconverted people to believe that they can be saved by keeping the law merely as a religious duty. Such preaching produces self-satisfied legalists. Rather, the law must be preached as the test of human hearts, exercising its spiritual function to bring sinners to conviction of sin and repentance. When repentance is deep and sincere the result will not be legalism, for the way will have been opened

for the gospel of grace to do its spiritual work and convert the sinner to faith in Christ, thus providing assurance of forgiveness.

Conversely, the love of God must not be preached in a way that misleads people to believe there is no judgment and that obedience is not required. Such preaching will produce licentious church members. Faith, assurance, and obedience are the goals of preaching God's love and grace. When faith in Christ is deep and genuine, when sinners recognize the depths of degradation from which they have been rescued by Christ, licentiousness is far less likely to result. The Holy Spirit gives the redeemed sinner an inner yearning to become like Christ, who was obedient to His Father.

Evangelicals have accused Seventh-day Adventists of preaching legalism for so long that we have begun to believe them. In our zeal to avoid the charge of legalism we have been tempted to cast aside God's law homiletically and theologically, preaching only God's love and consequently producing licentious members who know little, and care less, about being disciples of Christ. The preaching of godliness always has been and always will be resented by those who do not want to be godly. The inevitable consequence of preaching easy-believism is licentiousness.

The age in which we are called to preach is not a religious age. Most people today are irreligious and concerned more about present survival than future salvation. Yet, we continue to preach as though people are concerned enough about salvation to try to work their way into heaven. No wonder so few are listening to us, including the children of the church!

A preacher may be gifted with a charismatic personality and may be a master of pleasing words and yet be woefully inadequate as a spokesman for God, if the content of his preaching does not reflect the balance between law and gospel demonstrated in Romans 7 and 8.

Seventh-day Adventists learned from the 1888 experience that preaching God's law apart from righteousness by grace through faith produces legalists. Now we are learning that preaching grace without the law produces licentious church members. Balanced preaching of the law and gospel will produce born-again believers who have experienced freedom in Christ and whose greatest joy is to be His disciples, living obediently in harmony with His will. As

far as life on this side of the resurrection is concerned, salvation by grace constitutes the restoration of the ability to keep God's law without hindrance.

What Is God's Will?

How do we know what God's will is? Where can we find it? At this point our approach to the Bible becomes exceedingly important. In the Bible we find our Saviour presented not only as Redeemer but also as Lord. He exemplifies the nature of the redeemed by His obedient submission to the Father's will. In the Bible we find counsel from God as to how He wants His redeemed people to live and the example of Jesus that shows us how to live.

Society today has no fixed values and standards, but fortunately Seventh-day Adventists are not without fixed values and standards. We have faith in the inspired Word of God; unless, of course, some of us no longer believe the Bible and are individually willing to accommodate ourselves to the prevailing culture.

Inasmuch as culture is produced and shaped by sinful human beings, it is always changing and passing away. But the Word of God abides forever. Because we have what Ellen White refers to as the "unerring standard," the "authoritative, infallible revelation" of God's will, we do not have to surrender to the confusion and amorality that surround us.¹² "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you," wrote the psalmist (Ps 119:11).

Ellen White counsels us,

Let the seeker for truth who accepts the Bible as the inspired Word of God, lay aside every previous idea, and take that Word in its simplicity. He should renounce every sinful practice, and enter the Holy of Holies with heart softened and subdued, ready to listen to what God says.¹³

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was right when he said, to a denomination which had preached justification by grace through faith for 400 years, that

The only man who has the right to say that he has been justified by grace alone is the man who has left all to follow Christ.¹⁴

The cost of discipleship has gone up since 1888 and will climb higher still before the return of the Lord. Contemporary culture has a way of setting the price for Christian believers who wants to

be faithful, and especially now as we prepare for the second coming of our Lord. But,

Amidst the deepening shadows of earth's last great crisis God's light will shine brightest, and the song of hope and trust will be heard in clearest and loftiest strains.¹⁵

If, as this paper assumes, licentiousness is a major problem facing Seventh-day Adventists today, we need to hear more than ever the clear trumpet tones of the law *and* the gospel ringing together from our pulpits. Law and gospel belong together. They must not be separated homiletically or theologically. Yet we must know the difference between them, not confusing them, if we would preach truth correctly. The sad state of preaching today may reflect confusion brought about by the introduction to our ministers of certain Lutheran ideas. Historically, Seventh-day Adventists have understood that justification not only changes the status of the sinner before God but also, when accepted by faith, inwardly transforms the sinner. God does not merely declare forgiveness; through the ministry of the Holy Spirit He also transforms the sinner into Christlikeness. Lutheran theology on the other hand, though it attempts to hold justification and sanctification together, nonetheless sees a strong tension between them. Adventist theology attempts to hold them together too, but in harmony not in tension. In our way of thinking, sinners are justified but sin is never justified.

The proper understanding of the relationship of law and gospel is foundational to homiletical theory and practice. Without it the pulpit is robbed of its power to convict and convert. Law exposes mankind's true condition, and gospel brings new life.

If we preach only grace we succeed in convincing the old nature that it can be comfortable unchanged in the kingdom of God. If we preach only law, we succeed in convincing the old nature that it can make itself acceptable for the kingdom by self-improvement. But as Carl Braaten (with many others) has warned:

Where the Law is not accusing us, there is no consciousness of sin; and where there is no consciousness of sin, there is no need for repentance; and where there is no need for repentance, there is no need for faith; and where there is no need for faith, what's the use of Christ and the gospel?¹⁶

While preaching law alone denies God's mercy, preaching grace alone denies God's justice and judgment. Sinners will always need to hear both the law and the gospel. If we really believe that the Seventh-day Adventist church and its mission stand or fall on the preaching of righteousness by grace through faith, we must preach the law and the gospel in such a way that our hearers can experience genuine salvation.¹⁷ We must "scratch where it itches."

The work the Lord has given to the Seventh-day Adventist church will never be finished if we manage only to increase the ranks of either legalistic or licentious church members. The Lord wants true disciples. We must therefore offer courageously balanced messages that give due stress to both law and gospel, to both Romans 7 and Romans 8.

Endnotes

1 Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1984).

2 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1959), p. 237.

3 This study is based on the premise that Romans 7 speaks of both the pre-conversion and the post-conversion experience.

4 Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *New International Version*.

5 Quoted in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 6:1076.

6 *The Great Controversy*, p. 472.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 461.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 463.

9 See Matt 7:21; cf. Paul Tournier, *Guilt and Grace* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 58: "It is not enough to listen to God. We must obey Him."

10 Quoted in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 6:1077.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 1076, 1077.

12 *The Great Controversy*, pp. v-vii. See also *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 462.

13 *Our High Calling*, p. 207.

14 Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, p. 45.

15 Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 166.

16 Carl Braaten, "Whatever Happened to Law and Gospel?" *Currents In Theology and Mission*, 14 (1987): 116.

17 For an excellent discussion of salvation by grace through faith see John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988). Although MacArthur is a Dispensationalist, much of what he says about salvation agrees with what is believed by conservative Seventh-day Adventists.

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CHRIST, THE KEY TO THEOLOGY

A Sermon by D. A. Delafield
Retired from the General Conference
and the Ellen G. White Estate

When Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus, the Saviour recognized Nathanael even though he had never seen him before. "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee" (John 1:47, 48 KJV). So Jesus first saw Nathanael with the eyes of a Seer rather than with physical eyesight.

