

# THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS: MYTH OR HISTORICAL REALITY?

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## The Significance of Christ's Resurrection

The reality of the resurrection of Jesus is the touchstone of Christianity. An internationally recognized scholar has stated incisively that the resurrection of Jesus is "absolutely decisive for any Christian proclamation and for the Christian faith itself."<sup>1</sup> Another world-class theologian has summarized it in a single sentence, "Christianity stands or falls with the reality of the rising of Jesus from the dead by God."<sup>2</sup> Any informed reader of the NT will agree with these two summary assessments regarding the significance of the resurrection of Jesus for Christian faith. However, it may come as a surprise, even a shock, to find that neither of these world-class theologians accepts Jesus' bodily resurrection! Later in this essay we will discuss in some detail why these and other liberal theologians reject a bodily resurrection of the Lord.

**Foundation for Faith and Preaching.** The apostle Paul states unambiguously and with unabashed directness, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain" (1 Cor 15:14, NASB). The term "vain" is not familiar to many modern readers. The NKJV, therefore, reads, "If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty." The REB (Revised English Bible) puts it in more colloquial language, "And if Christ was not raised, then our gospel is null and void, and so too is your faith." The NIV uses the term "useless" as a substitute for the term "vain."

Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ of such decisive significance? Without the resurrection of Jesus our preaching, our

gospel, and our faith is "vain," is "empty," "useless," or "null and void." This key sentence in the apostle Paul's resurrection chapter (1 Cor 15) reaffirms the centrality of the resurrection of Jesus for Christian faith and proclamation. Genuine Christian faith and preaching has no foundation, no focus, no assurance, no guarantee, and no certainty without the factuality of the physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Foundation of the Believer's Salvation.** Romans 10:9 affirms, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved" (NASB). The confession of the lordship of Jesus and the belief in the heart (mind) that the Father raised Him from the dead go hand in hand. Thus, Jesus' lordship and His resurrection from the dead are two essentials foundational to the believer's salvation. Christian faith without the resurrection reality can, therefore, be neither genuinely Christian nor will it be saving faith.

**Foundation of Christianity's Uniqueness.** The uniqueness of Christianity over against all other world religions is manifested in the resurrection of Jesus, aside from other miraculous events. One prominent evangelical author writes, "The incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the events which distinguish Christianity from Mohammedanism and Judaism,"<sup>3</sup> and, we may add, from any other world religion.

Another widely read contemporary evangelical theologian sums up major connections and guarantees provided in Jesus' resurrection in the following quotation:

Christianity is like no other faith on earth, . . . Whether you compare Christianity with Judaism or Islam, its hostile half-brothers, or with Hinduism and its atheistic child Buddhism, or with Taoism or state Shintoism or any type of polytheism, or with any other religion that humanity has developed, the basic contrast is invariably the same. . . for they all ring changes on the theme of self-salvation. When Christians are asked to make good their claim that [Christianity is different] . . . , they point to Jesus' Resurrection. The Easter [that is, resurrection] event . . . demonstrated Jesus' deity; validated his teaching; attested the completion of his work of atonement for sin; confirms his present cosmic dominion and his coming reappearance as Judge; . . . and guarantees each believer's own reembodiment by Resurrection in the world to come.<sup>4</sup>

Christianity without the resurrection of Jesus is unthinkable. However, a major debate has waged for decades in the liberal tradition of modern theology about the reality and meaning of the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>5</sup> In the last few years the debate about the bodily resurrection of Jesus has entered the evangelical world as is indicated by a recent volume, *The Battle for the Resurrection* (1989), written by Norman L. Geisler.<sup>6</sup>

**Reality of the Resurrection Questioned.** The literature on the subject of the resurrection of Jesus is vast. The computerized list of the *ATLA Religion Index* provides more than 660 entries.<sup>7</sup> More than fifty major books have been published in the last four to five decades.<sup>8</sup> This vast amount of material, with its array of divergent opinions, reveals that the subject remains a current concern.

The passion and intensity with which the resurrection of Jesus is debated is revealed in several titles. Eduard Schweizer, professor at the University of Zurich, entitles his essay, "Resurrection - Fact or Fiction?"<sup>9</sup> Another scholar uses the title, "How Historical is the Resurrection?"<sup>10</sup> indicating that the historicity, facticity and actual event-happening of the resurrection is a major issue. One essay has the heading, "The Resurrection of Christ: Myth or History?"<sup>11</sup> These titles briefly indicate that the resurrection of Jesus has become a major problem in modernity with its secular, rationalistic mindset.

A key issue in the ongoing debate is whether Jesus actually rose in bodily form, in a truly physical manner. Did Jesus really come out of the tomb with a resurrection body? Was there an empty tomb to begin with? What about the claim that Jesus was raised only in the minds of the disciples? That is, was His resurrection a psychological resurrection of some sort based on hallucinations or other visionary experiences?

Was the resurrection an event in the faith of the disciples but not an event in actual history? Was it a faith resurrection which "took place" in the belief system or the kerygma (preaching) of the immediate followers of Jesus? Was it an experience in the mind and thinking of those who claimed to have seen Him? Is the "seeing" with the intellectual eye of the mental processes of the brain but not with the physical eye that perceives a material reality? These

questions, aside from others, indicate the direction in which the discussion at large is developing today.

Informed Christians cannot avoid becoming knowledgeable on major views in existence today regarding the resurrection of Jesus. They may insist that their denominational statements of faith are sufficiently precise on this matter so as to avoid confusion or to give in to accommodations of liberal, non-biblical views on this matter.<sup>12</sup>

**Resurrection Reality Clashes with Modernistic World Views.** Major thinkers in Christianity at large no longer accept the resurrection of Jesus as having happened in the way the NT describes it. These persons engage in massive reinterpretations of NT data in order to bring it into harmony with certain presupposed modernistic "scientific" world views.

The axiom of such a world view in liberal theology is summed up by the liberal theologian Jürgen Moltmann: "Faith does not depend on the Bible's world view but rather liberates reason to its own reasonableness. That includes the application of the historical[*-critical*] sciences to the Bible and to church dogma."<sup>13</sup> In this precisely worded claim an authoritative, modernistic, "scientific" world view superimposes itself on Christian faith and the Bible. Accordingly, the Bible must be reinterpreted to fit into this presupposed "scientific" world view. Unfortunately, exegesis (that is, a reading out of the text) becomes in this approach eisegesis (that is, a reading into the text) of something which the biblical text does not hold on its own terms.

**Resurrection Reality Bound up with the Reality of the Second Coming.** The Advent movement with its universal mission of proclaiming the "eternal gospel" (Rev 14:6-12) has as its focus a real and near return of Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven. This end time message, of course, does not fit into the modernistic "scientific" world view either. But it is based on the Bible's own divinely revealed world view.

The Three Angels' Message would be shaken to its very foundations, if the modernistic "scientific" world view were superimposed on Scripture. It would have to be reinterpreted in a massive way, and in its very essence, if a physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus has never taken place. How could Jesus Christ return in

reality and in fact on the clouds of heaven as a real Being and take His own home, if He has not been raised bodily from the dead?

In the face of these challenges to the essence of biblical faith, it is a mandate to return to Holy Scripture. Its words on this vital subject must have renewed impact on what believers will accept as their faith today, in the time of the end. Their faith must be a genuine biblical faith, a faith based on Scripture and grounded firmly in the Word of God.

In this essay we will first survey several modern views on the resurrection of Jesus. Following the survey, we will investigate the major NT records which shape and affirm the Christian faith in the resurrection of Jesus. In conclusion we will highlight briefly the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ for the church and the believer.

### Major Modern Views

Twentieth century scholars—for reasons based in essence on a non-negotiable, modernistic "scientific" world view—have taken contradictory positions on the facticity and historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. It is important to provide a sampling of representative views without being exhaustive. Our discussion will include: (1) Undergirding assumptions based on conceptions of reality and world views; (2) Presuppositions which are part of the historical method employed; (3) Subtlety of argumentation and language used in new proposals; (4) Changes implied for the Christian faith; and (5) The acculturation of the gospel message to various modern forms of thinking.

**"Swoon Theory": Jesus Taken from the Cross Alive.** The volume by the British scholar J. Duncan M. Derrett,<sup>14</sup> *The Anastasis. The Resurrection of Jesus as an Historical Event*,<sup>15</sup> published in 1982, gives renewed support to the old hypothesis that Jesus did not really die on the cross but merely "swooned." Jesus was, according to the "swoon theory," overcome by physical exhaustion and fainted on the cross, giving the appearance of being dead. He was mistakenly taken down as dead, but in the coolness of the tomb He revived and lived another forty days before He expired.

Derrett argues that the Greek terms *anastasis/anasthenai*, "resurrection/raised," mean the "revival of a person" but do not

refer to the resurrection of a dead person. In order to avoid the counter argument based on the term *egerthenai*, "to rise up, to be raised,"<sup>16</sup> he argues that this term expresses a manipulative action of the disciples to raise Jesus up from his fainted condition, but does not reflect the fact of a physical resurrection.

Hugh J. Schonfield also defends in his book, *The Passover Plot*,<sup>17</sup> the "swoon theory." Jesus plotted with Joseph of Arimathea to arrange for his death and the "resurrection." When Jesus cried out "I thirst," it was a signal for a servant of Joseph of Arimathea to administer to Him a powerful drug on a sponge, which caused a death-like state; but Jesus was not dead. He was laid in a tomb where He came to himself. Thus, Jesus plotted His "resurrection" by being revived in the tomb from the drug and rejoined His disciples subsequently.

It can hardly be expected that Schonfield would find many followers with this "highly imaginative piece of fiction which runs entirely contrary to the witness of the gospels,"<sup>18</sup> not to speak of the witness of the apostle Paul.

Derrett and Schonfield, each in their own way, revive the old "swoon theory" propounded extensively by rationalists on the Continent.<sup>19</sup> In 1828 the German rationalist H. E. G. Paulus<sup>20</sup> claimed that Jesus was taken down from the cross in an apparently dead state, but still alive, living for another forty days before He died. Jesus was revived by the coolness in the tomb and the aromatic spices and could leave the tomb because the earthquake had moved the rolling stone.<sup>21</sup>

The Greek terms<sup>22</sup> employed in the NT to describe the resurrection cannot be bent in meaning so as to give credence to the "swoon theory." The Greek terms for "resurrection" means just that and do not mean the revivication, resuscitation, "revival of a person," or the like.

The "swoon theory" is old, as we have seen, but it still commands some following today. Although no longer widely supported in the second half of the twentieth century, it is still alive.

**"Myth" Theory: Resurrection by Proclamation.** Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976), "one of the twentieth century's most influential theologians,"<sup>23</sup> who has dominated NT scholarship in much of this century, and who is known for his demythologization

program<sup>24</sup> has been a strong opponent to the factual, historical and bodily resurrection of Jesus.

Bultmann recognizes that "the resurrection of Jesus is often used in the New Testament as a miraculous proof."<sup>25</sup> Does this mean that the miraculous resurrection is a proof for Bultmann? No, it does not. Bultmann's modernistic "scientific" world view includes the presupposition of a "closed continuum" of natural causes and effects in history. It is a given that the "cause-effect" continuum on which modern historiography is based cannot be broken by a miracle.<sup>26</sup> Bultmann's acceptance of this presupposition makes it impossible for him (and all other modern scholars who think likewise) to accept a physical resurrection of Jesus, despite his recognition that this is what the NT claims on its own terms.

Bultmann concedes regarding Acts 17:31, which states that God "having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (NASB), that "here [in Acts 17:31] we are actually told that God substantiated the claims of Christ by raising him from the dead."<sup>27</sup> Can Bultmann accept this divine substantiation, or "proof," as valid and authoritative for believers in the twentieth century? Bultmann answers in the negative.

In fact, he chides the apostle Paul for calling on eye-witnesses as evidence for the resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor 15). Bultmann terms this eye-witness proof a "fatal argument"<sup>28</sup> on the part of the apostle. It is "fatal" in Bultmann's view because faith (as defined by him) is an existential decision which cannot have any support in historical fact. Bultmann's existentialist interpretation of faith is the issue here, not what the NT claims.

The apostle Paul shows it to be otherwise. He calls on eye-witnesses to show that the resurrection of Jesus was an event in time and place, quite different from faith in Jesus as Bultmann understands it. For Paul, and the early church from whom his information derives (1 Cor 15:3-8), the resurrection faith is based on Jesus' actual resurrection which a long series of eye-witnesses have attested. Most are still alive and could be questioned regarding this reality.

At the end of Bultmann's argument—and after he has spoken of "the legend of the empty tomb"—he concludes, "An historical fact which involves a resurrection from the dead is utterly inconceiv-

able!"<sup>29</sup> It is inconceivable on the part of Bultmann because he follows the presupposition of modern historiography. Accordingly, what happens in history is determined by an alleged "closed continuum" of causes and effects on the horizontal plane. Such a presupposition does not allow for God to intervene and to shape the historical process itself.

Many other modern scholars have joined Bultmann in the claim: "The resurrection itself is not an event of past history."<sup>30</sup> They have done so despite the fact that the NT presents Jesus' resurrection as an event of past history.

As just noted, Bultmann is not convinced by the 500 eye-witnesses to which Paul appeals. He speaks of "the impossibility of establishing the objective historicity of the resurrection no matter how many witnesses are cited, . . ."<sup>31</sup> For Bultmann the resurrection can never be historically verified or established through "objective historicity." "Objective historicity" is a concern of the historical-critical method to which he subscribes, a method which does not allow a divine cause to function in history.

In this sense Bultmann maintains an essential opposition between history as he defines it and historical reality as the NT defines it. He asserts, contrary to the NT, that "the real difficulty is that the resurrection is itself an article of faith, . . ."<sup>32</sup> It is an article of faith only for the existentialist interpretation to which Bultmann subscribes.

Since the "resurrection is an article of faith" for Bultmann, can there be any historical reality in support of such an "article of faith"? Bultmann is consistent in his claim: Jesus' "resurrection is not an event of past history. All that the historical criticism [i.e. historical-critical method] can establish is the fact that the first disciples came to believe in the resurrection."<sup>33</sup>

It is undeniable historically (as the NT gives witness to it) that the disciples believed in the resurrection of Jesus. But since Bultmann holds that Jesus' "resurrection is not an event of past history," what is the nature of the resurrection of Jesus for Bultmann? Bultmann's incisive answer is: "Jesus has risen in the kerygma."<sup>34</sup> In addition, ". . . Jesus Christ is present in the kerygma."<sup>35</sup> These statements mean that Jesus Christ is raised at the moment when the message of Jesus is preached and is present in

the preaching itself. Therefore, the reality of the resurrection is not based in a historical event; it is not an event of verifiable history. Of course, since it happens in the kerygma (proclamation), it is not a bodily resurrection. The bodily resurrection of Jesus in the NT becomes, in Bultmann's reinterpretation, a kerygmatic resurrection which takes place in the preaching of the church.