Nathanael had listened with rapt attention as John the Baptist preached at the Jordan River. With amazement he had heard John identify the carpenter of Nazareth as "the Lamb of God." But apparently he was not impressed by his first glimpse of Jesus. Perplexed, disappointed, and doubtful, he resorted to the seclusion of a fig tree, and knelt down to pray for light on the matter. How could this humble carpenter from Nazareth be the Messiah?

Now with Philip by his side Nathanael listens as Christ describes accurately his prayer session "under the fig tree." He is startled at Jesus' disclosure. Here certainly is an answer to his prayer for light. He is seized with the conviction that the carpenter is the Messiah after all. "Rabbi," he exclaims, "thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel" (vs. 49).

Jesus' foreknowledge and prophetic vision brought Nathanael to conviction. However, the Savior's disclosures had hardly begun. Because other remarkable revelations were in store for this guile-

less man, Jesus said to him, "Thou shalt see greater things than these" (John 1:50).

Christ pointed Nathanael to Himself as the ladder upon which angels of God ascend and descend—for He is the prime Revealer of God and of the realities and mysteries of heaven and earth. When Dr. Strong wrote the preface to his eighth edition of *Systematic Theology*, first published in 1886, he made this observation,

That Christ is the one and only Revealer of God, in nature, in humanity [p. vii].

Because He had become a dependent human being, Jesus' mind was illuminated by angels and inspired by the Holy Spirit. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:34).

Jesus' revelation to Nathanael was just the beginning of what Nathanael and the other disciples were to learn during the next few years about this amazing young man from the carpenter shop of Nazareth.

How Jesus Received Knowledge from God

As we explore the avenues by which Jesus received knowledge from the Father, we stand in awe. At times, the Saviour was instructed by His Father's audible voice. At least twice the voice that identified Him as Son sounded from heaven, placing the Father's signature on the personal ministry of Jesus and on their inseparable relationship. At His baptism (see Matt 3:17) His Father's voice brought courage to Jesus. Again just before His crucifixion, as recorded in John 12:28, 29, Jesus prayed, "Father, glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him."

Jesus' words in John, chapters 5 through 9, open mysteries concerning the nature of inspiration-revelation in His own life. Our Lord was a Seer as much as Samuel, David, John, or any of the other Bible prophets were. He was shown the heavenly realities in vision. He could truly say "I saw" or "I was shown."

In John 8:38 Jesus said, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father." In verse 28 He added, "I do nothing of myself; but as

my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." In verse 26 He said, "I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." Jesus did only those things He saw or heard the Father do. Because He was dependent upon the Father for His miraculous works and for the wisdom with which He spoke, it must be that He either perceived in mind and heart, or saw in vision, the very acts that God was to perform through Him in His public ministry.

Long before Jesus began to labor in a public way He came to understand how He was to function under specific circumstances. So intimately was Jesus' life and experience intertwined with the Father's that He explained His actions, miracles, teachings, and healings as being the fruitage of the Father's work. Because He made such statements, His enemies sought to kill Him. In John 5 we read about Jesus performing a miracle of healing on the Sabbath day. When He was criticized for Sabbath breaking, He explained that the Father had shown Him what to do. "My Father worketh hitherto," He said, "and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God" (vss. 17, 19).

Jesus responded to their accusations by stating, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do. For what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise, for the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel" (vss. 19, 20).

The Greatest of All the Prophets

Christ occupied the role of prophet, being the greatest of all prophets. Indeed He was "that prophet" foretold by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:18, 19. According to Numbers 12:6, the Lord said to Moses, "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision and will speak unto him in a dream."

It is evident that Christ had visions that enabled Him to see in advance people and events that He would encounter during His ministry. For example, when "his disciples came to Jesus saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?" (Matt 26:17), Jesus sent two disciples to make the

arrangements, explaining that as they went into “the city . . . there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him” (Mark 14:13). Then He described in detail how the man with the pitcher of water would enter a certain house. In that house they would be welcomed by a second man who would show them “a large upper room furnished and prepared” (Mark 14:15). It happened exactly as described in advance by the Lord.

How did Jesus obtain this remarkable knowledge? How do we explain His prescience when He gave two of His disciples directions for finding the “foal of an ass” upon which He was to ride triumphantly into Jerusalem? How do we explain His ability to describe ahead of time the circumstances surrounding their being able to appropriate it for His use?

Also, where did the carpenter obtain the great wisdom expressed in the Sermon on the Mount? Did the Holy Spirit disclose to Jesus in vision the truth so wonderfully disclosed in that sermon—the greatest sermon ever preached?

When the Saviour called the eleven disciples other than Nathanael, did He perceive the character of each in the same way He did Nathanael’s? And did He call each to discipleship in spite of a clear understanding of his faults?

When He peered up into the tree in Jericho to see little Zacchaeus, had He seen him before? Did He know in advance what He would say to the diminutive tax collector?

When Nicodemus, the honored member of the Sanhedrin, visited Him at night seeking the light, did the ruler appear as a stranger to Jesus, or did Jesus know about him beforehand? Did the Saviour understand what He should say to Nicodemus because the Father had previously revealed it to Him?

It is clear that at the well of Sychar Jesus already knew the personal life of the woman He talked to there. He indicated to her that the man she was living with was her paramour and that she already had had five husbands. In amazement she exclaimed, “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet” (John 4:19). When and how had He gained His information?

The Vision in the Wilderness

One of the most illuminating insights into Jesus’ inspiration is given in the Ellen G. White comments in Volume 5 of the

Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary. When the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tested by the forty-day fast and the temptations of Satan, Ellen White says He was shown in vision the great work that He was about to begin for God.

He sought for strength to meet the foe, for the assurance that He would receive grace to carry out all that He had undertaken in behalf of humanity. The thought of the warfare before Him made Him oblivious to all else, and His soul was fed with the bread of life, just as today those tempted souls will be fed who go to God for aid. He ate of the truth which He was to give to the people as having power to deliver them from Satan’s temptations. He saw the breaking of Satan’s power over fallen and tempted ones. He saw Himself healing the sick, comforting the hopeless, cheering the desponding, and preaching the gospel to the poor, doing the work that God had outlined for Him; and He did not realize any sense of hunger until the forty days of His fast were ended.

The vision passed away, and then, with strong craving Christ’s human nature called for food. Now was Satan’s opportunity to make his assault. He resolved to appear as one of the angels of light that had appeared to Christ in His vision [p. 1080].

Ellen White described this communication from heaven in the wilderness as both “the vision” and “His vision.” Jesus could see His future actions being played out ahead of time. He saw Himself healing the sick and preaching the gospel, doing the work that God had outlined for Him.

When the fierce conflict was over, the Saviour left the wilderness to begin His public life, but memories of the vision lingered in His mind. That which had been revealed to Him prepared Him for His public work. The instruction He had received in the visions served Him in good stead. He was prepared for the exigencies of a thousand incidents and interviews.

Spiritual Perceptions Gained at the Moment of Encounter

Christ’s insights were complete. He did not commit Himself to the Jews at the Passover because “He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man” (John 2:24, 25). Doubtless some of His insights were spiritual perceptions gained at the moment of encounter. For example, at the healing of the paralytic in the home of Peter’s mother-in-law, the Pharisees

reasoned in their hearts that Jesus was a blasphemer because He forgave sins. "When Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" (Mark 2:8).