It is, therefore, no surprise that Bultmann speaks of "the legend of the empty tomb,"<sup>36</sup> and of "all the Easter legends, whatever elements of historical fact they may contain."<sup>37</sup> Whatever "elements of historical fact" that may be at the core of these so-called legends,<sup>38</sup> will never grant an iota of credibility to the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

For Bultmann there can be no factual, historical, physical resurrection of Jesus because of his definition of history and what the historical-critical method can deliver. A physical resurrection is ruled out *a priori* on methodological grounds. In a debate with the Continental existentialist philosopher Karl Jaspers, Bultmann wrote that like him he was convinced "that a corpse cannot become alive again and climb out of the grave."<sup>39</sup>

Since the NT witness is so overwhelming regarding Jesus' physical resurrection as a historical reality, Bultmann asserts that we have to engage in a reinterpretation of the NT, a demythologization, to demonstrate that Jesus "has risen in the kerygma."<sup>40</sup>

Bultmann's claim of the resurrection of Jesus "in the kerygma" feeds into and is in harmony with his existentialist interpretation of the gospel. Jesus is not only raised in the kerygma, the apostolic proclamation of the past, but the "Christ of the kerygma"<sup>41</sup> "authoritatively addresses the hearer—every hearer"<sup>42</sup> in the church's present proclamation. Jesus is still being raised as the "Christ of the kerygma" in the preaching of today.

By now there is ample evidence from Bultmann's pen that Jesus' "resurrection in the kerygma" is not identical with a physical resurrection as an historical event of the past. Thus, Bultmann can maintain his view that the resurrection of Jesus as "an event of past history" is "inconceivable," while at the same time he can speak of the resurrection of Jesus in another sense, meaning something radically different.

We will linger just a little longer with Bultmann, because he

has defined the issue so decisively and linked it so explicitly to the dominant historical-critical method which modernistic scholarship employs as the standard method of research.

A few years ago Bultmann gave an interview to a major German news magazine, *Der Spiegel*,<sup>43</sup> which reported on a rally of 22,000 German believers in the Westphalia Hall in Dortmund, Germany, on March 6, 1966. These confessing Christians of Germany gathered under the banner, "The Lord is risen—the Lord is risen, indeed." In response to this rally Bultmann reaffirmed in his interview that the NT "reports of a bodily resurrection of Jesus are legends, . . ." <sup>44</sup> He also maintained "that Jesus is risen in the same manner as Goethe [considered the most famous of German poets], if one views the person and work as a phenomenon of cultural history. For the person and works of great men remain effective in cultural history, and that goes for Jesus too."<sup>45</sup>

In this sense the resurrection of Jesus is not an hallucination on the part of the disciples, a view which Bultmann does not support. Rather, it is "a phenomenon of cultural history," an event in the memory of human beings as they are told about Jesus, Goethe, Stalin, or any other major historical figure. The resurrection of Jesus is but an event in memory not in history.

Bultmann, as noted before, refuses to understand the resurrection of Jesus to be a matter of historical research. He holds firmly to the "principle of analogy" as espoused by the historical-critical method.<sup>46</sup> This principle holds that there is "a fundamental homogeneity of all historical events" (E. Troeltsch), that is, the past is known only by means of the experience of the present. The present is the only key to provide knowledge about the past.

Thus, for Bultmann there can be no physical resurrection of Jesus in the past, because physical resurrections are not part of the human experience at present. Since the dead do not come forth from their graves today, there could not have been a resurrection of Jesus from the dead in the past. This view is grounded in and based on the so-called "principle of analogy" of modern historical criticism.

In short, Bultmann's denial of a physical resurrection of Jesus is grounded in his modern "scientific" world view. The latter contains: (1) The presupposition of a "closed continuum" of natural causes and effects which are said to determine the flow of history,

and (2) The principle of analogy which understands the past on the basis of phenomena happening in the present. Since no dead come out of their graves today, Jesus could not have come out of His grave in the past. These methodological constraints provide the basis for the denial of the physical resurrection of Jesus.

Reactions to Bultmann have been voluminous.<sup>47</sup> Bultmann separated faith from history. Past reality based on happening and contemporary faith are dichotomous.<sup>48</sup> Contemporary faith is based on the contemporary world view, so Bultmann claims, and this world view does not allow anyone to be raised from the dead. Can we follow such a modern dichotomous separation of the past and the present, of faith and history? Do we want to engage in a reductionism of the biblical message, a shortening of the biblical truth? Are we willing to concede that faith is a concoction of the mind without any basis in historical reality? If we were to concede this, then faith would be based on a myth as Bultmann holds.

The world view of the believer must be holistic and comprehensive. It needs the divine revelation of Scripture. It cannot disallow or deny singularities, that is, one-time and unique events of history, simply because they do not seem to be repetitive and known in today's experience. If the resurrection is but a reality of proclamation (kerygma) and thus a reality created in the minds of the listeners, then the resurrection is but a mental reality no different from any other such mental act.

The NT, however, speaks of another type of reality which involve eye-witnesses and not simply mind-witnesses as is the case in Bultmann. Over against Bultmann we have to maintain the unity of truth and historical reality. This means that the truth is based on a reality of events which happened in time and space, a reality in history which was factual and genuine.<sup>49</sup>

It has been said, "Faith did not create the appearances; the appearances created faith."<sup>50</sup> We need to add that the kerygma did not create Jesus' appearances nor his resurrection; the kerygma, the preaching, proclaimed what had happened in the physical resurrection and in real history. The resurrection of Jesus precedes the proclamation (kerygma) about it.

**"Non-Factual Vision" Theories.** The views of several modern theologians and exegetes who have in common the general

idea that the resurrection of Jesus is the result of non-factual visions or hallucinations fit under this heading. The term hallucination is less often used in recent literature because of certain criticisms leveled against it earlier. Therefore, the language of "non-factual vision" is preferred today.

1. *B. H. Streeter*. The Oxford NT scholar B. H. Streeter is known most widely for the formulation of the so-called "four-source theory" of the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>51</sup> Streeter held at the beginning of this century that the empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus Christ were a "sign" which satisfied the apostles, but can "be not a convincing sign to us."<sup>52</sup>

In Streeter's view the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection were "[visions] directly caused by the Lord Himself veritably alive and in communion with them [the disciples]."<sup>53</sup> With this interpretation the miraculous nature of the bodily resurrection is avoided, making it but a visionary experience, indeed, a "sign."<sup>54</sup> The historicity of the resurrection as a factual event in history is circumvented in this interpretation as well.

2. *Günther Bornkamm*. Günther Bornkamm, a student of Bultmann who belongs to the so-called post-Bultmannians, agrees with Bultmann that the resurrection of Jesus is "removed from historical scholarship. History cannot ascertain and establish conclusively the facts about them [Jesus' resurrection from the dead, his life and his eternal reign] as it can with other events of the past."<sup>55</sup>

Bornkamm also speaks of the "Easter stories" as "legend"<sup>56</sup> and containing "legendary additions."<sup>57</sup> He does not accept a bodily resurrection of Jesus, nor does he know what really happened on resurrection Sunday. Bornkamm holds that "we have to understand the Easter stories too as evidence of the faith, and not as records and chronicles, and that it is the *message* of Easter we must seek in the *Easter stories*."<sup>58</sup> He maintains that the "appearances of the risen Christ and the word of his witnesses have in the first place given rise to this faith."<sup>59</sup>

In Bornkamm's view the appearances of the risen Christ are not historically verifiable events. While he refrains from designating the appearances of Jesus as outright hallucinations, they are

on the level of non-factual visions in the minds of those who proclaimed Jesus to have been raised from the dead.

3. *Willi Marxsen*. Willi Marxsen, who was Bultmann's successor on the professorial chair at Marburg University and also a so-called post-Bultmannian, remains highly skeptical about the NT resurrection reports.<sup>60</sup> He asserts that no one who belonged to the early Church ever claimed to have seen or experienced "Jesus' resurrection as an event, a fact, a happening."<sup>61</sup>

He holds that since our time and place is different from that of the NT, we are as little able to appeal to the NT texts as we are able to appeal to Genesis 1-2 when we wish to know what really happened. Natural science has to inform us on these matters.<sup>62</sup> Marxsen reveals in these ideas a methodological presupposition which is grounded in a modern "scientific" world view. The latter is the norm for understanding the past. The scientific history created by historical criticism, that is, the historical-critical method, to which he subscribes and the presuppositions which determine its understanding of history rule out a physical resurrection of Jesus.

Marxsen himself raises the question whether the idea of a vision of Jesus is "indeed the whole truth of what really happened?"<sup>63</sup> For Marxsen the resurrection of Jesus is the result of "an outcome of reflection."<sup>64</sup> The question relates to the cause of the "reflection"? Is it a fact in time and space, because history speaks about time and space? Is it the result of a "vision," an event in the mind of people and not in time and space? Marxsen provides the answer to this crucial issue. He says, "The formulae [of the resurrection] show that both the setting up of the community as well as the reasons given for functioning within it were traced back to a vision of Jesus after the crucifixion. Now this means that what supplies the real basis of the community and the function within it is *the fact*, not of the resurrection itself, but of Jesus' *appearances*; this fact alone is brought into prominence."<sup>65</sup> The "fact" are the "appearances" which are the "vision of Jesus after the crucifixion."

For the purpose of our discussion it will suffice to note that Marxsen shares with other historical-critical theologians the view that the resurrection of Jesus is not based on historical fact, but on

"a vision of Jesus after the crucifixion," a "vision" of appearances in the minds of the disciples.<sup>66</sup>

In short, Jesus was raised in the minds of the disciples, in their subjective "vision." Subsequently they reflected about it and thus produced what the NT contains regarding the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection was not a physical reality which was experienced by Jesus who had actually died on the cross. In harmony with Bultmann, Marxsen says that the phrase "'Jesus is risen' simply means: today the crucified Jesus is calling us to believe."<sup>67</sup> The phrase is but a metaphor for believing in Jesus.

The German Lutheran scholar Ulrich Wilckens, himself a scholar of the liberal tradition, noted that neither Marxsen's nor Bultmann's views on the resurrection can pretend to represent biblical Christianity.<sup>68</sup> This assessment is correct, because their reductionistic interpretation omits key elements in the NT. They represent what the best of historical-critical scholarship can provide.

4. *Jürgen Moltmann.* In 1964 the University of Tübingen systematic theologian Jürgen Moltmann wrote an epochal book, *Theology of Hope*.<sup>69</sup> His programmatic volume was translated into many languages, because it was taken as a milestone in the eschatological orientation of modern theology of the liberal tradition.<sup>70</sup> It became influential in the development of what has become known as liberation theology in its various forms.

Moltmann's tome, *Theology of Hope*, is seen "as much a book about the resurrection of Jesus as it is a book about eschatology, since for Moltmann, the resurrection is only properly understood in eschatological perspective, . . ."<sup>71</sup> We quoted in our introduction above his famous sentence, "Christianity stands or falls with the rising of Jesus from the dead by God."<sup>72</sup> What does Moltmann mean when he speaks about the resurrection of Jesus?

It is a fact of Moltmann's thinking that there was no factual or physical resurrection of Jesus.<sup>73</sup> He writes, "The resurrection of Jesus from the dead by God does not speak the 'language of facts,' but only the language of faith and hope, that is, the 'language of promise'."<sup>74</sup> Although Moltmann is in conversation with and opposition to the so-called "present" eschatology of Bultmann, in the

matter of Jesus' resurrection he follows Bultmann's "existential interpretation."<sup>75</sup>

Moltmann remains also indebted to the traditional principle of analogy of the so-called "scientific" historical-critical method. Since the resurrection of Jesus is without analogy in present human experience, it cannot be perceived to be a historical event of the past and cannot be historically verified by the "language of facts," argues Moltmann.

In Moltmann's view the resurrection is an "eschatological event" of the future. It is a "promise." "*Resurrectio* is no restoration," says Moltmann, "but rather a *promissio*. It has no *anamnesis*, but rather anticipation."<sup>76</sup>

Moltmann is a thorough-going historical skeptic. He insists that not even the NT narratives of the resurrection of Jesus know what happened. He maintains, "What 'resurrection of the dead' really is, and what 'actually happened' in the raising of Jesus, is thus a thing which not even the New Testament Easter [resurrection] narratives profess to know."<sup>77</sup>

What does the phrase "risen from the dead," which is repeated so often in the NT, actually mean for Moltmann? He provides an elaborate and complex answer: "The actual process of the raising of Jesus is covered by a term for which there is no basis in experience hitherto and elsewhere. That is to say, it is described as something for which there are no analogies in the history we know, but only apocalyptic promises and hopes that where death is concerned God will give proof of his divinity in the last [that is, the future]."<sup>78</sup> This explanation calls again upon the principle of analogy which is foundational for secular "scientific" historiography in the liberal tradition of scholarship.

He also notes that the term "resurrection" has no equivalent in present experience. This means that there are no physical resurrections as part of the human experience of the present. The implication with the principle of analogy is that since we do not experience physical resurrections in the present it did not happen in the past.

Finally, he reinterprets the resurrection event of the past, which the NT explicitly affirms to be physical in nature, as but a divine promise of the future. We must ask, How can an alleged



promise for the future have any meaning, if there is no factual and real substance to it in the reality of the past? The real future resurrection has meaning only if there was a real resurrection in the historical past. Without such an historical event in the past, the promise of it for the future is empty. It is pie in the sky. What did the disciples experience in the appearances of the resurrected Jesus? Moltmann elaborates that "... the eye-witnesses perceived the earthly, crucified Jesus of the past in the glory of God's coming and drew conclusions from that in their experience of call and mission."<sup>79</sup> This "perception" explanation is most curious.

Moltmann holds that what the disciples "perceived" in the appearances of Jesus was actually "the glory of God's coming," that is, His future coming. Thus, the perception was a visionary "sight and a foretaste in the countenance of the crucified Christ of the God who was to come, a matter of being seized by the coming change in the world through God's glory."<sup>80</sup> The "sight" of the appearances of Jesus was but that, namely, some sort of a mental vision. The resurrection appearances have thus been interpreted by Moltmann as mental faith visions of a "pre-reflective anticipation"<sup>81</sup> of God's future in the Christ event.

It is fully evident by now that Moltmann does not support a historical, physical resurrection of Jesus in the sense of a past factual event in space and time.<sup>82</sup> For him the resurrection of Jesus was not "a real event in space and time"<sup>83</sup> in the sense that Jesus was raised bodily from the dead. It consisted of events in the minds, the "sight," of the disciples who experienced a mental "foretaste" of what is to come from God in the future. "Hence," as far as Moltmann is concerned, "in the strictest terms Jesus cannot ever be said to have been resurrected," concludes R. E. Otto correctly.<sup>84</sup>

Does this mean for Moltmann that there can be no real second coming of Jesus since the resurrection was but a "sight" experience in the minds of the disciples? What the disciples experienced in their "sight" regarding the appearances is but a foretaste of what the believers are to experience in their "sight" as the Second Coming. The denial of a physical resurrection is by Moltmann inseparably linked to a denial of a physical return of Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven.