So impressed were Christ's disciples as they observed Him at work that they said, "Now we are sure that thou knowest all things and needest not that any man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou camest forth from God" (John 16:30).

Jesus was pleased that His disciples said they believed in Him, but He was not satisfied that they had a clear understanding; so He asked, "Do you now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:31-33).

The apostle declared, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb 1:1, 2). If in the apostle's time the last days of an old dispensation had arrived and the necessity had arisen for God to address people through His Son, it is equally important, if not more so, that today we should listen to the voice of Jesus as it comes to us through the Bible in the writings of the prophets and apostles. It is also echoed in the writings of Ellen G. White.

The Way to Victory

Ellen White applies the lesson of the trial and the victory which came to Jesus in the wilderness of temptation to us who live in an age of great temptation and great victory:

We may learn that there is no conquest without combat. Remember that this temptation came to Christ immediately after the heavens had been opened, and the Spirit of God, like a dove of burnished gold, had rested on Him. In the wilderness He had had a close communion with God. Then the storm of temptation fell on Him. Is it not thus with us? After the Lord has bestowed upon us the richest blessings, does not some sore trial come to us to darken our souls and cause us to doubt God's goodness? Let us at such times, remember that Christ was tempted in all points like as we are tempted, and that in His

strength we may overcome. Let us by prayer and fasting draw near to God [Letter 159, 1903].

We may not have visions and dreams, we may not hear the audible voice of God, but we have the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to guide us and to show us the way to the life of victory. And we remember that the Spirit of Prophecy is the "testimony of Jesus," the witness of the One who is the Revealer of God and the Key to theology.

SEVEN ENCOURAGING THINGS

A Sermon by C. Mervyn Maxwell
Andrews University

Today is November 18, 1989.

Sabbath, November 18 in the year 1848 fell during the last of those famous 1848 "Sabbath and Sanctuary" conferences, the one that was held in the home of Otis Nichols in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

This particular conference continued into Sunday the 19th; and as the Sunday meeting was beginning, on November 19, Joseph Bates and others fell into a discussion about the identity of the seal of God in Revelation 7:1-3. Soon Ellen G. White was given a vision on the question, showing that the seal of God is Sabbath observance. During the vision she spoke aloud several times. Elder Bates had accustomed himself when at sea to maintaining a running record of events in his ship's log. As this vision progressed, he wrote down anything that Sister White said. Among the statements he recorded is this one:

When that truth [about the Sabbath] arose there was but little light in it, but it has been increasing. . . . It grows in strength . . . [and] it lasts forever when the bible is not needed. . . . O how mighty is that truth; it's the highest after they enter the goodly land, but it will increase till they are made immortal . . . [and] it never sets [Joseph Bates, *A Seal of the Living God*, p. 25].

For those of us who are convinced that Ellen G. White meets the Bible tests for a prophet, here is a basis for reassurance, even for triumphalism! As we step over the threshold of the 1990s and speculation is rife as to the form Adventism will assume in the upcoming decade, we can nail down one datum with confidence: The Sabbath message will keep growing stronger and stronger.

We must candidly admit that some data are not so encouraging. Congregations we know are scarcely growing and some are actually declining. Sabbath attendance in some places seems to be about half the membership even when the children are counted in, whereas thirty years ago attendance usually equaled membership. Some conferences are reducing their pastoral staffs. M.Div. enrollment is down. Influential theologians with apparently escalating effectiveness are siring an Adventism only slightly distinguishable from its cultural environment.

The very genesis of the Adventist Theological Society confirms the observation that our church today is in a crisis.

I worry about such things; but I keep reminding myself that there is much to encourage us! Was it not Elder W. A. Spicer who used to direct our leaders to "cheer everybody on" by choosing to talk about encouraging things?

Encouraging Thing No. 1

For our first Encouraging Thing this morning, let us not forget the vision of November 19, 1848 that we talked about a moment ago, with its promise that *the Sabbath will last forever and will increase until we are made immortal*.

At the same time, let us not forget that "in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. . . . We must be partakers of the righteousness of Christ" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283).

Encouraging Thing No. 2

Here's a second Encouraging Thing, a well-known 1886 statement that appears today in book 2 of *Selected Messages*, p. 380:

Satan will work his miracles to deceive; he will set up his power as supreme. *The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat.* This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony [see Rev 12:11] will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin [see Eph 5:27], without guile in their mouths [see Rev 14:5]. We must be divested of our self-righteousness and arrayed in the righteousness of Christ [emphasis added].

Whenever I read this passage I say to myself, "I want to be among Zion's wheat, not the chaff," and I want to be "arrayed in the righteousness of Christ." Don't you feel the same? "In Christ" we want to be members of this church of His that may seem about to fall but which He will keep from falling. Isn't the church Christ's? Isn't it His body?

Encouraging Thing No. 3

Now for a third Encouraging Thing: *No other church can match the qualifications of end-time prophecy.*

To fulfill Revelation 14:6-12, a church had to arise around 1844 proclaiming the arrival of judgment hour and the fall of Babylon, and soon thereafter had to preach the Sabbath message. According to Revelation 12:17, this same movement had to keep the commandments and have the "testimony of Jesus," which is the "Spirit of Prophecy" (see Rev 19:10).

Any other group that might arise claiming to fulfill prophecy would also have to start with the judgment hour message in the 1840s and the sanctuary message soon afterwards and would also have to preach the Sabbath and cherish the genuine Spirit of Prophecy. In other words, it would have to be so similar to our own God-given movement as to be virtually indistinguishable from it. It would also have to be somewhat imperfect, inasmuch as Jesus said that tares would grow in the church until the harvest.

While we're looking at the three angels' messages, let's remind ourselves incidentally that the third angel is commissioned to carry the 1844 message to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Which reminds us of Matthew 24:14, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, . . . and then shall the end come."

By God's grace and foreknowledge, we are a people of prophecy, fore-seen to be a *triumphant* people of prophecy.

Encouraging Thing No. 4

The message of our *current Sabbath School lessons* provides our fourth Encouraging Thing.

The first wave of Jews had come back from the Babylonian exile with high hopes and expectations—maybe with something of the excitement of East Germans at last getting out into the west.

These Jews enjoyed the full support of the great conqueror King Cyrus and a sizable grant for the rebuilding of the temple.

But things hadn't worked out very well.

The reality of the ruins was worse than the old timers remembered and the younger generation imagined. Times were hard, crops were poor, and any cash the people came by seemed to escape through holes in their money bags. All things considered, it seemed to many that the moment hadn't arrived yet for bothering to build the temple. Materialism and disillusionment led even God's people who had left Babylon to put their own affairs first.

So things progressed, or failed to progress, for almost twenty years. We recall that the Gentiles in the area demanded the right to participate in building the temple on the basis that they were sixth generation God worshipers (or something like that; see Ezra 4:2). When Zerubbabel perceived their worldliness and refused their request, they found new ways to harass the builders, even appealing all the way up to leadership at imperial headquarters.

But the temple got built anyway! After accomplishing practically nothing for 18 years, the Jews at last rose up and finished the job in four years from re-start to final finish.