#### "Objective Vision" Theory: Historical Resurrection

**Without Bodily Resurrection.** The world renowned neo-Kantian systematic theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg of the University of Munich has become famous for defending the resurrection of Jesus as a historical event.<sup>85</sup> This defense has caused much excitement because it is believed that historical-critical scholarship can now affirm the historical happening of the resurrection of Jesus.

Pannenberg claims that "there are good and even superior reasons for claiming that the Resurrection of Jesus was a historical event, and consequently the risen Lord himself is a living reality."<sup>86</sup> To a mainline Bible-believing Christian this is a most astonishing statement from a liberal theologian.

Does Pannenberg mean that Jesus Christ was bodily raised from the dead, and that He is now a genuine living Being in the heavenly world? It seems as if this is what Pannenberg argues for in the languages which he uses. But Pannenberg must be listened to with care for what he claims and for what he does not claim.

What does Pannenberg mean when he speaks of the "historical event" of the resurrection of Jesus? And what does he mean when he says that the risen Lord Jesus is a "living reality"? Bultmann could also speak of Jesus as a "reality" in Jesus' post-resurrection state. But for Bultmann it was a "reality" caused by the kerygma, the preaching in the past and in the present, and not by a physical resurrection.

A "historical event" occurs in time and space, argues Pannenberg. That is to say, a "historical event" happens with reference to a "specific" time and a "specific" place on earth. The death of Jesus took place on the cross, and it happened at a specific time which can be dated in history and at a specific place which can be geographically located. Thus, the death of Jesus is an event in time and place. In this sense the time-place nature of the event of the resurrection, Pannenberg says, leads to the claim "that an event [which] happened at a particular time and place implies logically a claim to historicity."<sup>87</sup> Thus, Pannenberg can speak of the "historicity of Jesus' Resurrection."<sup>88</sup> By this he means that Jesus was "raised" at a particular time and a particular place.

But when Pannenberg speaks of the "historicity of Jesus' Resurrection," does this resurrection at a particular time and space mean that He was physically raised from the dead in a bodily

resurrection? This question touches the very core of the issue on the nature of the resurrection of Jesus in Pannenberg and modern neo-liberal theology.

Pannenberg bases his conclusions on the appearances of the raised Jesus and argues on that basis as follows: "If Jesus (after he was dead) now lives, then he was—before he was seen for the first time as the living One—either resuscitated or, conversely (when the manner of the contemporary life excludes resuscitation and his death was undoubtedly certain), he has been transformed to another 'life'."<sup>89</sup>

First, it needs to be noted that Pannenberg avoids speaking affirmatively of the physical resurrection in this pivotal statement, or elsewhere in his writings. Instead, he speaks elusively of Jesus being "transformed to another 'life'." He actually puts the term "life" in quotation marks so as to indicate that this other "life" is of a different order and nature than the life Jesus experienced before his death.

Second, Pannenberg allows for the theory of resuscitation, although he does not commit himself to it. Pannenberg prefers to speak of Jesus as "transformed to another 'life'." "Because the life of the resurrected Lord involves the reality of the new creation, the resurrected Lord is in fact not perceptible as an object among others in this world; therefore, he could only be experienced and designated by an extraordinary mode of experience, the vision, and only in metaphorical language."<sup>90</sup> In this pivotal statement Pannenberg speaks of Jesus, after his resurrection, as not being "perceptible as an object." An object can be touched and is material. But for Pannenberg, Jesus is not raised as an "object" in this sense. Therefore, Jesus can only be "experienced and designated by an extraordinary mode of experience," namely "the vision."

Could Jesus be seen by anyone after his resurrection? Was "the vision" a normal vision in the sense of a sight or seeing open to any human being? The resurrection appearances, in Pannenberg's view, were not events "visible to everyone." He states, "With regard to the character and mode of the Easter appearances, the first thing to be considered is that it may have involved an extraordinary vision, not even an event that was visible to everyone."<sup>91</sup>

How can this be the case, if there were hundreds of people who

saw Jesus after his resurrection? Pannenberg does not accept the reports of Jesus' resurrection at face value. The gospel reports regarding the appearances of Jesus "have such a strong legendary character that one can scarcely find a historical kernel of their own in them."<sup>92</sup>

What kind of body did Paul see and was in contact with on the road to Damascus? Pannenberg answers, "Paul must have seen a spiritual body, a *soma pneumatikon*, on the road to Damascus, not a person with an earthly body."<sup>93</sup> The resurrection body of Jesus is not a physical body, an "earthly body," but a "spiritual body."

The "spiritual body" is so radically different from the previous body that "the transformation of the perishable into the spiritual body will be so radical that nothing will remain unchanged. There is no substantial or structural continuity from the old to the new existence."<sup>94</sup> Thus, both in substance and structure the "spiritual body" is without continuity with the old body. The "spiritual body" is not a structural body.

What kind of continuity will exist between the non-material, non-substantial and non-structural body of the resurrected Jesus and his previous body? Pannenberg is as elusive here as we will find him anywhere in the exposition of his views. He asserts, "Something different will be produced in its place, but there is a historical continuity in the sense of a continuous transition in the consummation of the transformation itself."<sup>95</sup> Evidently, the only continuity between the pre-resurrection body of Jesus and the post-resurrection body of Jesus is an "historical continuity . . . of a continuous transition," but not bodily continuity, even if the material nature of the body is different.

Pannenberg does not accept the NT record that Jesus predicted his own resurrection.<sup>96</sup> He is also uneasy about everything the NT says concerning the empty tomb. While he does not wish to follow those who have an "excessive skepticism" of the empty tomb tradition,<sup>97</sup> he does not accept the accounts himself in the completeness with which they are presented in the gospels. Pannenberg notes that he only accepts the empty tomb tradition "as historical in its core."<sup>98</sup>

The historical "core" of the empty tomb tradition is restricted to the idea that Jesus was raised from the dead to "another 'life'."

But what is this "life" to which He was raised? He states, "That the Easter appearances were, as experiences, events in space and time need not include that the appearing *Reality*—presupposing it was not a question of mere hallucination—on its side was in space and in time. Hence, the resurrection of Jesus as an event [itself] is fixable temporally and spatially—but the continuous sequential relationship in which events are usually arranged, temporally as well as spatially, at this point [in the appearances] evades our view. Plainly said: The wider course of the event, insofar as it concerns Jesus himself, remains unknown."<sup>99</sup> Thus, Pannenberg says "the appearing *Reality*" was not one in "space and time." Thus, Jesus who died was transformed to "another life."<sup>100</sup> That other "life" is a life with an immaterial, "spiritual body," without substance and corporeality.

Pannenberg develops this further. He does "not consider the Gospels in every respect as historically reliable sources, . . ." <sup>101</sup> He believes that "apologetic pressure" led to the development of "legendary elements in those [gospel] narratives, especially in their final form, representing comparative late stages of their tradition."<sup>102</sup>

Pannenberg takes as his starting-point the report of Acts 9:3ff., 22:6ff., and 26:12ff., with the light and voice coming to Paul from heaven as the clue to the "life" of the resurrected Jesus.<sup>103</sup> From there he goes to 1 Corinthians 15:42ff. where Paul speaks of the "spiritual body" of the new life of the Resurrection in contrast with the present condition of bodily existence."<sup>104</sup> The "spiritual body" is for Pannenberg a "spiritual life" which "means a form of life that is no longer separated from the divine origin of life and hence is immortal, as Paul says (1 Cor 15:42, 52sqq.)."<sup>105</sup>

It must not escape our attention that Pannenberg's view of the resurrection of Jesus is depicted by him as a "metaphor." "To speak of the resurrection of the dead is not comparable to speaking about any random circumstance that can be identified empirically. Here we are dealing with a metaphor."<sup>106</sup> Pannenberg does not wish to remove any "historical event" aspect from the resurrection of Jesus when he speaks of resurrection in terms of "metaphor."<sup>107</sup>

In the end, therefore, Pannenberg "spiritualizes" away the bodily resurrection of Jesus. For him, the experience of Paul was a

purely visionary phenomenon.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, the appearances of Jesus were of the same nature.

At this point it is important to note that the NT never refers to the resurrection appearances of Jesus in terms of a "vision."<sup>109</sup> Paul says of his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, "He appeared [Greek *ophthe*] to me also" (1 Cor 15:8, NASB). Paul equates his Damascus road encounter with Christ in terms of an "appearance" in the same way in which Christ "appeared" (Greek *ophthe*) to the disciples and brethren earlier (vss. 5, 6, 7). This usage is in harmony with the Greek terminology used in Acts 26:19 for the "heavenly vision [*ouranios optasia*],"<sup>110</sup> more precisely translated as "heavenly appearance,"<sup>111</sup> which includes "the appearance [of Christ] outside Damascus"<sup>112</sup> referred to in Acts 9:1-9 and subsequent revelations of Jesus.<sup>113</sup>

William L. Craig, one of the foremost contemporary scholars on the resurrection of Jesus who has earned a doctorate under Pannenberg, has reacted to Pannenberg for confusing the issue of the "spiritual body/life" of Jesus. Craig points out that the reports in Acts regarding the appearance of Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:5-6; 22:8, 10; 26:15-19) cannot be interpreted to be merely extrasensory, visionary manifestations.<sup>114</sup>

It seems inappropriate to start with Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, since the appearances of Jesus to his disciples precede Paul's own experience in time.

In addition, it is not sound to equate the "resurrection life" of Jesus with the "spiritual body" of 1 Corinthians 15 as is done by Pannenberg. The language in Paul's epistle to the Corinthians reveals that ". . . the 'spiritual body' is in its nature the same body, the body of flesh, but determined by the Spirit as is the body of Jesus Christ."<sup>115</sup> The contrast is not between the natural and non-natural body, that is, a material and an immaterial body, but between the natural and the supernatural body.<sup>116</sup> In both cases there is a bodily reality.

The contrast is also not between bodily existence in this life and spiritual existence in the life after the resurrection. The contrast in 1 Corinthians 15:42-49 is between an "earthly body" which is characterized by corruption (vs. 42) and weakness (vs. 43), that is, the "earthly body" as the "natural body" of fallen humanity, and

a "spiritual body," being still a body and not immaterial and non-corporeal in nature. The latter is called "spiritual" because it manifests fully the Spirit which is from heaven and not the corruption and weakness of sin typical of what is on earth.<sup>117</sup> The "continuity between the earthly body and the heavenly body rests on a miracle."<sup>118</sup> The resurrected One exists in the resurrection body *and* with immortal life which exists in God alone and comes from Him.

On a theoretical level Pannenberg qualifies the historical-critical method in one aspect, that is, the principle of analogy which holds that dead persons do not leave their grave.<sup>119</sup> Pannenberg allows for singularities on a theoretical level. However, in his application of the historical-critical method, he still holds to the principle of analogy. He recognizes the limitation of the method but is not able to accept its implications.

Thus, the full testimony of the NT, especially that of the bodily resurrection of Jesus, is still rejected. The mandates of historical reasoning based on the historical-critical method's principles of analogy, correlation and criticism, cause an essential part of the NT to be dismissed as legendary. And this, despite the fact that Pannenberg uses elusive and reinterpreted expressions as "historical event" and "historical fact" when he speaks of the resurrection of Jesus.

The assessment of Daniel P. Fuller that "Pannenberg has solved the problem of how we can know the resurrection of Jesus Christ by historical reasoning—and still remain historians"<sup>120</sup> cannot be accepted in this unqualified way. If Pannenberg were able to penetrate to the truth of the resurrection by means of the historical-critical method, then his approach would involve "an elitist 'priesthood of historians' which can provide decisions concerning the truth of the Christian faith"<sup>121</sup> based on the complicated and elitist methods used by so-called "scientific" historians. Such elitism of historical authority<sup>122</sup> would mean that the trained historian would become a new pope, telling the believer what is truth. However, biblical truth transcends such a method from "below," since biblical faith is based on more than that.

There are many other views which could be mentioned.<sup>123</sup> However, the hypotheses referred to above provide a cross-section

of the liberal and neo-liberal views held by major figures today. We will turn now to the NT evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.

### NT Evidence for Jesus' Resurrection

The NT references to the resurrection of Jesus deserve a full and complete presentation. Unfortunately, it cannot be provided within the constraints of an article. Suffice it to say, the resurrection of Jesus is acknowledged in almost every book of the NT (except 2 Thess, Titus, Phile, 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude and James).<sup>124</sup>

It has been noted that the early Christian message "stands or falls with the resurrection, since exaltation forms the foundation of the confession that Jesus is Lord."<sup>125</sup> Indeed, biblical faith stands or falls with the resurrection of Jesus, since the risen and exalted Christ completes his post-resurrection and pre-advent ministry in the heavenly sanctuary before He returns in glory in His Second Coming.

In short, if there is no true resurrection, there can be no ongoing, intercessory ministry on the part of Christ, and there can be no investigative judgment ministry in the time of the end. Consequently, there can be no victorious return of Christ to take home the true believers of all ages: the righteous dead who will be raised at the first resurrection and the faithful living ones. Without Jesus' resurrection there is no new life, no heaven to go to, and no newly created earth to be possessed by God's children.

**Surveying the NT.** For the sake of brevity we will enumerate only the longer passages in the NT on the resurrection:

#### 1. Major Resurrection Records in the Gospels<sup>126</sup>

- a. Matthew 28:1-10
- b. Matthew 28:16-20
- c. Mark 16:1-8
- d. Luke 24:1-12
- e. Luke 24:13-35
- f. Luke 24:36-39
- g. Luke 24:50-53
- i. John 20:1-18
- j. John 20:19-29
- k. John 21:1-14
- l. John 21:15-24

2. *Major Resurrection Records in the Book of Acts*

a. Acts 2:24-36

b. Acts 1:3

c. Acts 17:31

3. *Major Resurrection Records in the NT Letters*<sup>127</sup>

a. 1 Corinthians 15:3-34

b. 1 Corinthians 15:35-57

c. Romans 1:3-4

d. Ephesians 1:19-21

The listings of these major NT records dealing with the resurrection of Jesus should not be understood to mean that these are more important than the shorter references or casual references to Jesus' resurrection. This is by no means the case. It is simply an attempt to indicate that there are major discussions in various NT writings which treat the resurrection of Jesus extensively within the various contexts of the respective NT documents.

**Evidence in the Gospels.** All four gospels along with the report of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 agree to a consistent pattern of four sequential events connected with the resurrection of Jesus, namely, that He (1) died, (2) was buried, (3) was raised, and (4) appeared to various human beings. Taking this sequential picture of events as our starting-point, we will briefly discuss the burial reports in the NT. We assume that we do not need to discuss Jesus' death on the cross. It is for the purpose of this essay taken for granted.

1. *Burial Reports.* The time of the burial is indicated in Mark 15:42, "And when evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is the day before the Sabbath" (NASB). Jesus was buried (a) in the evening of the (b) preparation day (c) before the Sabbath began. This time notice reveals that Jesus rested in the tomb on the Sabbath.

Jesus was buried on Friday,<sup>128</sup> the day of preparation for the seventh-day Sabbath and in this instance for the ritual Passover Sabbath, thus constituting a "high day" (John 19:31). Because of the lateness of the hour in view of the approaching Sabbath, Jesus was laid in "the tomb [which] was nearby" (John 19:42).

Joseph of Arimathea, the owner of the tomb (Matt 27:57-60), requested of Pilate the corpse of Jesus, and Pilate gave orders for

him to receive the body of Jesus. Joseph placed the body of Jesus in the tomb. Various other persons were also involved in the burial process.<sup>129</sup>

The body of Jesus was wrapped (Mk 15:46; Matt 27:59; Lk 23:53) in a shroud, respectively "linen cloths" (John 19:40, and a "face cloth" was used as well (John 20:7). It is "evident that the Synoptics see no contradiction between speaking of the *sendon* [shroud] and a plurality of *othonia* [linen cloths]"<sup>130</sup> when it comes to the material used in the burial of Jesus. Jesus was buried in a previously unused rolling-stone tomb in a garden.<sup>131</sup>

Among the women present when Jesus was buried were Mary Magdalene (Mk 15:47; Matt 27:56, 61; cf. John 20:1), Mary the mother of Joses (Mk 15:47), and the "other Mary" (Matt 27:61), and other women both named and unnamed (Lk 23:55; 24:1, 10).

On resurrection Sunday women again play a significant role. Some of the same women who participated or witnessed the burial became witnesses of the empty tomb.<sup>132</sup>

2. *Empty Tomb Reports.* A casual reading of the gospel reports of the women's discovery of the empty tomb and the events surrounding it reveals that not all gospels report every detail or every aspect relating to the empty tomb. Thus, the impression can be gained by the less careful reader that there may be discrepancies in the stories.<sup>133</sup>

a. **Theories about the empty tomb.** A number of theories have been developed by those who wish to do away with the empty tomb narratives. Among the more prominent ones are the following: (1) Joseph of Arimathea stole the body of Jesus,<sup>134</sup> or (2) reburied it after the body had been first buried somewhere else.<sup>135</sup> (3) The disciples stole the body of Jesus.<sup>136</sup> (4) The women went on Sunday morning to the wrong tomb.<sup>137</sup> (5) The gardener removed the body of Jesus from the tomb so that his lettuce would be protected from the arriving spectators.<sup>138</sup> (6) The body of Jesus "evanesced" or decomposed between the time of his death on Friday and Sunday morning.<sup>139</sup> (7) Jesus "swooned" and did not really die on the cross.<sup>140</sup>

The matter of the empty tomb has given rise to the hypothesis in liberal and neo-liberal scholarship that the reports of the empty

tomb are an "apologetic legend"<sup>141</sup> and, therefore, cannot be used for demonstrating the historicity of the resurrection.<sup>142</sup>

The legend notion is a modern historical-critical construct designed to minimize the gospel reports. However, the NT reports about the empty tomb do not function as an apology in the gospel record and are, therefore, no "apologetic legend."<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, the gospel reports appear to fill each other out, supplementing and complementing each other without contradiction. One can perceive that there is a harmonious mosaic made up from the various parts.<sup>144</sup>

**b. Women at the empty tomb.** Let us first consider the women going to the tomb. The women arrived at the rolling-stone tomb "very early on the first day of the week," (Mk 16:2) or to be precise, "when the sun had risen" (Mk 16:2), "at early dawn" (Lk 24:1) which means "after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn" (Matt 28:1).<sup>145</sup> John adds that Mary Magdalene "came early . . . while it was still dark" (20:1).

The fact that there were a number of women going to the tomb that very morning, early on the first day of the week, is indicated by John who mentions only Mary Magdalene, but notes in her announcement to the disciples "We do not know where they have laid him" (vs. 2, NASB). Mary was obviously not alone at the tomb for she includes others in the word "we." There must have been the two Marys and Salome mentioned in the Gospel of Mark, Joanna and other women mentioned in Matthew and Luke.

**c. The guard at the tomb.** Only the Gospel of Matthew reports that a guard had been placed at the tomb (27:62-66; 28:4, 11-15). The reason for the guard was to prevent Jesus' disciples from removing His body, enabling them to claim His resurrection (27:64).

Subsequently, the guard reported to Jewish authorities, upon the fact that the tomb was empty, "all that had happened" (Matt 28:11). The guard were bribed to say, "His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep" (vs. 13).

Evidently the guard had nothing to lose by cooperating with the Jewish leaders in giving a false report.<sup>146</sup> The historicity of the guard report is very well presented by several authors.<sup>147</sup>

**d. The sealed stone rolled away by the angel.** No one had

seen Jesus rise from the dead. The stone that sealed the tomb was designated as a "large stone" (Matt 27:60) or "extremely large" in size (Mk 16:4). The women were not likely to roll away such a huge stone by themselves. Actually they wondered themselves who would perform this task for them (Mark 16:3). Large stones of rolling stone tombs are estimated to have a weight of one and one-half to two tons.<sup>148</sup>

When the women arrive at the tomb early on the first day, they find the stone already rolled away (Matt 28:2; Mk 16:4; Lk 24:2). It is reported that an "angel" moved the stone and then sat upon it (Matt 28:2). The guards, upon seeing the angel who rolled away the stone and recognizing that the sealed tomb had been opened by him (Matt 27:66), "shook for fear of him, and became like dead men" (Matt 28:4, NASB).

The size of the stone indicates that the women could not move it by themselves. With the guard placed before it and the Roman seal attached, it was not possible for grave robbers to move the stone and remain undetected.

**e. The report to Peter and its result.** Mary reports to Simon Peter that the tomb is open and "they have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him" (John 20:2, NASB). John reports that both Peter and "the other disciple" rush to the tomb and find it empty with the linen grave clothes rolled up (vss. 5-8). John, "the other disciple," comes to believe then and there that Jesus is raised from the dead (vs. 8).

**f. The grave clothes.** The mention of grave clothes in the Gospel of John is hardly accidental. He even records that the face-cloth was "in a place by itself" (John 20:7, NASB). The emphasis on the face-cloth and the linen wrappings being still in the tomb indicates that the body of Jesus could not have been stolen.

Robbers stealing a body would not have unwrapped the corpse and placed the linen neatly wrapped in two different places in the tomb. They would have taken the body quickly, just as it was, including its face-cloth and linen wrappings.<sup>149</sup>

**g. The angelic announcement.** The angel's statements that "He is not here" (Matt 28:6, KJV), that "He has been raised from the dead" (Matt 28:6, NRSV), and that the women are to report to the disciples, "He has been raised from the dead" (vs. 7, NRSV)

provides additional evidence for the reality and facticity that the tomb was empty.

The fact that Paul has the fourfold sequence of "died—was buried—rose again—was seen" (1 Cor 15:3-5) "clearly implies that the tomb was empty"<sup>150</sup> on account of the second and third members of this sequence. Although Paul does not mention explicitly the empty tomb, it is surely implied in the sequence of this early report which came to Paul and which he related to the Corinthians in this letter.<sup>151</sup> Oscar Cullmann has noted incisively that Paul, in his report of what he "received," provides "the proof that, long before the composition of the Gospels, the certainty of the resurrection was grounded not only on the appearances, but equally on the 'empty tomb'."<sup>152</sup>

The gospel records regarding the empty tomb may be summarized as follows: The last event in the final period of Jesus Christ's ministry on earth is not the cross—as important and central a role as it plays in Christian faith. The cross is followed by the burial of Jesus, and this in turn is followed by His resurrection and subsequent ascension. The cross without these subsequent events is like a mountain chain without its peaks.

The concluding sections of each of the four gospels contain reports which deal with the empty tomb and the events that surround it. Each of the four gospels report that women, followers of Jesus, found the tomb open and empty aside from the grave clothes. The women were the first who were told and recognized that Jesus had risen. Women were to make this fact known to the disciples.

There are two reports about appearances of the Risen One in the gospels. Matthew 28:9-10 reports that "Jesus met them [women] and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him" (NASB). In John 20:1-2, 11-18 Mary Magdalene is especially singled out as the earliest to report to Simon Peter that the tomb is empty (vss. 1-2). She later (as well as the other women, Matt 28:9-10) saw Jesus who conversed with her, at first unrecognized and then recognized (John 20:11-18).

This cumulative evidence shows that the women witnessed something true and factual taking place following the resurrection. They see the reality of the empty tomb and are confused, stating "We do not know where they have laid him" (John 20:2, NASB).

But being informed by the word of the angel, "He is not here, for He is risen, just as He said" (Matt 28:6, NASB) they realize that Jesus had indeed risen. Mary Magdalene later that morning personally spoke to Jesus (John 20:11-18). Thus, human recognition of the empty tomb and of Jesus in the garden, supported by the testimony of the angelic word, point to the factual, historical event of the resurrection of Jesus.

3. *Appearances and the Nature of the Resurrection Body.* Among the exciting facets of the resurrection of Jesus is the aspect of His appearances and His resurrection body. Did Jesus appear in "visions"? Was He seen with the mind's eye or with the physical eyes? Was Jesus raised bodily or spiritually? Did he have a non-material reality or a physical reality when He rose from the dead? In other words, What was the nature of Jesus' resurrection appearances and His resurrection body? These questions call for an answer from the testimony of Scripture as preserved by the Evangelists.

a. **The debate and its presuppositions.** At this point we briefly recall our previous discussion on the resurrection of Jesus in current thought. Modern progressives of the liberal tradition deny a bodily resurrection of Jesus.<sup>153</sup> It is typical for these scholars to play off what they consider the "massive realism"<sup>154</sup> of the four gospels with what they depict as the purely "spiritual body" mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15.<sup>155</sup> The "spiritual body" is interpreted to be non-physical, immaterial and intangible.

In discounting the nature of the gospel records, it is stated, "Above all, [the gospel records] have throughout a strong legendary character. For a Jesus who, after his resurrection, interacts in this way with his disciples is a figure of legend, of a legend of which it must be asked whether it does justice to the mystery of what Jesus' resurrection means."<sup>156</sup> Once more a major book by a well-known NT scholar resorts to declaring the gospel accounts "legend" and/or "legendary"<sup>157</sup> simply because the reports do not fit into modern, philosophically conditioned understandings of what can or cannot happen or what can or cannot be perceived.<sup>158</sup> The modern "scientific" world view interferes again with the Scriptural record.

Paul's reference to the "spiritual body" is interpreted in purely immaterial and noncorporeal terms so as to make it fit modern

conceptions. Once this interpretation is made it is pitched against the gospel records. The latter are accordingly reinterpreted to be legendary in nature by modern interpreters. The problem is not what the gospel records actually report or what Paul actually meant, but what the interpreter with his/her "scientific" historical method, (grounded in modernistic presuppositions) is willing to accept. Here is another telling example of the modern mind-set, a mind-set based on a naturalistic world view, is the determinant of what the Bible means or is meant to say.

b. **Risen physically.** With these preliminary considerations in mind, we turn directly to the gospel records for their testimony. A "close reading"<sup>159</sup> of what is recorded in every gospel about the appearances of Jesus shows that what is reported is consistently physical appearances.<sup>160</sup>

The angel's words are recorded in Mark 16:6, "He has risen; He is not here; here is the place where they laid him" (NASB). The Greek verb rendered "he has risen," is *égèrthe*.<sup>161</sup> Its usage communicates "the event as just having happened."<sup>162</sup>

This same Greek word is also used when Jesus makes His earlier predictions of his own resurrection (Matt 16:21; 17:9, 23; 20:19; Mk 14:28; Lk 9:22), and it is used in all four gospels with regard to his resurrection (Matt 28:7; Mk 16:6; Lk 24:34; Jn 21:14).

In Matthew 28:7 the angel commands the women to announce to Jesus' disciples that "He has risen from the dead." The expression "from the dead" reveals that it is a genuine resurrection and not a resuscitation from an unconscious state or an apparent death. Jesus was truly dead, and now He is truly alive again: "He has risen."

c. **Grasping Jesus' feet.** The Gospel of Matthew reports an incident that demonstrates clearly that Jesus' resurrection was physical in nature and neither immaterial, visionary, or an hallucination. After the Risen Lord had greeted the women, "they came up and took hold of his feet" (Matt 28:9, NASB). The appearance of Jesus is so "real"<sup>163</sup> and genuine that the women who are at the tomb are able to hold him by his feet. To hold a person by the feet indicates that the feet are real in a physical sense even as the person himself must be real in that same sense. Their taking hold of the

feet of Jesus reveals that His was a physical appearance and that His body was a physical body.<sup>164</sup>

d. **"Do not cling to Me."** The Gospel of John reports that Mary Magdalene held on to Jesus after she recognized Him. Jesus says to her, "Do not cling to Me" (Jn 20:17, NKJV). The NASB tries to capture the intention of the Greek expression in its rendering, "Stop clinging to me." The NIV renders the phrase, "Do not hold on to me."

Jesus' imperative to Mary Magdalene shows that it was within her power to maintain her hold on Him, that is, to continue to cling to Jesus. It was possible for Mary Magdalene to grasp Jesus in a physical way and to keep holding on to Him, preventing Him from moving away. Once more the gospel account reveals that the resurrected body of Jesus was a real, physical body and that His appearance was a physical one.

e. **Eating Food.** The appearance of Jesus to His disciples on the evening of the day He arose (Lk 4:36-49) also communicates the same message of a bodily resurrection and physical appearance. It is highlighted by the fact of their surprise. "Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself" (vs. 39, NRSV), says Jesus. He continues, "Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (vs. 39b, NRSV).

The disciples, having been shown Jesus' hands and feet, were in their joy still "disbelieving and wondering," so that He asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence" vss. 41-43, NRSV).

The fact that the resurrected Jesus could eat in a normal manner like any other human being proved to His disciples that He had indeed risen and stood a real person before them. He was not a ghost, an apparition, a hallucination, or the like, but a person with a genuinely raised body; a person as real as any person that can eat food.