So what made the difference? The presence of the Spirit of Prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus (cf. 1 Pet 1:11)—and the commitment of church leadership to stepping out by faith in the leadership of the Spirit of Prophecy. As Ezra put it, "Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God, helping them" (Ezra 5:1). The words of Zechariah 4:6-10 are classic:

6. This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord of hosts.

7. "What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain; and he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'"

8. Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying,

9. "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you."

10. "For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel [RSV]."

If this is triumphalism, so be it! God knows we need it.

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong,
Alleluia [William H. Howe, "For All the Saints"].

This history is encouraging to us not only because it reveals how the unchanging God gets things done but also because our modern prophet applied the experience specifically to our day. Said she in commenting on the story of Joshua and Zerubbabel, "Human power and human might did not establish the church of God, and neither can they destroy it" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 595).

Again, commenting on the same events on the same page:

Often men are tempted to falter before the perplexities and obstacles that confront them. But if they will hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end, God will make the way clear. Success will come to them as they struggle against difficulties.

Thus far we've found encouragement in a November 19 vision that the Sabbath would grow not weaker but ever stronger; in our prophet's testimony that the chaff will be sifted out of Zion, but Zion will not fall even though it may appear to be about to fall; in the fact that prophecy clearly points to the triumph of this movement; and in our Sabbath School lessons about Joshua, Zerubbabel, and the way the prophets helped them.

Encouraging Thing No. 5

Our fifth Encouraging Thing is something Jesus said about the wheat and the tares. He said, "Let both grow together until the harvest" (Matt 13:30).

It struck me with new force a few Saturday nights ago that if the tares will grow among the wheat until the harvest, two conclusions are inescapable: (1) we shouldn't be surprised or dismayed by the presence of tares; Christ foresaw them and will take care of them; and (2) if tares are growing among the wheat, there must be wheat growing among the tares! So in our conversations about the church, why not give the good wheat equal time? Let's enjoy the wheat. Let's draw strength from its vigorous spread and rich

maturation. I'll try to develop this thought as we go through Encouraging Things six and seven.

Encouraging Thing No. 6

Our sixth Encouraging Thing is that *God has already brought the church through a number of tare-ible crises* (please excuse the pun; Bible writers often punned when they were the most serious); and as each crisis has passed, the wheat by God's grace has been found to be growing stronger than before, usually much stronger. Let me give you several examples from our denominational experience, benefiting from God's "leading and teaching in our past history."

A. THE CASE OF CASE & RUSSELL, "THE MESSENGER PARTY," AND STEPHENSON & HALL. GROWTH: FROM 1,000 TO 2,000.

In June 1853, H. S. Case and C. P. Russell rejected the sanctuary message, Ellen White's inspiration, and Elder James White's leadership and started a paper called *Messenger of Truth*. When they heard that James White was ill, they rejoiced that he would soon be out of the way. When Elder White read about their joy in their paper, he rose up in bed and declared (with Wycliffe and Psalm 118:17) that he would not die but would outlive them. After two years Ellen White (see *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:123) urged the loyal ministers to preach only the present truth and not expend their energies any longer opposing the *Messenger* party.

The loyal ministers faithfully complied, even though for awhile things seemed actually to get worse. J. M. Stephenson, a leading theological writer in our movement, and another of our ministers called D. P. Hall defected together and soon linked up with Case and Russell. But the loyal ministers persevered in teaching only present truth, and after three years the opposition had melted clear away, and Elder White reported that the *Review* subscription list had doubled from 1000 to 2000.

At its worst, the *Messenger* party seems to have attracted a full third and possibly a half of all our ministers (or "traveling brethren") at the time. It presented a real crisis! But Christ loved His church and not only preserved it through the crisis but prospered it significantly. (For more on this crisis, see *Tell It to the World*, pp. 134-136.)

B.: THE CASE OF SNOOK & BRINKERHOFF AND "THE MARION PARTY"
(1860s).

In 1865, two years after our denomination was organized, the officers of the Iowa Conference—B. F. Snook and W. H. Brinkerhoff—rejected the sanctuary message, Ellen White's visions, and James White's leadership and broke away from the church. Inasmuch as we had only seven conferences at the time, the Iowa defection involved one-seventh of all our conferences. The name "Marion Party" came from the location of its headquarters in Marion, Iowa.

But the crisis didn't last long, and the church continued to advance to better things, while Snook and Brinkerhoff rather abruptly faded away. (For more, see *Tell It to the World*, pp. 136-137.)

C. THE CASE OF D. M. CANRIGHT. GROWTH: FROM 25,000 (1887) TO
175,000 (1919).

Elder D. M. Canright's defection in 1887 is doubly significant in that before it he had been our leading evangelist and after it he wrote stinging books against us which continue to wield influence around the world. His loss might be compared with the departure of a Vandeman, Cleveland, or Brooks.

In 1889, two years after Canright's defection, his *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced* appeared, containing the unhappy prediction (on p. 33) that "without doubt" the Adventist movement would be ruined by "discouragement, divisions, apostacies, infidelity, and ruin to souls."

But under God the Seventh-day Adventist church has not been ruined but instead has marched ahead without Elder Canright. We had about 25,000 members when he left us in 1887—and 175,000 when he died in 1919. (For more, see Carie Johnson, *I Was Canright's Secretary*, and the summary of this book in R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, pp. 464-470.)

Before we leave the 1800s, let's allow ourselves to be encouraged by the good that was happening in our church even during the post-1888 era. That crucial period has been characterized as a time of angry saints, but we should remember that it was also the time when Abram LaRue, a volunteer self-supporting worker, went evangelizing to Hong Kong—and to Shanghai, Japan, Borneo, Java,

Ceylon, Sarawak, Singapore, and even Palestine as well! It was also the time when the indefatigable Stephen Haskell went from New Zealand to do pioneer work in England and later traveled the world seeking mission sites. This was the time when several colporteurs went to India to open our work there on a self-supporting basis; and when George James became our first missionary to non-Christian Africans. To buy his ticket to Africa, James sold everything he owned except his clothes and his violin. In Africa he attracted friendly attention with his "box that could sing." After two years he learned that the church had founded a mission at Solusi and set out at once to meet his brethren. But on the way aboard a little steamer he died of malaria. The captain buried him in an unmarked grave somewhere along the riverbank.

And what we've been saying about the "wheat" in the 1890s we could say about the wheat in almost any decade. During every crisis, God's good wheat has gone right on growing, winning souls, and maturing.

D. THE CASES OF J. H. KELLOGG, M.D. AND THE LIVING TEMPLE, AND
OF A. F. BALLENGER AND THE GATHERING CALL. GROWTH: FROM
80,000 (EARLY 1900s) TO 800,000 (1952).

Dr. J. H. Kellogg had one of the keenest minds this denomination has ever seen. He wrote more than 50 volumes, many of them large; he established the very sizable Battle Creek Sanitarium and helped to found about 30 smaller health institutions; he became famous nationally and internationally; he helped make Ellen White's health reform scientifically respectable. And so on. But over time he became mistrustful of the sanctuary doctrine, Ellen White, and his brethren; he also became increasingly independent of the church and, at the same time, increasingly enamored of his personal concept of pantheism. During the famous seven-hour interview with two elders from the Battle Creek church prior to his disfellowshipping in 1907, Dr. Kellogg stated that he didn't see "anything ahead of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination but *complete wreckage*" as long as the *present leaders* had "hold of the crank."

Our top leaders in 1907 were the President, A. G. Daniells, and the Secretary, W. A. Spicer. Our church counted about 80,000 members when Dr. Kellogg made this dire prediction. By the time (1930) when Daniells and Spicer had both retired, we had about 314,000 members (nearly four times as many as in 1907). By the time Dr.

Kellogg died, we had 550,000 members (nearly seven times as many). By the time Elder Spicer died in 1952, we had 800,000 members, ten times as many as in 1907 when the brilliant Dr. Kellogg faithlessly predicted nothing ahead for this movement but "wreckage."

The Bible says that the wisdom of ordinary men is foolishness with God (see 1 Cor 3:19).

To save time, we'll say nothing further about A. F. Ballenger and will mention only briefly the next few tere-ible crises—

F. THE CASE OF L.R. CONRADI.

G. THE CASE OF VICTOR T. HOUTEFF AND HIS DAVIDIAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS (THE SHEPHERD'S ROD). GROWTH: FROM 350,000 (1930) TO 1,350,000 (EARLY 1960s).

H. THE CASE OF ROBERT BRINSMEAD. GROWTH: FROM 1,500,000 (EARLY 1960S) to 2,800,000 (1970s)

I. THE CASE OF DESMOND FORD.

Even those of us old enough to have lived through the Shepherd's Rod movement and the Brinsmead agitation have almost forgotten how extremely serious a threat each one appeared to be at one time. And we have difficulty recalling the apparent seriousness of the Ford challenge, even though it peaked only a decade ago. The loss of Desmond Ford is one that many of us still feel personally, yet we are led to praise God that even without Ford's wonderful eloquence, the church has marched right on. "Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit, saith the Lord."

J. THE CASE OF CONTEMPORARY LIBERALISM. GROWTH: FROM 2,000,000 (1970) TO 6,500,000 AND CLIMBING.

Crises continue to challenge the Seventh-day Adventist church. One of our current crises is apparently caused by infatuation with "liberal" hermeneutics and by embarrassment over historical Adventist differentness.

Contemporary Seventh-day Adventist liberals continue to honor the Bible, the Sabbath, the second coming, Ellen White, creation, the flood, and even the investigative judgment, and many of them tend to be conservative in their lifestyle, even to practicing vegetarianism and tithing. They are very interested in their denomination.

Their interest in the denomination, however, is focused on

changing it in the direction of the world outside. Inspection reveals further that as a group they favor the Sabbath for celebration but not especially for holiness. They seldom speak of any signs of the second coming. They tend to use Ellen White for devotions rather than for authority. When they speak of the investigative judgment they avoid saying when it began, for they're not sure whether it has begun yet; and 1844 to them is an important date in Adventist history but not for any event in heaven. The Seventh-day Adventist message is the "everlasting gospel" but not "the three angels' messages," and it is certainly not "the truth" but is rather one more good attempt at discovering truth. The creation that they believe in started hundreds of millions of years ago and is still continuing; and Noah's flood was one notable catastrophe in a long string of catastrophes. The Bible is irreplaceable as a source for sermons, but its writers were so conditioned by their contemporary cultures that we have to interpret them very broadly today.

Such "liberal" beliefs obviously sap the vitality out of Seventh-day Adventism for those individuals who choose to believe them, but in spite of the impact of liberalism on North American Adventism, our church keeps growing in other parts of the world under God's rich blessing. Membership was about 2,000,000 when the current liberal movement got under way around 1970. Today, it is more than 6,500,000.

So we take courage from the way God has brought us successfully through each of many crises in our denominational experience.

Encouraging Thing No. 7

Our seventh Encouraging Thing is the observation that *there's a lot of good wheat growing today*, and it's doing wonders by God's Spirit.

Let none of us in the Adventist Theological Society allow our minds to brood on our denomination's North American problems to the neglect of its ongoing worldwide triumphs.

Lance Morrow, in his *Time* essay for Oct. 30, 1989 (p. 100), recalled that

In March 1933, Albert Einstein was visiting the Long Beach campus of the University of California. He and his host from the department of geology walked through the campus, intently discuss-

ing the motions of earthquakes. Suddenly they looked up in puzzlement to see people running out of campus buildings. Einstein and the other scientist had been so busy discussing seismology that they did not notice the earthquake occurring under their feet.

Is it possible that while we theologians mull over our deep anxieties, this movement of ours is speeding ahead to its God-ordained success without our realizing it? Are we entitled to a lot more triumphalism than we allow ourselves to enjoy?

Think for a moment about the number of baptisms being reported. During the Thousand Days of Reaping (1982-1985), do you remember how many were baptized into this message every day? More than 1100!

The goal of baptizing a thousand people in a day was based on the inspired promise in *Evangelism*, p. 693 that "more than a thousand will soon be converted in a day."

I first became aware of this promise in the 1940s. From time to time the back page of the *Review* would announce that ministers in the South American Division were preparing to hold multiple baptisms on a certain day and that they expected, in doing so, to fulfill Ellen G. White's promise of more than a thousand in a day. I remember dwelling on those announcements, thinking that probably Sr. White's promise was for more than a thousand *every* day, but fearing within myself that such a prospect was remote indeed. And now see what has happened! For a thousand days prior to the 1985 General Conference our people baptized more than *one thousand one hundred* every day.

And today our brothers around the world are baptizing more than *one thousand five hundred* every day!

Let us not allow the full impact of this information to escape us, like the earthquake Einstein missed. While you're rejoicing in it, let me ask you how many people our movement was baptizing in 1885 when Sr. White predicted "more than a thousand" in a day?

Only five or six.

Think of it! We were baptizing only five or six persons a day and had a total membership of only about 20,000 members in 1885, when Ellen White made this prediction of more than a thousand in a day. At that time a thousand accretions a day would have represented an "impossible" 5% growth rate per diem!

Now listen to this promise, written in 1905 and printed in *Evangelism*, p. 692: "The time is coming when there will be as many converted in a day as there were on the day of Pentecost."

According to Acts 2:41, the number converted on the day of Pentecost was *three thousand!*

We know that not all who are being baptized these days are truly converted; but many seem to be. It's been my privilege this year to travel to West Africa and also to Hong Kong and China—besides being five times on the west coast and filling appointments in still other places. Many of you have traveled similarly or more.

From personal contacts on these trips I believe there is a wonderfully fine crop of wheat growing in this church today, more good wheat in fact than at any previous time in the history of our movement.

In Nigeria I found our pastors charged with as many as fifteen churches apiece and paid only about half enough to buy their food, yet they are carrying on heroically. Each minister, it seems, has a story to tell about standing firm for the Sabbath, notably during school days in the state-run universities. One told me he chose not to participate in the biology field trips scheduled for Saturdays. After the final examinations the teacher announced that only two students had passed the course, and that he was one of them. Another minister related how one of his teachers became so impressed with his courageous unbending refusal to take an examination on Saturday that the teacher himself became a Seventh-day Adventist.

At our seminary in Nigeria I met a woman in the cafeteria whose husband threatened to drive her out of her home if she chose to be baptized a Seventh-day Adventist. After anguished prayer she chose to serve the Lord, and her husband proved as harsh as his threat. He compelled her to leave behind their four children, one of whom was only two years old, and he promptly married another wife.