The fact that the risen Jesus ate in the presence of His disciples is proof of the reality of the bodily resurrection and the reality of a physical, bodily appearance. "The bodily resurrection is so real that the risen One is able to eat with his own."<sup>165</sup>

f. **Seeing and touching.** Thomas was skeptical of the reports



from his fellow disciples about the resurrection of Jesus. He was absent when Jesus appeared to the other disciples at an earlier time. Thomas did not wish to be deceived by an hallucination, by a trick of his senses.<sup>166</sup> He did not wish to believe that Jesus only appeared in a "vision" or to the "sight" of the inner eye of the mind.

It is important to note that this incident in which Thomas meets the resurrected Jesus is found only in the Gospel of John (20:19-29). The timing of this event carries its own significance. It takes place on the eighth day after the resurrection of Jesus (vs. 24, 26). By that time Christ had ascended to His Father and had returned again to earth (see John 20:17). Consequently, this Thomas-James narrative is a *post-ascension* appearance of Jesus. In other words, this narrative gives evidence about the nature of Jesus' resurrection body *after* His return from heaven.

Thomas had insisted, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe" (Jn 20:25, NKJV). Thomas insisted on two sensory experiences. He wants to "see" with his own eyes, and he wants to "touch" with his own hands. He is not satisfied with seeing alone, because he knows that sight or seeing may be deceptive. He may experience an apparition; he may have a vision; he may be engaged in an hallucination.

Thomas wants the second proof, that of touch. C. K. Barrett notes that Thomas "would be satisfied neither with a substituted body which was not the body of the Lord who died on the cross, nor with a spiritual body or an apparition."<sup>167</sup>

Thomas, according to the record, is immediately addressed by Jesus who appeared suddenly in the midst of the disciples. Jesus commands Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at my hands; and reach your hand here and put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing" (vs. 27, NKJV). Thomas does not follow through. He is so overwhelmed by the fact that Jesus knew his thoughts and words that "he had no desire for further proof."<sup>168</sup>

Thomas asked for a sensory "proof" so as to accept Jesus' resurrection as real. Thomas saw him; Jesus spoke to him. He spoke such words which only an all-knowing Jesus Christ could reveal. And thus, Thomas received a proof of Jesus' resurrection as a reality which went beyond the physical touch and sight.

Jesus offered Thomas what he desired, but the seeing and the speaking of Jesus, all of which communicated that Jesus' resurrection body was real, convinced Thomas of the physical reality of His resurrection. Thomas was given more than what he asked. He asked to handle the resurrection body. He surely could have done so, but it was no longer needed, since the doubting disciple received more than what he requested.

Thomas is overcome and exclaims, "My Lord and my God!" (vs. 28). This confession provides the apex of the reports of the risen Lord.<sup>169</sup> Jesus, risen from the dead, is both Lord and God.

g. "Flesh and bones." There is also an aspect to Jesus' resurrection that reveals that His "resurrection is not simply the resuscitation of a corpse."<sup>170</sup>

When Lazarus came forth from his grave, it was a resuscitation of a corpse. Lazarus lived again, but he also died again. The body of Lazarus was mortal. Jesus, on the other hand, rose in a new body to "enter into His glory" (Lk 24:26) and to "ascend to My Father" (Jn 20:17). This shows that Jesus, after His resurrection, did not simply continue His earthly life with a body that had all the limitations of His former earthly body.<sup>171</sup>

The fact that Jesus is able to disappear ("he vanished from their sight," Lk 24:31, NASB) at the moment the disciples on the road to Emmaus "recognized Him" indicates that the resurrection body is not limited in the same manner as the present mortal body is. As suddenly as Jesus can disappear He can reappear. When the two disciples tell the others what had happened to them on the road to Emmaus, Jesus "Himself stood in their midst" (vs. 37).

The group of Jesus' followers were so startled and frightened by this sudden appearance of Jesus in their midst, they thought "they were seeing a spirit" (Lk 24:37, NASB). In order to avoid any kind of misunderstanding, Jesus said, "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (vs. 39, NASB).

There is a vital distinction between the "flesh and bones" as Jesus designates His resurrection body and what Paul describes as "flesh and blood" which "cannot inherit the kingdom" (1 Cor 15:50, NKJV). What does Paul mean by the expression "flesh and blood"

which he parallels with the phrase: "neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (KJV).

Paul's phrase "flesh and blood," in harmony with Semitic idiom, is a designation for "man's external life and [refers] also to his existence as a living creature, which is guaranteed by blood as the sap of life. From the very outset, then, the idea of mortality and creatureliness seems especially bound up with the phrase."<sup>172</sup> "Flesh and blood," thus, refers to man in his "mortality and creatureliness."

Paul says that in man's mortality, in his "flesh and blood," there is a "qualitative difference from God."<sup>173</sup> Accordingly, "flesh and blood" is a "Semitic expression for mortal human nature and has nothing to do, strictly speaking, with anatomy."<sup>174</sup> Therefore, it is wrong to understand Paul's phrase "flesh and blood" to mean the same thing as Jesus' phrase "flesh and bones" when the latter depicts His resurrection body. There is no opposition, if rightly understood, between what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:50 and what Luke writes when he quotes Jesus' expression "flesh and bones."

What does Jesus mean when He speaks of His resurrection body as "flesh and bones" and not identifiable with a "spirit" or a "ghost"? The expression "flesh and bones," as Jesus uses it, refers to His corporeal, bodily existence. A spirit or ghost has no corporeal or bodily existence. The risen Jesus, however, has that kind of existence.<sup>175</sup> The risen Jesus has "flesh and bones." He can be touched, He can eat, He can walk and talk, and so on. He has corporeality,<sup>176</sup> a physical body, but one which is not subject to mortality as is the body of "flesh and blood" of which Paul speaks.

The gospel records are unanimous and in agreement with each other, if rightly understood. Jesus was raised bodily. His resurrection was not immaterial and visionary. It was not hallucinatory and in the mind of the disciples. He came forth from the tomb with a genuine physical body. He could be touched, held, seen, talked with and talk, be eaten with and eat, and so on.

There can be no question about the reality of Jesus' physical resurrection and His bodily existence according to the witness of the gospels. Their evidence overwhelmingly supports a genuine bodily resurrection of Jesus and physical appearances.

There is, however, an aspect of Jesus' resurrection body that allows Him to appear and disappear at will. His resurrection body has qualities which are no longer bound to space and time in the same way His natural or mortal, pre-resurrection human body was bound to the space/time continuum. Jesus can appear and disappear, shall we say, materialize and dematerialize, in a way not possible with the pre-resurrection body. Furthermore, Jesus' resurrection body is also immortal, whereas the pre-resurrection body was mortal.

*Resurrection Evidence in 1 Corinthians 15.* The pivotal chapter on the resurrection in the NT outside the gospels is universally recognized to be 1 Corinthians 15. The problems and false teachings that floated around in the church at Corinth also included disbelief in the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of the faithful. Some in Corinth argued, "There is no resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor 15:12).

A complete study of the resurrection theme in this important chapter would fill a full-sized book. It will, therefore, be necessary to limit ourselves to some essential points.

1. *Passing on What Paul Received.* It is exciting to recognize that Paul begins his argument about the resurrection of Christ with the words, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received" (1 Cor 15:3, NASB). Many scholars have come to recognize that Paul passes on a report, or, as some would say, a "tradition" (1 Cor 15:3, REB). It is widely assumed today that 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 contains information which is of pre-Pauline origin.<sup>177</sup>

The information Paul supplies can be presented in the following schematic way:

- a. "Christ died for our sins according to Scripture."
- b. "He was buried."
- c. "He was raised on the third day according to Scripture."
- d. "He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve."
- e. "He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep."
- f. "He appeared to James."
- g. "then to all the apostles."

Evidently there is a sequence of four movements expressed by four different verbs: "died"—"buried"—"raised"—"appeared."

This sequence agrees completely with the records of Jesus' resurrection in the four gospels which we have already investigated. He cites this information which had come to him in order to demonstrate to the Corinthian believers that Christ Himself rose from the dead (1 Cor 15:20).

2. *The List of Witnesses.* Paul refers to five different categories of persons to whom Christ appeared.

a. **"Appeared."** For the sake of clarity we will make some brief comments on the verb used by Paul for the appearances. Paul used the Greek verb *ophthe* which is properly rendered into English as "appeared." This nuance is quite different from what is meant when one speaks of a vision.<sup>178</sup>

The verb "appeared" (*ophthe*) contains a distinctly visual aspect. It is seeing with human eyes, physical eyes and not the "eye of the mind" which sees that which is invisible to physical sight. In this sense what occurs in connection with the term "appeared" is a "real happening."<sup>179</sup>

While the physical reality is maintained, there is also an aspect in the term "appeared" which includes the idea of recognition. "Appeared" thus includes both the seeing as well as the recognizing of the One who appeared.

b. **Cephas/Peter and the Twelve.** Paul names first Cephas, that is, Peter, and then the Twelve as persons to whom Christ had first "appeared." This accords well with the reports in the gospels considered above.

c. **Five Hundred brethren.** Paul also provides information that Christ "appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep." C. H. Dodd states, "There can hardly be any purpose in mentioning the fact that most of the 500 are still alive, unless Paul is saying, in effect, 'the witnesses are there to be questioned'."<sup>180</sup> B. Klappert speaks of the "evidence of witnesses"<sup>181</sup> and argues that the statement that most of the 500 brethren are still alive means that "one can go to them and one can ask these witnesses."<sup>182</sup>

The little detail that Jesus appeared to these five hundred "brethren," that is, Christians, "at one time" (1 Cor 15:6, NASB)<sup>183</sup>

should not escape our attention. The Greek word *ephapax* (*one*) has in this context the meaning that the appearance of the resurrected Lord to this large group of believers occurred at a single gathering and not in a sequence of encounters over a period of time. On this basis we can understand Christ's appearance to be a one time appearance to a huge group of Christians.

Paul's appeal to eyewitnesses who are still alive has to be understood within the context of establishing a fact to prove a point. To provide proof by calling upon witnesses was a known practice in the Hellenistic world of Paul's time.<sup>184</sup> This is just what Paul was doing. The apostle wished to emphasize the "facticity of the resurrection" and the "historicity of the resurrection . . . by giving a convincing historical proof by the standards of that time."<sup>185</sup> By citing a list of witnesses for the post-resurrection appearances of Christ, Paul emphasizes that Christ's bodily resurrection and appearances were historical facts and not fiction, myth, or visionary experiences. The passage cannot be understood in its original intention as underscoring anything but historical reality and genuine fact.

d. **James and all the apostles.** The appearance to James is not mentioned in the gospels<sup>186</sup> or in the book of Acts. This is the only NT reference of Jesus' appearance to James, who is the "brother" of Jesus (Gal 1:19; cf. 2:9, 12; Acts 1:14; 12:17; 15:13; 21:18).

Jesus also appeared to "all the apostles" (vs. 7). The term apostles may include the "Twelve" mentioned previously (vs. 5), who were only eleven after Judas had killed himself. It seems to include Matthias (Acts 1:21-26) who was to witness with the others to Jesus' resurrection (vs. 22). It seems to include a few other eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry mentioned elsewhere in the NT (1 Cor 9:5-6; Rom 16:7; cf. Lk 24:33; Matt 28:16-17) who are described as pillars in the early church.

We are now in a position to draw some definite conclusions regarding 1 Corinthians 15:

(1) Paul cites what had been passed on to him and what he himself had passed on to the Corinthian believers regarding the resurrection of Jesus.

(2) Paul notes that there were a number of well known pillars

of the early church, as well as a crowd of more than 500 persons, many of whom were still living, who were eyewitness to the fact of Jesus' resurrection.

(3) Jesus "appeared" repeatedly in such a way that these appearances can only be understood as physical appearances of the risen Lord.

(4) The appeal to eyewitnesses demonstrates that the factuality of appearances was so obvious that persons still living could be asked about their reality.

(5) The resurrection of Jesus Christ on "the third day" is a special event in history which includes the fulfillment of OT predictions, "according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:4).

(6) The facticity of the resurrection can be accepted as a real historical event because it is supported by (a) the prior prediction "according to the Scriptures" and (b) prominent eyewitnesses who are still alive.

In sum, the apostle Paul denies today's liberal "scientific" presuppositions by insisting on a supernatural cause for Jesus' resurrection.<sup>187</sup> We have testified of God that he raised up Christ" (1 Cor 15:15, KJV). In this important passage Paul summarizes the core of Christian faith as it centers in Christ. Christ, upon whom the hope of salvation rests, died on the cross for our sins. He was buried in a tomb and "raised on the third day" according to the predictions made in the Scriptures. After His resurrection He physically "appeared" to many prominent eyewitnesses, "most of whom are still alive" and can be questioned regarding the reality of the bodily resurrection of Christ. Christians are challenged to hold on to this "gospel" (vs. 1) of the reality of Christ's real death, burial, resurrection and his physical appearances as the "word" (Greek *logos*) "through which also you are being saved" (vs. 2, NRSV).

#### Meaning of Jesus' Resurrection for Faith and Life

The centrality of the resurrection of Jesus for the "gospel" and the "word" to be proclaimed (1 Cor 15:1-2) is such that it cannot be emphasized enough. Christian faith stands or falls with the reality of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We may point to a few critical connections between the resurrection of Jesus and the faith and life of the believer.

**Revelation of Divine Power.** The resurrection of Jesus gave evidence that God has power over death. God's power is mightier than death and all other powers of earth taken together (Rom 8:38-39). The "power of God" which was manifested in the resurrection of Christ (2 Cor 13:4; Eph 1:19-20) guarantees that "we will live with him by the power of God" (2 Cor 13:4, NRSV). The life of the believer is associated with the life of the raised Lord.

Our present life with Christ and through Christ (physical and spiritual) is the life caused by God's creative act in conversion and manifested before in His creative act which also brought about the resurrection of Jesus. God proves Himself as Creator "who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (Rom 4:17, NRSV) and rescues believers from their trials (2 Cor 1:9-10).

**Accomplishment of Christ's Mission Assured.** The mission of our Lord Jesus Christ has two major focal points: one is the His role as the Suffering Servant; and the other is His role as the returning heavenly Son of Man.

The first mission was to be accomplished on the cross. Jesus fulfilled the role of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45, NASB). Jesus gained victory over sin and death on the cross; He died as "a ransom for many." He accomplished His task on the cross.

The second mission is yet to be accomplished. If Jesus were not raised physically from the dead, then He would still be resting in a grave in Palestine, and His teaching about His return in the clouds of heaven would be a massive deception. "If Jesus is dead, his entire message about the Kingdom of God is a delusion."<sup>188</sup>

Christ's second mission is dependent on the reality of His bodily resurrection. Since Jesus was physically raised from the dead, He could ascend into heaven and is able to return again in the clouds of heaven (Acts 1:6-11). Scripture affirms without any doubt or hesitation that He who rose and ascended to heaven "will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (vs. 11, NRSV). Jesus Second Coming is guaranteed by the fact of His resurrection and His ascension.

**Resurrection Makes the Cross Effective.** Paul states, "If

Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor 15:17, NASB). Christ's resurrection has a direct relationship to the sins of believers.

How can "you still be in your sins," if Christ is not risen? Is Christ's death on the cross not efficacious without his resurrection? No, it is not. Paul affirms that the death of Christ is not enough in itself, "for how can a dead Christ save others from death, which is the penalty of sin?"<sup>189</sup> Without His resurrection the death of Christ is ineffective. "If Jesus was not raised from the dead, then He was an impostor; faith in Him would not bring pardon for sin, and the sinner would retain his guilt."<sup>190</sup> The resurrection is needed to make the cross fully effective for the forgiveness of sins for each believer.

The resurrection of Jesus *makes possible* the justification of believers. Paul says, Jesus "was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25, NRSV). Indeed, "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor 15:3), and He "was raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25). The connection of the resurrection with justification (acquittal) has been linked to the future judgment.<sup>191</sup> The final judgment requires a living Christ. He plays a key role in that awesome event (John 5:22; 2 Cor 5:10). Without the resurrected Christ believers would find ultimate justification meaningless. In the pre-advent judgment the righteous will find justification by being acquitted by the Judge (cf. Dan 7:22).

Thus, we may take the phrase, "was raised for our justification," in the sense that He was raised to reaffirm ultimate "justification" to the righteous in the future judgment. He will bring justification by showing that they have fully and totally relied upon their Lord for their salvation. In this case the benefits of His death on the cross are applied by the risen Lord in the judgment for the justification of the saints. This means that "justification" is "*both* a past event in history and a future eschatological event [in judgment]."<sup>192</sup> The doers of the Law "will be justified" (Rom 2:13).

**Resurrection and Christian Baptism.** Christian baptism is represented as dying and rising with Christ. Certain statements in the NT link Jesus' death and resurrection with the believer's dying-with and rising-with Christ so that he/she may live with Christ. Paul states, "Therefore we have been buried with Him

through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4, NASB). In vs. 11 Paul continues, "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus" (NASB). In Colossians 2:12 a briefer statement of the same idea is presented: "Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (NASB).

Three ideas seem to be brought together. First, the present dimension of obedience in terms of walking in newness of life, is expressed in Romans 6:4, 11. In baptism we died with Christ, "in order that as Christ was raised . . . so we too might walk in newness of life," and we need to consider ourselves "dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus."

To "walk in newness of life" means to live the life of genuine discipleship, being alive to God. The believer is now "alive to God" in relationship with Christ who was raised from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus makes it possible to "walk in newness of life." If Christ were not physically raised from the dead, then there would be no foundation for the believer to be able to walk the walk of faith with Christ (cf. 1 John 1:3, 7).

The second idea relates to the first but is different. It is "a present dimension of faith"<sup>193</sup> in addition to the present dimension of obedient discipleship. It is a "consideration" of faith: "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus." The present faith dimension is the consideration to be "dead to sin" and "alive to God." The latter is made possible by the resurrection of Jesus as well.

The third idea involves a move from the present with its faith and obedient discipleship dimensions to the future dimension of faith. "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" (Rom 6:8, NASB). As Christ was raised from the dead and is alive, so the believer knows by faith that he/she will be raised in the future and "live with Him." This eschatological dimension of the believer's resurrection is based in the reality of Jesus' own resurrection.

**Resurrection and "First Fruits."** In 1 Corinthians 15:20 Paul makes another profound statement, "But in fact"<sup>194</sup> Christ has

been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep" (NRSV). Christ is here presented as the "first fruits" of those who have died. This passage reveals in its two parts the relationship between the reality/factuality<sup>195</sup> of the resurrection of Jesus and the subsequent general resurrection of the dead who died in Christ.

Every expectation of a future resurrection of the dead is dependent on the resurrection of Jesus. If Jesus was not raised from the dead as a physical reality, then no one will be raised from the dead in such a reality either. There can be no future expectation of eschatological hope unless Christ was raised bodily from the dead. "Every future expectation which is not determined by the bodily resurrection of Jesus is for Paul no real hope."<sup>196</sup>

The risen Lord Jesus Christ is the "first fruits" of all believers who have fallen asleep. His bodily resurrection is the guarantee that they too will be raised as He was raised.

The idea of "first fruits"<sup>197</sup> also implies that the resurrection of the righteous will as surely follow the resurrection of Christ as day follows night (1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14; 1 Thess 4:14; Rom 8:11). Believers still fall asleep, but because they are connected with Jesus Christ, the Risen One, they no longer belong under the power of the first Adam. Death has no final and ultimate power over them (1 Cor 15:25-26).

All the righteous "will be made alive in Christ" (1 Cor 15:22). The verb *zoopoieo*, "to make alive," expresses a future act of creation.<sup>198</sup> This new creative act will happen at the proper time. All believers who remained loyal to Christ (vs. 23: "who belong to Christ," NRSV) will be raised "at his coming" (vs. 23). This reveals that the resurrection of the righteous is still a future event involving divine creative power. It will take place when Christ returns in the clouds of heaven; it has not taken place as yet.<sup>199</sup>

The bodily resurrection of Jesus is required so that there will be a genuine resurrection of His people from the dead when He returns at His Second Coming. Then the righteous will be raised (1 Thess 4:14-16) and will be "glorified with Him" (Rom 8:17), will be "with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:17), will "live together with Him" (1 Thess 5:10) and will "reign with Him" (2 Tim 2:12).

As believers we are reminded that even now "our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil 3:22), and when Christ returns, He "will trans-

form the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory" (vs. 23, NASB). The resurrection body of the righteous will be in affinity with the immortal resurrection body of Christ. "At his coming" (1 Cor 15:23, NRSV), "at the last trumpet" (vs. 52), the righteous "dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality" (vss. 52-54, NRSV).

This biblical certainty is provided in and through Jesus' bodily resurrection. Knowing this, believers can "be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord" (vs. 58, NRSV). Our present faith finds its source of immovable power in the physical death and bodily resurrection of our Lord, historical events of the past, and in the certainty of the promised bodily resurrection and expected immortality as gifts of our Lord in the future.

### Endnotes

1 Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?" *Dialog* 4 (Spring 1965): 128.

2 Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM Press, 1965), p. 165.

3 William Childs Robinson, "The Bodily Resurrection of Christ," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 13/2 (1957): 81.

4 James I. Packer, "Response to the Debate [on the Resurrection]," *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead? The Resurrection Debate*, Gary R. Habermas and Antony G. N. Flew, ed. Terry L. Miethe (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 143-144.

5 In England Thomas Woolston, *Discourses on the Miracles of our Saviour* (1729) maintains that Jesus' disciples had stolen his body and subsequently they themselves spread another story which in the course of time they themselves believed in. In Germany G. E. Lessing published anonymously H. S. Reimarus' *Wolfenbüttel Fragmente* (1747). The latter was deeply influenced by English Deists and argued that the disciples invented the resurrection of Jesus. For an excellent survey of studies from Reimarus to the beginning of the twentieth century, see P. Hoffmann, "Die historisch-kritische Osterdiskussion von H. S. Reimarus bis zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Welt der Forschung* 522 (1975): 15-67.

6 Published by Thomas Nelson Publishers in Nashville, TN.

7 I have read the titles of all of them. Any scholar is forced to consider only a limited selection of representative articles when there is such a wealth of information available.

8 See for the most recent ones the books and articles by Jacob Kremer, "Entstehung und Inhalt des Osterglaubens, zur neueren Diskussion," *Theologische Rundschau* 72 (1976), 1-14; H. Hübner, "Kreuz und Auferstehung im Neuen Testament," *Theologische Rundschau* 54/3 (1989): 262-306; Pheme Perkins, *Resurrection. New Testament Witness and Contemporary Reflection* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984).

9 E. Schweizer, "Resurrection - Fact or Fiction?" *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 1 (1979): 137-159.

10 Daniel L. Migliore, "How Historical is the Resurrection?" *Theology Today* 33 (1976): 5-14.

11 J. W. D. Smith, "The Resurrection of Christ: Myth or History?" *Expository Times* 72 (1961): 370-375.

12 The wording of the "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-Day Adventists" as voted in Dallas, Texas, at the 1980 General Conference session refers to the resurrection of Jesus in the statement under "4. The Son" as follows: "He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, *was raised from the dead* [italics supplied], and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf." It should not go unmentioned that there were major Adventist theologians, Bible teachers, and others who suggested and urged that one word be inserted to make the statement on the resurrection of Jesus more clear. They suggested that the clause read, "was raised bodily from the dead." Unfortunately the word "bodily" was never included in the various revisions that were made over a period of more than two years before it came to the final vote on the floor of the General Conference session. As a result this statement as voted is less precise and more open to various interpretations than is necessary.

13 Jürgen Moltmann, "Christianity in the Third Millennium," *Theology Today* 51/1 (April, 1994): 80-81.

14 This author has made a mark in scholarship in the history of ancient Near Eastern law and its relationship to the NT.

15 Published in Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire, by P. Drinkwater.

16 W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 214-215.

17 Published in New York by Bantam Books, 1967.

18 George Eldon Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1975), p. 135.

19 Karl Friedrich Bahr, an orthodox cleric turned rationalist, wrote several works in German between 1782 and 1792 in which he developed his version of the "swoon theory." Karl Heinrich Venturini, another rationalist, held to the same theory in his four volume work on the non-supernatural history of Jesus published between 1800-1802. See the work of Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 43-44, 46-47.

20 Heinrich E. G. Paulus, *Das Leben Jesu als Grundlage einer reinen Geschichte des Urchristentums* (1828) I, 2, pp. 303-331.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 331.

22 See G. Oepke, "anistemi," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), I:668-372; L. Coenen and C. Brown, "Resurrection," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. C. Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), III:259-281; J. Kremer, "Anastasis, Resurrection," *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. H. Balz and G. Schneider (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), I:88-92.

23 R. C. Roberts, "Bultmann, Rudolf," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. W. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984), p. 180.

24 See Stephen Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1961* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 222-235; R. C. Briggs, *Interpreting the New Testament Today* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1973), pp. 240-249.

25 R. Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. H.-W. Bartsch (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 39. This programmatic essay was first written and presented in 1941.

26 R. Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" *Existence and Faith. Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann*, ed. S. M. Ogden (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing, 1965), p. 291, writes, "The historical method includes the presupposition that history is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum of effects in which individual events are connected by the succession of cause and effect."

27 *Ibid.*

28 So correctly translated by Carl E. Braaten, *History and Hermeneutics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 86.

29 *Ibid.*

30 Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 42.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

34 R. Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus," *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ: Essays on the New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville (Nashville: Abingdon, 1964), p. 42. Cf. R. Bultmann, *Das Verhältnis der urchristlichen Christusbotschaft zum historischen Jesus* (4th ed.; Heidelberg: Karl Winter, 1965), p. 27.

35 *Ibid.*

36 Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," p. 39.

37 Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus," p. 42; *idem*, *Das Verhältnis der urchristlichen Christusbotschaft zum historischen Jesus*, p. 27.

38 Braaten, *History and Hermeneutics*, p. 78, speaks of the irony of the form-critical study of the NT to which Bultmann was a main contributor.

39 "Interview With Rudolf Bultmann," p. 255.

40 Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Kerygmatic Christ," p. 42.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 30

42 *Ibid.*

43 *Der Spiegel* (July 25, 1966).

44 "An Interview With Rudolf Bultmann," *Christianity and Crisis* 26 (Nov. 14, 1966): 255.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 254.

46 See the description in Van A. Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer* (2nd ed.; Toronto: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 3-37; E. Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 56-58.

47 It would go beyond the intention of this essay to mention every publication which has dealt with his views. See the insightful discussion of Bultmann's demythologization program in the light of his views on miracle (the resurrection of Jesus being one of them) in Colin Brown, *Miracles and the Critical Mind* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1984), 248-255; W. Schmithals, *An Introduction to the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* (London: SCM Press, 1968), pp. 126-146; C. Brown, "Bultmann Revisited," *The Churchman* 88 (1974): 167-187.

48 For a detailed description of the either/or of history and faith in Bultmann and its problems, see Anthony Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament*

*Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans and Exeter: Paternoster, 1980), pp. 205-292; idem, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), pp. 274-276, 279-282.

49 See the insightful study on the relationship of the laws of physics and the resurrection by T. F. Torrance, *Space, Time, and Resurrection* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976) and G. O'Collins, *What Are They Saying About the Resurrection?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), pp. 76-81.

60 Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus*, p. 138.

61 Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Four Gospels. A Study of Origins* (first published in 1924; London: Macmillan & Co., 1951).

62 B. H. Streeter, *Foundations: A Statement of Christian Belief in Terms of Modern Thought: By Seven Oxford Men* (London: Macmillan, 1912), p. 140.

63 Ibid., p. 136.

64 W. Kasper, *Jesus, The Christ* (New York: Paulist, 1976), pp. 135-140, also speaks of the "sign" nature of Jesus' resurrection.

65 G. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 180.

66 Ibid., p. 183.

67 Ibid., p. 182.

68 Ibid., p. 183 (italics his).

69 Ibid., p. 183.

60 Willi Marxsen, "The Resurrection of Jesus as a Historical and Theological Problem," *The Significance of the Message of the Resurrection for Faith in Jesus Christ*, ed. C. F. D. Moule (London: SCM Press, 1968), pp. 15-50; idem, *The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970).

61 Marxsen, "The Resurrection of Jesus as a Historical and Theological Problem," p. 24.

62 Marxsen, "The Resurrection of Jesus," p. 16.

63 Ibid., p. 31.

64 Ibid., p. 41.

65 Ibid., p. 34 (italics his).

66 For a description of Marxsen's views, see Peter Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 154-162.

67 Marxsen, *The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 128.

68 U. Wilckens, *Auferstehung. Das biblische Auferstehungszeugnis untersucht und erklärt* (Stuttgart/Berlin; Kreuz Verlag, 1970), pp. 157-158.

69 The English translation was produced from his 5th edition of 1965 by James Leitch and first published in English in 1967 by SCM Press in London.

70 For an assessment of Moltmann's theology, see Richard Bauckham, *Moltmann: Messianic Theology in the Making* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1987).

71 Richard Bauckham, "Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* Revisited," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 42 (1989): 202.

72 Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 165.

73 Unfortunately, some have interpreted Moltmann as if he supports a literal resurrection of Jesus as a historical phenomenon. For example, Langdon Gilkey, *Religion and the Scientific Future: Reflections on Myth, Science, and Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 150 n.; Dale Vree *On Synthesizing*

*Marxism and Christianity* (New York: Wiley, 1976), p. 100; John Macquarrie, *Christian Hope* (New York: Seabury, 1978), p. 77.

74 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 173.

75 Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution and the Future* (New York: Scribner's, 1969), p. 54.