Claiming promises like "Thy Maker is thine husband" and "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord," she told me miracles God has worked to help her keep in touch with her children.

She also told me that she has made friends with the second wife and is leading her to the Lord!

Can we find a better Christian even in the Bible?

Our Ile-Ife Hospital has been returned to us. Once the Ile-Ife Adventist hospital was the best medical facility in Nigeria. The government, which assumed ownership of it in the 1960s, has given it back to us stripped of nearly all its equipment. I asked to see the surgical theater and was shown a worn leather surgery bench and a single overhead light. I asked about X-Ray equipment and was assured they had a machine that could still photograph a *few* positions. But the dedication of the staff members was inspiring. I found them eager to make the institution once again a seed-bed for the raising up of churches all over the nation. And the physician, who has a Loma Linda M.D. and a Loma Linda residency in pediatrics in addition to special training in surgery, is delighted to labor there on a salary of \$150.00 a month.

I read many encouraging stories in the *Africa-Indian Ocean Adventist Review*. In one story our zealous laity prepared dozens of people for baptism and then asked believers everywhere to pray for an intensely stormy night. They hoped to hold the baptism in a river at night under circumstances free from the hostile eyes of local authorities. God sent the storm they desired, and in the pelting rain and crashing thunder they conducted an otherwise normal service, except that the deacons and deaconesses didn't hand the newly baptized people towels to dry off with! When the leader called for people to get ready for the next baptism, eager flashlights picked out a good many upraised hands.

Talking about lay soul winners in far away places reminds me that Bill Fagal a few days ago directed my attention to a report from Yerba Buena in southern Mexico, where he once served as a student missionary. The report stated that Antonio Díaz, without any college education, has conducted evangelistic meetings and trained lay soul winners so effectively that in the past 25 years he has been responsible for 15,000 (*fifteen thousand*) baptisms.

Can wheat grow any greener?

Maybe it can! When Pauline and I were visiting our son Stanley in Hong Kong in February we confirmed a story he had reported to us two years earlier while he was serving in Yan Bian University. Stanley has written up the story for *Insight*. It's enough to say here that we have a Seventh-day Adventist Brother Wong in China who

must be entirely composed of "salt" (to shift a moment from our "wheat" metaphor). He's in his eighties now. He was in his fifties when he was first arrested.

Ever since his conversion, Brother Wong has had a deep seated commitment to the Sabbath and to the writings of Ellen G. White, and a delightful custom of asking people if they know his friend Jesus. This custom has helped him lead many people to the Lord, but under the communist regime it landed him in the worst prison in the whole nation. In this prison, Brother Wong found people who desperately needed the Saviour, so he bravely continued his question, "Do you know my friend Jesus?" For his Sabbath keeping and his loving witness, the guards beat and kicked him repeatedly. At one point they hung a very heavy stone around his neck and intermittently whacked his face for *seventeen days and nights*, and then dumped him on a pile of bodies. On another occasion they bound him exceptionally tight and set him outdoors on an intensely cold night, only to find him alive and well in the morning. His knots had been miraculously untied for him.

Brother Wong is home now. He is still alive, still telling people about his Friend, and accumulating letters from former fellow prisoners who thank him for his encouraging ministry.

While we professors worry over theological trends in North America, let's be wonderfully encouraged by the good wheat that is growing all around the world.

We have much reason for optimism—even if church attendance has declined in *some* congregations, *a few* conferences out of hundreds are reducing their ministerial staffs, M.Div. enrollment is *temporarily* down, and influential theologians are *momentarily* siring an Adventism only slightly distinguishable from its cultural environment.

We cite Elder W. A. Spicer again, this time from a 1930 letter to G. B. Starr. In it, like other Seventh-day Adventists of his day, he referred to our message as "the truth"—

It is a fine thing, this work of God. It is as true as truth itself. There is one little creed I do believe in, and that is the truth is true. It will stand against the world. Years ago when before things broke open I knew privately that men like Dr. Kellogg and A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner were going to probably line up against the truth, I felt weak in the knees. It seemed as though we would have a terrible time to

answer them. But I ran across that text in Jeremiah, 'O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth?' [Jer 5:3 KJV] You know, that settled the whole business and I stopped worrying. It was a good thing I did, for what is the use of our trying to carry the load that only God can carry? He will keep His eye on the truth. It is ours to push along and bear witness to it" [quoted in Godfrey T. Anderson, *Spicer: Leader with the Common Touch*, p. 79].

Yes, God brought our church and its message triumphantly through the Kellogg crisis—and through all our other past crises.

Jesus said there would always be tares among the wheat and, conversely, wheat among the tares; so we shouldn't be surprised by the tares, or overlook the splendid wheat that is growing right now among the tares.

Our Sabbath School lessons in Zechariah have reminded us that it is "not by might nor by power but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." Human power didn't establish the church—and human power will never be able to destroy it.

In 1886 Ellen G. White was inspired with the promise that Zion might seem about to fall, but that it wouldn't fall; only the chaff would be sifted out from among the wheat.

And on the 1848 equivalent of this Nov. 18-19 weekend, years ago, the Lord's special messenger to this movement was shown that the Sabbath message, far from faltering or fading away, would increase and grow brighter until Jesus comes, and after that, throughout eternity.

When that truth [about the Sabbath] arose there was but little light in it, but it has been increasing. . . . It grows in strength . . . [and] it lasts forever when the bible is not needed. . . . O how mighty is that truth; it's the highest after they enter the goodly land, but it will increase till they are made immortal . . . [and] it never sets.

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THE LAST DAYS

By Ellen G. White

A Book Preview by the Editor

Leo R. Van Dolson

Since we retired, my wife, Bobbie Jane, and I have been working part time for the Ellen G. White Estate. One of our most fascinating assignments has been to prepare a compilation of the Ellen G. White writings on final events.

This project was begun by Donald Mansell several years ago when he served on the staff of the White Estate. He launched a thorough review of the manuscripts in the vaults in Washington, searching for everything available that Ellen G. White had written about the last days. When Don left the White Estate, Gerard Damsteegt was assigned to organize into book form the materials that Don had spent so much time and effort collecting.

By the time of our retirement, Gerard had relocated at Andrews University, and so we were asked to put the materials into final form for publication. How amazed we were when, soon after our arrival in Kennebunkport, Maine, the United Parcel Service delivered four large cartons containing 27 thick notebooks full of copied originals and retyped Ellen White manuscripts that Don and Gerard had assembled.

It is our understanding that approximately 80 percent of this material has never been published. What a blessing we have received as we have worked through the manuscripts, arranging and editing selections for publication!

We have narrowed the exciting materials to 267 pages of single-spaced typed manuscript. As of the present date, the Pacific Press still

needs a few months to get the material published, but we have been given permission by the White Estate to share with the readers of the JOURNAL some of the gems we came across. My two most notable favorites were these:

The Practical Significance of the Investigative Judgment. We should be astonished at our own indifference when we should be all life and vivacity [if we] could see the work that is going on in heaven. Here is the work of our Intercessor.