76 Jürgen Moltmann, "Die Kategorie *Novum* in der christlichen Theologie," *Perspektiven der Theologie: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (München: Christian Kaiser, 1968), p. 179.

77 Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 197.

78 Ibid.

79 Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 168.

80 Ibid., pp. 167-168.

81 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981) p. 85.

82 It is incorrect to include Moltmann as belonging to those who "speak of the resurrection as a historical event" as was done by Braaten, *History and Hermeneutics*, p. 92.

83 Against Bauckham, "Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* Revisited," p. 210, who suggested that Moltmann holds to a physical resurrection.

84 Randall E. Otto, "The Resurrection in Jürgen Moltmann," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35/1 (1992): 88.

85 See particularly Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?" *Dialog* 4 (1965): 128-135; idem, *Jesus—God and Man* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968); idem, *Grundfragen systematischer Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967); idem, *Basic Questions in Theology*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970-1973). On Pannenberg's view of the resurrection of Jesus, see D. P. Fuller, *Easter Faith and History* (1968), pp. 177-187; E. Frank Tupper, *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), pp. 146-160; William Lane Craig, "Pannenberg's Beweis für die Auferstehung Jesu," *Kerygma und Dogma. Zeitschrift für theologische Forschung und kirchliche Lehre* 34 (1988): 78-104.

86 Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Response to the Debate," *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead? The Resurrection Debate: Gary R. Habermas and Antony G. N. Flew*, ed. Terry L. Miethe (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 134-135.

87 Pannenberg, "Response to the Debate," p. 126.

88 Ibid.

89 Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen zur Auferstehung Jesu," *Kerygma und Dogma* 14 (1968), p. 111.

90 Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, p. 99.

91 Ibid., p. 93.

92 Ibid., p. 8.

93 Ibid., p. 92.

94 Ibid., p. 76.

95 Ibid.

96 Pannenberg, "Response to the Debate," p. 132.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid., p. 129.



- 99 Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen zur Auferstehung Jesus," p. 112.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Pannenberg, "Response to the Debate," p. 132.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 Ibid., p. 131.
- 104 Ibid., p. 133.
- 105 Ibid., p. 133.
- 106 Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, p. 74; idem, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), pp. 129-130.
- 107 Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, p. 135.
- 108 Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Grundzüge der Christologie* (2nd ed.; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1966), p. 90.
- 109 The normal NT noun for a "vision" is *horama*. See W. Michaelis, "horama," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1967), 5:369-370.
- 110 The Greek terms *ouranios optasia*, traditionally rendered "heavenly vision," is best rendered "heavenly appearance." W. Michaelis, "optasia," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1967), 5:372-373, states, "In terms of current usage Lk. is not calling this a vision, and he commonly uses *horama* for it. Less, or even no emphasis at all is placed on the visual element as compared with the revelation by word and its demand for obedience."
- 111 So perceptively Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles. A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), p. 686.
- 112 Michaelis, "optasia," p. 372.
- 113 Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 900.
- 114 William Lane Craig, "Pannenberg's Beweis für die Auferstehung," pp. 96-98.
- 115 H. Clavier, "Brèves remarques sur la notion de *soma pneumatikon*," *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*, eds. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 361, as cited by Craig, "Pannenberg's Beweis für die Auferstehung Jesus," p. 100.
- 116 K. A. Bauer, *Leiblichkeit—das Ende aller Werke Gottes* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1971), pp. 137-140.
- 117 Christian Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1982), pp. 198-199.
- 118 Ernst Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi* (1933) as cited by E. Schweizer, "pneuma, pneumatikos," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 4:420.
- 119 Pannenberg, "Response to the Debate," p. 134.
- 120 Daniel P. Fuller, "The Resurrection of Jesus and the Historical Method," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 34 (1966): 24.
- 121 Craig, "Pannenberg's Beweis für die Auferstehung Jesus," p. 92.
- 122 Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Redemptive Event and History," *Basic Questions in Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 1:56, states himself that "faith loses its independence by being bound to the results of historical research and thus [it is] subjected to the authority of science. . . . But historical science by no means claims to be the kind of authority that demands blind subjection. It invites every competent person to make his own test of its results."
- 123 There are a number of other views; see PHEME PERKINS, *Resurrection:*

- New Testament Witness and Contemporary Reflection* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), pp. 331-420; Peter Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).
- 124 So C. F. Evans, *Resurrection and the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1970), p. 1.
- 125 Perkins, *Resurrection*, p. 17.
- 126 I follow the texts listed in Perkins, *Resurrection*, pp. 5-6, but in the order of the NT writings.
- 127 I follow the sequence presented by William Lane Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*, *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity*, vol. 16 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989).
- 128 The issue of the Wednesday crucifixion theory cannot be discussed at this time. See Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Time of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1985); Josh McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1981), pp. 121-123.
- 129 Note Mark 16:6 with the statement "here is the place where they laid him" (NASB).
- 130 Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence*, p. 179.
- 131 John 19:41. It is reported that the remains of a garden were still in existence next to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in AD 350 as reported by Cyril of Jerusalem (Cyril, *Catechesis* 14.5, see PG 33.829B).
- 132 For a critique of the supposed conflicting traditions and the alleged flight of the disciples to Galilee, see Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence*, pp. 188-196. He shows that the different aspects of the gospels harmonize admirably. See also John Wenham, *Easter Enigma: Are the Resurrection Accounts in Conflict?* (Exeter: Devon, 1984): 55-67.
- 133 So most critical NT scholars; see for example, Marxsen, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, pp. 44-47; F. Neirynck, "John and the Synoptics: The Empty Tomb Stories," *New Testament Studies* 30 (1984): 161-187.
- 134 So in this century Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1925), p. 357.
- 135 G. Baldensperger, "Le tombeau vide," *RHPR* 12 (1932): 413-443; 13 (1933): 105-144; 14 (1934) 97-125.
- 136 This claim is old and already referred to in the NT as a false claim (Matt 28:11-15).
- 137 Kirsopp Lake, *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (New York: Putnam & Sons, 1907), pp. 251-252; P. Gardner-Smith, *The Narratives of the Resurrection* (London: Methuen, 1926), pp. 134-139.
- 138 This is also an ancient theory mentioned by the church father Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, 30.
- 139 Leslie D. Weatherhead, *The Resurrection of Christ* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1959), pp. 43-45.
- 140 This theory was discussed above.
- 141 So Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (rev. ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 290. This position is held also by Hans Grass, *Ostergeschehen und Osterberichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), p. 93; Hans-Werner Bartsch, *Das Auferstehungszeugnis* (Hamburg: Herbert Reich, 1965), 22; W. H. Lampe and D. M. Mackinnon, *The Resurrection* (London: Mowbray, 1966), pp. 46-48, among others who follow Bultmann.

142 It is to be noted that the results of form criticism, a methodology of the historical-critical method, is utilized to demonstrate that the empty tomb reports of the gospels are unreliable. See Braaten, *History and Hermeneutics*, pp. 78-82, who speaks of the "irony of the form-critical consensus."

143 So correctly Paul Althaus, *Die Wahrheit des kirchlichen Osterglaubens* (Gütersloh: H. Bertelsmann, 1941), p. 26.

144 This is the approach of Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus*, pp. 79-89; Wenham, *Easter Enigma*, pp. 68-89. The most careful to fit the various aspects of the picture together is Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence*, pp. 197-222.

145 T. R. W. Longstaff, "The Women at the Tomb: Matthew 28:1 Re-examined," *New Testament Studies* 27 (1980/81), pp. 277-282.

146 See Michael Perry, *The Easter Enigma* (London: Faber & Faber, 1959), pp. 98-99.

147 Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence*, pp. 211-222; McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, pp. 54-58.

148 McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, p. 54.

149 Note again the refutation of the historicity in Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence*, pp. 244-247.

150 C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 466.

151 This is argued among others convincingly by Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus und die Korinther*, p. 161.

152 Oscar Cullmann, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (London: SCM Press, 1949), p. 32.

153 The following is a representative sample: James W. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1975), pp. 115-122; Paul Hoffmann, "Auferstehung," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 4 (1979), pp. 450-567; Gerald O'Collins, *The Easter Jesus* (2nd ed.; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980), p. 84; James M. Robinson, "Jesus from Easter to Valentinus (or to the Apostles' Creed)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101 (1982): 6-17; W. Winden, *Wie kam es und wie kommt es zum Osterglauben* (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1982); I. Boer and J. Werbick, eds. "Der Herr ist wahrhaftig auferstanden" (Lk 24, 34). *Biblische und systematische Beiträge zur Entstehung des Osterglaubens* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988); H. Hoffmann, ed., *Zur neutestamentlichen Überlieferung von der Auferstehung Jesu* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988).

154 Hans Grass, *Ostergeschehen und Osterberichte* (4th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), p. 28.

155 There are many others in addition to the examples cited above. R. Scroggs, *The Last Adam* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), p. 92: "The New Testament Church does not agree about the nature of Christ's resurrection body. Material in Luke and John perhaps suggest this body to be corporeal in nature. Paul, on the other hand, clearly argues that the body is a spiritual body. If any historical memory resides in the accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts, he must not have understood the appearance of Christ to have been a corporeal appearance."

156 Hans Grass, *Christliche Glaubenslehre* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1973), 1:101-102; idem, *Ostergeschehen und Osterberichte*, pp. 138-186, for his extensive attempt to place a deep and unbridgeable gap between Paul and the gospel records.

157 There are a host of others who declare these gospel accounts to be legend and/or legendary. The following are representative on the North American continent: Reginald H. Fuller, *The Formation of the Resurrection Narratives* (London: SPCK, 1972), p. 79; Richard R. Niebuhr, *Resurrection and Historical Reason* (New York: Scribner's, 1957), pp. 60-61; R. E. Brown, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection* (London: G. Chapman, 1973), p. 91, argues for the transformation in the resurrection which makes it impossible to take a photographic picture of the risen Christ.

158 Eduard Schweizer, "Die Leiblichkeit des Menschen: Leben—Tod—Auferstehung," *Beiträge zur Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, ed. E. Schweizer (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1970), pp. 177-180.

159 This designation is used here for the reading of the biblical text at face value without reading above, behind, below, or in any other way the text of Scripture. It is a literal reading of the text as it stands in its final form.

160 This is even admitted by those who wish to discount the gospel records as legends; see Grass, *Ostergeschehen und Osterglauben*, p. 92.

161 The form is an aorist passive of *egeiro* which means "be raised, rise . . . of one who has died" as is stated in Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*, p. 215.

162 V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1963), p. 607.

163 E. Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus, übersetzt und erklärt* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, n.d.), p. 344.

164 Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence*, p. 341.

165 Wolfgang Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, n.d.), p. 416.

166 Johannes Schneider, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (2nd ed.; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1978), p. 324.

167 C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: SPCK, 1972), p. 572.

168 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), p. 807.

169 Schneider, *Johannes*, p. 324.

170 Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence*, p. 342.

171 Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 411.

172 R. Meyer, "sarx," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 7:116.

173 Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, p. 205.

174 Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence*, p. 343.

175 E. Schweizer, "sarx," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 7:124: "In Lk 24:39 'flesh and bones' denotes the substance of earthy man. The contrast is between the corporeal and the non-corporeal worlds."

176 Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 416.

177 Perkins, *Resurrection: New Testament Witness and Contemporary Reflection*, p. 88, speaks in summarizing contemporary scholarship as follows: "Scholars generally agree that the formula in 1 Cor 15:3-5 embodies a pre-Pauline tradition." Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*, 3: "Taken together these considerations have persuaded

virtually all New Testament scholars that vs. 3-7 do contain a pre-Pauline formula."

178 Jacob Kremer, *Das älteste Zeugnis von der Auferstehung Christi* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1967), pp. 57-58.

179 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

180 C. H. Dodd, "The Appearances of the Risen Christ: A Study in Form-Criticism of the Gospels," *More New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), p. 128.

181 Bertold Klappert, ed., *Diskussion um Kreuz und Auferstehung* (2nd ed.; Wuppertal: AUSAAT Verlag, 1967), p. 10.

182 *Ibid.*, p. 10 n. 3.

183 NRSV reads "at one time"; NIV reads "at the same time"; REB reads "at once."

184 Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Ist Jesus wirklich auferstanden?" *Ist Jesus wirklich auferstanden? Geistliche Woche für Südwestdeutschland von der Evangelischen Akademie Mannheim vom 16. bis 23. February 1964* (Karlsruhe: Evangelische Akademie Mannheim, 1964), p. 24.

185 Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, p. 89.

186 The apocryphal "Gospel of the Hebrews," which is of Egyptian provenance and is assigned to the second century A.D. reports that the Lord "went to James and appeared to him," translated from the citation in Jerome, *vir. inl.* 2 in E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 165.

187 The resurrection of Jesus is the result of a supernatural cause. The point regarding this issue made by Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*, 420, is worth citing: "... the methodological principle that prohibits any historian from adducing a supernatural cause for an event in history seems to be either arbitrary or based on bad science or philosophy. For as long as the existence of God is even possible, an event's [sic] being caused by God cannot be ruled out."

188 Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus*, p. 146.

189 A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1967), p. 349.

190 F. D. Nichol, ed., "1 Corinthians," in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Publ. Assoc., 1957), 6:803.

191 Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus*, p. 147.

192 *Ibid.*, p. 148.

193 L. Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 2:103. We rely on Goppelt for the three dimensions in this section but do not agree with him on all details.

194 The Greek word *nuni* means "in fact" (so the rendering of NRSV which we have followed in the first part of this verse) or "in reality" (so Wolff, *Der Erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 2:176 n. 140). Cf. G. Stählin, "nun," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1967), 4:1109 n. 33, renders this particle in 1 Cor 15:20 with "in reality." This usage of the particle in this context refers to the factual reality.

195 See the previous note.

196 Wolff, *Der Erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 2:175.

197 The terminology of "first fruits" seems to be connected with the wave

sheaf of the barley harvest which was performed on Nisan 16 (cf. Lev 23:10). The resurrection of Christ took place on this very day and is a typological fulfillment of this offering (Lk 23:56; 24:1). In the same manner as the "first fruits" of that OT sacrificial system was a pledge of the full harvest at the end of the agricultural year, so the resurrection of Jesus was the "first fruits" of the final resurrection of all the faithful at the time of the end when the harvest of the world will be collected.

198 H. Schwantes, *Schöpfung der Endzeit* (Berlin: Evang. Verlag, 1963), pp. 56-61.

199 The reference here is clearly to the Second Coming for which Paul uses the technical term *parousia*. On the timing of the Coming of Christ in relationship with the "end," see Kremer, *Das älteste Zeugnis von der Auferstehung Christi*, p. 92.

"I will praise You, O Lord, faithfully  
and wonderfully make:  
Marvelous are Your works,  
And that my soul knows very well—  
Your eyes saw my calamities,  
being yet unformed;  
and in Your book they all were written.  
The days fashioned for me,  
When as yet there were none of them."