The great antitypical day of atonement and the work of judgment is going on with the dead, and how soon will it begin with the living? When every one of our cases will pass in review before God? And let it be understood by you that, if you do not [do] the work that God has given you, you will be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary and found wanting. To us who have this hope and faith it is a dangerous thing to be putting off the day of God.

A living church is a working church and a working church is a living church. We must educate ourselves to be thinking and dwelling upon the great scenes of the judgment just before us; and then, as we keep the scenes of the great day of God before us when everything will be revealed, it will have an effect upon our character. One brother said to me, "Sister White, do you think the Lord will come in ten years?"

"What difference does it make to you whether He shall come in two, four, or ten years?"

"Why," he said, "I think I would do differently in some things than I now do if I knew the Lord was to come in ten years."

"What would you do?" I asked.

"Why," he said, "I would sell my property and begin to search the Word of God and try to warn the people and get them to prepare for His coming, and I would plead with God that I might be ready to meet Him."

Then I said, "If you knew that the Lord was not coming for twenty years, you would live differently?"

He answered, "I think I would."

Then I said, "You know your Master's will, and it is your duty to do just as though you knew that He was coming in [ten] years."

I opened the Scriptures and read to him . . . and he was convicted that he should change his course, and he did change his course of action. . . . How selfish was the expression that he would live a different life if he knew his Lord was to come in ten years! Why, Enoch walked with God 300 years. This is a lesson for us that we shall walk with God every day, and we are not safe unless we are waiting and watching. We must have an eye single to God's glory.—Manuscript 10, 1886 ("Preparation for Christ's Coming," July 23, 1886).

The Bright Home of the Saints. The bright home of the saints was presented vividly before me. . . . I seemed to be there, where all was peace, where no stormy conflicts of earth could ever come. Heaven, a kingdom of righteousness where all the holy and pure and blest are congregated . . . living and walking in happy, pure intimacy, praising God and the Lamb who sitteth on the throne. Their voices [are] in perfect harmony. They never do each other wrong. Princes of heaven, the potentates of this mighty realm, are rivals only in good; seeking the happiness and joy of each other. The greatest there is least in self-esteem, and the least is greatest in his gratitude and wealth of love.

There are no dark errors to cloud the intellect. Truth and knowledge, clear, strong, and perfect, have chased every doubt away, and no gloom of doubt casts its baleful shadow upon its happy inhabitants. No voices of contention mar the sweet and perfect peace of heaven. Its inhabitants know no sorrow, no grief, no tears. All is in perfect harmony, in perfect order and perfect bliss. . . .

Heaven, sweet heaven, the saints' eternal home, the abode for the toilers, where the weary who have borne the heavy burdens through life find rest, peace, and joy. They sowed in tears, they reap with joy and triumph. Heaven is a home where sympathy is alive in every heart, expressed in every look. Love reigns there.—Letter 30, 1882 (To G. I. Butler, summer 1882).

Other Selections

The manuscript as submitted contains 27 chapters, divided into four sections. The selections that follow have been chosen from these four sections and are arranged under the section titles.

Section 1: The Conditions Surrounding the Advent

The Last Scenes of This Earth's History. In the last scenes of this earth's history, war will rage. There will be pestilence, plague, and famine. The waters of the great deep will overflow their boundaries. Property and life will be destroyed by fire and flood. Disasters will come unexpectedly upon the world. This should show us that the souls for whom Christ has died should be fitting up for the mansions that He has gone to prepare for them. There is a rest from earth's conflict. Where is it? "That where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). Heaven is where Christ is. Heaven would not be heaven to those who love Christ, if He were not there.—Manuscript 41, 1896 ("Words of Christ").

Human Theories Designed to Undermine Confidence in the Adventist Message. The world's opinion will oppose the very work that must be done in order that the safety of the flock of God shall not be imperiled. The fact that men . . . are imperiled by the sophistries that are coming in . . . shows that a power from beneath is making its imprint on human minds. Every movement made now is to be carefully guarded, for the forces of Satan have minds under their control, and will strive through them to unsettle faith in the experience of the past, which bears the signature of heaven. The delusive influences working upon human minds are of a character to unsettle the faith of the people of God in the experience of the past, which has borne the signature of heaven . . . [and] in the testimonies which the Lord has given His people. . . .

History is being repeated. The perils that God's people encountered in past ages . . . will be encountered again, intensified. . . . Unless we give the most earnest heed to the Word of God, human minds will work up theories according to their own deficient practices . . . and will misrepresent and misapply a "Thus saith the Lord." A departure from the great principles Christ has laid down in His teachings, a working out of human projects, using the Scriptures to justify a wrong course of action under the perverse working of Lucifer, will confirm men in misunderstanding, and the truth that they need to keep them from wrong practices will leak out of the soul like water from a leaky vessel.—Manuscript 5, 1904 (Diary, Jan. 20, 1904).

Apostasy and Shaking in the Church. Many will stand in our

pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan. If doubts and unbelief are cherished, the faithful ministers will be removed from the people who think they know so much. . . .

God himself will work for Israel. Every lying tongue shall be silenced. Angel hands shall overthrow the deceptive schemes that have been formed. The bulwarks of Satan will never triumph. Victory will attend the third angel's message. As the Captain of the Lord's host tore down the walls of Jericho, so will the Lord's commandment-keeping people triumph, and all opposing elements be defeated. . . .

Some will go out from among us who will bear the ark no longer. But these cannot make walls to obstruct the truth, for it will go onward and upward to the end.—Manuscript 92, 1897 ("God's Messengers," Aug. 12, 1897).

How Sabbath Keepers Are to Deal with Sunday Laws. To defy the Sunday laws will but strengthen in their persecution the religious zealots who are seeking to enforce them. Give them no occasion to call you lawbreakers. . . . Keep right on with your [missionary] work, with your Bibles in your hands, and the enemy will see that he has worsted his own cause.

One does not receive the mark of the beast because he shows that he realizes the wisdom of keeping the peace by refraining from work that gives offense, doing at the same time a work of the highest importance. . . . Whenever it is possible, let religious services be held on Sunday. Make these meetings intensely interesting. Sing genuine revival hymns, and speak with power and assurance of the Saviour's love. Speak on temperance and on true religious experience. You will thus learn much about how to work, and will reach many souls.

Make no demonstrations on Sunday in defiance of law. . . . We can use Sunday as a day on which to carry forward work that will tell on the side of Christ. We are to do our best, working with all meekness and lowliness.—Letter 132, 1902 (To A. G. Daniells and G. A. Irwin, Aug. 17, 1902).

Section 2: The Proclamation of the Adventist Message

Focus on the Message. Be sure, when you go out to teach others

not to get your minds upon little things, but keep your mind upon the great work of God for Satan will surely turn you off if possible. Do not try to be original and get up something you have not heard your brethren speak of, for many have been shipwrecked in this way. Keep the mind upon the third angel's message. When you keep this before the minds of the people they will see wisdom in it. But when you get a great many little trifling things before them they become confused just like the Jews. What we want to do is to get the truth before the people.—Manuscript 91, 1886 ("Morning Talk," Sept. 21, 1886).

The Certainty of Eternal Life. If I know my own heart, it is to do the will of God to the very letter. I am willing to be a pilgrim and a stranger here, for I am seeking a city whose builder and maker is God. It is only a little while that we shall have to work, and we want to do our work with diligence. We want to make sure of eternal life. We do not want to follow our inclinations or our pleasure, but just do the will of God and wait for His salvation and the final reward. I have peace and joy in my Saviour. I am looking to the great beyond, and, if the Master says "Well done," I shall be entirely satisfied. I love Jesus. I love to do His will. I ask not position or honor or ease or convenience. I want to labor together with God, practicing self-denial and self-sacrifice, and be a partaker with Christ of His sufferings [in order] that I may be a partaker with Him of His glory.—Letter 62, 1886 (To J. H. Kellogg, ca. Aug. 2, 1886).

This Is No Time to Haul Down Our Colors. The Sabbath is God's memorial of His creative work, and it is a sign that is to be kept before the world. There is to be no compromise with those who are worshipping an idol Sabbath. We are not to spend our time in controversy with those who know the truth, and upon whom the light of truth has been shining, when they turn away their ear from the truth to turn to fables.

I was told that men will employ every policy to make less prominent the difference between the faith of Seventh-day Adventists and those who observe the first day of the week. In this controversy the whole world will be engaged, and the time is short. This is no time to haul down our colors.

A company was presented before me, under the name of Seventh-

day Adventists, who were advising that the banner or sign which makes us a distinctive people should not be held out so strikingly, for they claimed it was not the best policy in securing success to our institutions. This distinctive banner is to be borne through the world to the close of probation.—Manuscript 15, 1896 ("Revelation," Mar. 27, 1896).

Fearful Perils Will Face the Leaders of God's Cause. Fearful perils are before those who bear responsibilities in the cause of God, perils the thought of which make me tremble. But the word comes, "My hand is upon the wheel, and I will not allow men to control My work for these last days. My hand is turning the wheel, and My providence will continue to work out the divine plans, irrespective of human inventions." Men's plans will be overthrown and the Lord God of heaven will reveal His glory.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit will work out Heaven's law. These three great Powers have pledged themselves to bring to naught the inventions of idolatrous minds. They have put the infinite treasures of heaven at the command of God's struggling people. [God says,] "As the wheel is turned by a divine hand, the philosophy of the wisest men who are working contrary to My purposes will become intricate and confused." . . .

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with, but let us not forget that the three great Powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His purposes to pass.—Manuscript 118, 1902 ("Christ's Method of Imparting Truth," Oct. 6, 1902).

Section 3: Dangers Facing God's People

When Will the End Come? There must be no concealing of the principles of our faith. The third angel's message is to be sounded by God's people. It is to swell to the loud cry. The Lord has a time appointed when He will bind off the work. But when is that time? When the truth to be proclaimed for these last days shall go forth as a witness to all nations, then shall the end come. If the power of Satan can come into the very temple of God and manipulate things as he pleases, the time of preparation will be prolonged.—Letter 83, 1896 (To O. A. Olsen, May 22, 1896).

Good and Evil Angels Will Appear on Earth as Human Beings. Satan will use every opportunity to seduce men from their allegiance to God. He and the angels who fell with him will appear on the earth as men, seeking to deceive. God's angels also will appear as men, and will use every means in their power to defeat the purposes of the enemy. We too have a part to act. We shall surely be overcome unless we fight manfully the battles of the Lord.—Letter 83, 1903 (To H. W. Kellogg, May 13, 1903).

Undermining the Testimonies and Foundations. We met a very intelligent young man [in Norwich, Mass.] . . . who is altogether filled with the idea that no one is quite as smart as himself. He has been studying up the messages in Revelation and he thinks he has discovered wonderful light. But is it that "wonderful light" that will flash forth all along the pathway till the end of time [or is it] the theory that tears away and takes the vitals out of all the past experience in the messages? To see such a youth, of a babe's experience, turning away [from] the pillars of our faith seems just terrible. . . .

The enemy has made his masterly efforts to unsettle the faith of our own people in the testimonies, and when these errors come in they claim to prove all the positions by the Bible, but they misinterpret the Scriptures. They make bold assertions . . . and misapply the prophecies of the Scriptures to prove falsehood. And after men have done their work of weakening the confidence of our churches in the testimonies, they have torn away the barrier [in order] that unbelief in the truth shall become widespread and there is no voice to be lifted up to stay the force of error. This is just as Satan designed it should be, and those who have been preparing the way for the people to pay no heed to the warnings and reproofs of the testimonies of the Spirit of God will see that a tide of errors of all kinds will spring into life. They will claim Scripture as their evidence and deceptions of Satan in every form will prevail.—Letter 109, 1890 (To W. C. White, and J. E. White and wife, Dec. 6, 1890).

Section 4: Preparation for the Second Advent

Jesus Does Not Change Our Characters at the Second Advent. If you would be a saint in heaven you must first be a saint on

earth. The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection. You will come up from the grave with the same disposition you manifested in your home and in society. Jesus does not change the character at His coming. The work of transformation must be done now. Our daily lives are determining our destiny. Defects of character must be repented of and overcome through the graces of Christ and a symmetrical character must be formed while in this probationary state that we may be fitted for the mansions above.—Letter 18b, 1891 (To Bro. and S. Kynett, Feb. 15, 1891).

Temptations Stronger Near the End. As we near the end, temptations will be stronger and more seductive, but we need not yield to them, we need not open the door of the heart and invite Satan to enter. There is no power in earth or hell [strong enough] to compel . . . you to sin and dishonor your holy faith.—Letter 18b, 1891. (To Bro. and S. Kynett, Feb. 15, 1891).

Believers in Ellen G. White's Inspiration Will Be Safe From Heresies, Especially Those Concerning the Sanctuary. Men may get up scheme after scheme and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth, but all who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White, and has given her a message, will be safe from the many delusions that will come in these last days.

I know that the sanctuary question stands in righteousness and truth just as we have held it for so many years. It is the enemy that leads minds off on sidetracks. He is pleased when those who know the truth become engrossed in collecting Scriptures to pile up around erroneous theories which have no foundation in truth.—Letter 50, 1906 (To W. W. Simpson, Jan. 30, 1906).

Preparation for What Is Coming. The perils of the last days are upon us and, at this time, we are each determining what our destiny for eternity shall be. Individually we are to form characters that will stand the test of the judgment. Individually we are to give in the church where we are an example of faithfulness and consecration. The ministry of the Word is designed to prepare a people to stand in the times of temptation in which we live. . . .

There has been revealed to me the grave dangers we shall meet in these last days of peril and temptation. Our only reliable light and

guide for this time is the Word of God. We must take this Word as our Counselor and faithfully follow its instructions or we shall find that we are being controlled by our own peculiar traits of character and our lives will reveal a selfish work that will be a hindrance and not a blessing to our fellow men.—Manuscript 61, 1909 (“Words of Instruction,” Sept. 17, 1909).

History is being repeated. The perils that God's people encountered in past ages . . . will be encountered again, intensified. . . Unless we give the most earnest heed to the Word of God, human minds will work up theories according to their own deficient practices . . . and will misrepresent and misapply a “Thus saith the Lord.” A departure from the great principles Christ has laid down in His teachings, a working out of human projects, using the Scriptures to justify a wrong course of action under the perverse working of Lucifer, will confirm men in misunderstanding, and the truth that they need to keep them from wrong practices will leak out of the soul like water from a leaky vessel.—Ellen G. White, Manuscript 5, 1904 (Diary, Jan. 20, 1904).