181 The reference here is clearly to the fact that the Greek text of the Gospels is not a copy of a copy, but a copy of the original. On the other hand, the fact that the Greek text of the Gospels is not a copy of a copy, but a copy of the original, is not a proof of the fact that the Greek text of the Gospels is not a copy of a copy, but a copy of the original.

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### LIFE SKETCH

## GERHARD FRANZ HASEL, 1935-1994

Berrien Springs, Michigan

Gerhard Franz Hasel was born in Vienna, Austria, on July 27, 1935, and next to youngest child of Franz Joseph and Helene (Schroeter) Hasel, and passed away on August 11, 1994, at the time of death he was serving as the first John Newton Lewis Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology and co-director of the Ph.D. and Th.M. Programs at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University. Earlier he served seven years (1961-1968) as Dean of the Seminary.

He was a highly regarded scholar, an exceptionally productive and an effective administrator, an active leader in his local church and a faithful and affectionate family man. If the phone rings the first thing he does is to pick up the receiver, and I am sure that he would have done the same thing if he had been in the office.

**"I will praise You, for I am fearfully  
and wonderfully made;  
Marvelous are Your works,  
And that my soul knows very well. . . .  
Your eyes saw my substance,  
being yet unformed.  
And in Your book they all were written,  
The days fashioned for me,  
When as yet there were none of them."**

Gerhard spent the war years, 1935-1945, near Frankfurt, Germany, growing from 4 to age 10. His accounts of those years are a vivid and dramatic chronicle of war hardships. His father, a physician and literature translator, was very drafted into the Wehrmacht and assigned to the Russian front. From there he came

THE SKETCH

GERHARD FRANZ HASSEL, 1935-1994

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And in Your book they all were written,  
I have fashioned for me,  
When as yet there were none of them."

C. Mervyn Maxwell  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Retired  
Andrews University  
Berrien Springs, Michigan

Gerhard Franz Hasel was born in Vienna, Austria, on July 27, the third and next to youngest child of Franz Joseph and Helene (*nee* Schroeter) Hasel, and passed away on August 11, 1994 aged 59. At the time of death he was serving as the first John Nevins Andrews Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology and as Director of the Ph.D. and Th.D. Programs at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University. Earlier he had served seven years (1981-1988) as Dean of the Seminary.

He was a highly regarded scholar, an exceptionally productive author, an effective administrator, an active leader in his local church, and a faithful and affectionate family man. If the phone messages that have been coming to me are any indication, and I am sure they are, his death has been a deep shock to many, producing a profound sense of loss. One caller, from California, observed that Dr. Hasel was a giant who won the respect of scholars of other religions without compromising his own principles. A church leader in the East spoke of him as "a remarkable scholar whose heart was committed to the Adventist message and who was a most effective defender of the faith." The pastor of a congregation far out in the Nebraska Panhandle said, "My people dearly loved him."

FAXes have come in from several overseas divisions of the Adventist organization. One, from the Africa-Indian Ocean Division, said, "The light he lit across Africa will continue to burn brightly." His two sisters are here with us [at the funeral, August 17, 1994] from California, and his older brother from Germany. Also here are representatives from various institutions and church administrative entities.

Gerhard spent the war years, 1939-1945, in or near Frankfurt, Germany, growing from 4 to age 10. His accounts of those years have formed week-long series at camp meetings. His father, a minister and literature evangelist, was early drafted into the Wehrmacht and assigned to the Russian front. From time to time

when alone he drew courage from a fading picture of the Daniel 2 image, which he treasured in a pocket, reminding himself that Hitler must fail sooner or later. A convinced non-combatant, he nonetheless saw his share of danger, but under heaven's blessing he became one of only seven men out of his original battalion of several hundred, to return home alive. He was one of only two of the seven who came home uninjured.

Gerhard's mother took a firm stand that none of her children would attend school on the Sabbath. One crucial occasion, while her small children waited at home for her return or for their being scattered to unknown destinations, the officer who was expected to sentence her fell ill, so that at the critical moment he was replaced by an officer who had once been befriended by an Adventist couple. Gerhard's mother returned home to some very happy children. The immovable commitment of his parents to God's Word clearly contributed a lifelong attribute to Dr. Hasel's character.

The passing of years found Gerhard completing elementary and secondary schools and entering a trade school. In 1953, when he was 18, he was identified as the best apprentice in electrical engineering in all of Frankfurt and was subsequently designated the best apprentice in electrical engineering in the state of Hessen. With these impressive citations came an invitation to the Technical College in nearby Darmstadt with full scholarship support through graduate school. But as the Lord worked on his heart, he kept asking himself, "Why should I work in a field that anyone else could choose? Why don't I do something for the Lord that only I could do?"

So thinking, he turned down the proffered scholarship and enrolled in the theology program at the little Seventh-day Adventist Marienhöhe Seminary (also in Darmstadt), completing the four-year licentiate program in 1958. To meet expenses, he did colporteur work every summer, following in the footsteps of his father, who became the Publishing Director for the Central European Division. Dr. Hasel often observed later that the literature work is a most valuable preparation for the ministry.

In the summer of 1958, he and his older brother Kurt—who is now a retired pastor-evangelist in Germany—asked God for a sign. If either of them sold above a certain minimum, they would con-

clude that the Lord wanted that one to study in America; but if either earned less, that one should go to Newbold College in Britain. They entered into a covenant, separated to different areas, set to work, and did very well, except that (as Kurt remembers) Gerhard sold double what he did.

Thus in 1958 Gerhard traveled to the United States by ship and enrolled at Atlantic Union College. Gerhard's first goal was to learn English and his second, to find answers to theological questions. Among his classmates at AUC was Jim North, who in 1988 became a member of the Seminary faculty.

Building on his work at Marienhöhe, Gerhard completed (1959) a BA in one year and moved to Berrien Springs, where he earned (1960) an MA in Systematic Theology in a single year—still canvassing in the summers to pay his way. By 1962 he had a B.D. (the degree now known as an M.Div.). But in the meantime, on June 11, 1961, in Chicago, he married Hilde Schäfer. Hilde was still a student at Emmanuel Missionary College and thought she was much too young to get married. But when Gerhard persuaded her that she was unquestionably old enough, she gave her consent. "It was the best decision I ever made," she says. Over time, three children were born to them, Michael, Marlana, and Melissa, all of them now married. How good the parents looked together at Melissa's wedding, so little time ago!

Upon receiving his B.D., Gerhard served first as a pastor in Boston for a year (1962-1963) and then as Assistant Professor of Religion at Southern College for four years (1963-1967), being ordained to the gospel ministry in 1966. In 1967 he began a 27-year teaching career at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, starting as Assistant Professor and ending, as of July this year, as the first John Nevins Andrews Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology.

In 1970 he completed a Ph.D. program in Biblical Studies at Vanderbilt in Nashville. He had divided his class work evenly between New and Old Testaments, but his dissertation was based on the Old Testament: "The Origin and Early History of the Remnant Motif in Ancient Israel." A legend floats among Adventist academics that his major professor, who did not share Gerhard's confidence in Scripture as the Word of God, told a subsequent

Adventist student that Gerhard Hasel was his most brilliant student to date and was also the most firm in standing for his convictions. To help finance his university training he accepted two named scholarships, a Hillel Scholarship and a Danforth Teacher Grant.

In 1976 (-1982), when Dr. Siegfried Horn became Dean, Dr. Hasel became chairman of the Seminary's Old Testament Department and Director of the Ph.D. and Th.D. programs (1976-1994).

After Dr. Tom Blinco's Deanship, Dr. Hasel served as Dean for seven years beginning in 1981 (Sept. 1). At that time the so-called "Ford crisis" had just peaked, and church leaders around the world demanded that the denomination's premier Seminary be headed by a reputable scholar of self-evident loyalty to the Seventh-day Adventist Fundamentals. During his tenure as Dean, Dr. Hasel balanced the Seminary's budget in spite of severe financial difficulties, called several strong faculty members, led in a reorganization of the curriculum which enhanced its "practices" quality, and in general developed a Seminary that proved to be a delight to the Spring, 1989 accreditation team. Noting that our seminary was one to be proud of, "equal to any in the land," the team leader told the assembled faculty, "You should go out and celebrate." (We did.)

At the time of his death Dr. Hasel was an active member of seven learned societies<sup>1</sup> and of two honorary societies.<sup>2</sup> He was listed in nine "Who's Who" kinds of publications, including *Men of Achievement*, 6th edition, and the prestigious *Dictionary of International Biography*.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, theological concern provoked discussion at Columbia Union College and Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists about the possible formation of a new society directed against perceived permutations. Thus was born, in 1988, at Southern College, the Adventist Theological Society, with Dr. Jack Blanco as its first president. Though reluctant to provide leadership at first, Dr. Hasel became a strong president of the new organization in 1990 (-1992) and continued to give considerable attention to it until his death. He believed that what ATS stood for was vital to the work of God and to the health of this world-wide denomination.

Dr. Hasel's publishing profile is almost exhausting to con-

template. For over twenty years (1973-1994) he was Associate Editor of *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, and Circulation Manager as well for seven of those years (1973-1980). He was also an Editorial Consultant for twenty years (1974-1994) of *Origins*, the SDA journal of creation science, and for several years was a member of the Editorial Board (1990-1994) of the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*. He was recently appointed an associate editor of *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology*. He is the only writer who has contributed a major article for each volume of the great series, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. By invitation, he wrote a brilliant article on the Sabbath for the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, and at the time of his death was working on two volumes, Amos and Hosea, for Eerdmans' *New International Commentary on the Old Testament*.

Michael, his son, has compiled a list of 14 books, not counting major revisions, and 319 articles and book reviews written by his father—plus a number of titles which are still in process of publication. A relatively small number of the articles are devotional, while most are astonishingly "scholarly," with perhaps a hundred or even two hundred references to learned works in various languages. His book *The Old Testament: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* has gone through three significant revisions (or updatings) and is used in quite a number of non-Adventist colleges and seminaries in the United States and Canada, and in most of the Universities in South Africa. A non-Adventist school in Korea made a translation for the use of its students. A Portuguese translation is used in South America. His *New Testament: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* has also seen wide acceptance as a textbook. Dr. Davidson, who once made a study into the question, says that the humorous wail, "Hasel is a hassle," is heard in more Seminaries than just our own.

One test of a writer's impact in the academic world is the degree to which his books are reviewed in scholarly journals. Seminary librarian Warren Johns has so far located no fewer than 39 reviews of four of Dr. Hasel's books. He has also compiled a list of approximately 50 scholarly papers presented to learned societies and denominational study committees. Dr. Hasel's publications led

to invitations for guest lectureships in a variety of non-Adventist institutions.

Time fails to tell about Dr. Hasel's significant contributions to the 1980 Glacier View meetings, to Bible Conferences, camp meetings, and ministers' meetings around the world, and to the ongoing work of the Biblical Research Institute.

When Michael showed me his list of his father's literary output, I asked him and Melissa, who was sitting nearby, "Did your Father ever have time for you children?" They responded quickly, "O yes, lots of time!" Their mother explained that he was often home and available to the children on Friday nights and Sabbaths, and that he was conscientious about taking month-long vacations with the family—even if, at times, he spend a portion of the months speaking at a camp meeting. When he was busy, the children sensed that he was working for God. They also knew that he would "be there" for them whenever they needed him.

Yes, the children urged me to include in this life sketch that their father was never interested in self-exaltation. His objective since boyhood was to be used by God. God helped him understand the Bible because He was willing to study it, praying for God's guidance. His goal, they told me, was to find truth and to reach people for God around the world, helping them prepare for the Second Coming.

Like any man of ardor and profound conviction, it was inevitable that Dr. Hasel was at times controversial. But even those who did not agree with all his views acknowledge that he was a titan among us, one who committed robust energies and impressive intellect to the quest for truth and who exerted a tangible influence in Old Testament circles within and without our church supporting the integrity of the Bible.

Several times in his life it seemed to Dr. Hasel that God and His angels were protecting him from imminent danger, not only in his childhood during the war, but also in his adulthood. Once heavy ice developed on the wings of a small plane that was carrying him over high mountains in New Zealand. With great effort, the plane managed to clear the pass inches from the snow below. Another time, sightseeing above the Iguacu Falls on the border between Brazil and Argentina, he was startled to realize that the little boat

he was sitting in was drifting perilously toward the upper rim, even though it was directed away from it, the motor was going full blast, and the owner was paddling for all he was worth.

About 2:30 last Thursday afternoon, August 11, Dr. Hasel turned off Interstate 15 at an interchange in a built-up area near Ogden, Utah. (He was driving a rental car and was in the area to read a paper on the "days" of Genesis 1.) As he approached the four-lane artery that passed under the Interstate, he paused at the stop sign, then turned left to cross the road. In doing so, he moved directly into the path of an oncoming car, which hit his vehicle on the left side between the front wheel and the driver's door. The oncoming car was going well within the posted 55 m.p.h. speed limit. The air bag in the oncoming car protected its driver from everything but a few scratches and bruises, but Dr. Hasel's air bag, though it functioned as designed, was unable to protect him from a side blow. Dr. Hasel did not regain consciousness.

Where were the angels then?

*Education*, p. 305, says that "every redeemed one will understand the ministry of angels in his own life. The angel who was his guardian from his earliest moment; the angel who watched his steps, and covered [protected] his head in the day of peril; the *angel who was with him in the valley of the shadow of death*, who marked his resting place, who was the first to greet him in the resurrection morning—what will it be to hold converse with him, and to learn the history of divine interposition in the individual life, of heavenly co-operation in every work for humanity!"

It seems appropriate to close with comments by Ellen G. White, a cofounder of this denomination, written in respect to the sudden death of her husband at age 60.<sup>3</sup>

When he upon whose large affections I had leaned, with whom I had labored for thirty-six years [Gerhard and Hilde worked together for 33 years], was taken away, I could lay my hands upon his eyes, and say, I commit my treasure to Thee until the morning of the resurrection. . . . [Yet] at times I felt that I could not have my husband die. But these words seemed to be impressed on my mind; "Be still, and know that I am God."

I keenly feel my loss, but dare not give myself up to . . . grief. . . . We will be thankful for the years of usefulness that were granted to



him; I will look with pleasure upon his resting-place. The best way in which I and my children can honor the memory of him who has fallen, is to take the work where he left it, and in the strength of Jesus carry it forward to his completion.

I take up my life-work alone, in full confidence that my Redeemer will be with me. . . . Only a little while . . . then Christ will come. . . . We are left on earth to encounter storms and conflicts, to perfect Christian character, to become better acquainted with God our Father, and Christ our elder Brother, and to do work for the Master in winning many souls to Christ.

1 Adventist Theological Society, American Academy of Religion, American Schools of Oriental Research, Chicago Society of Religious Studies, International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Near East Archaeological Society, and Society of Biblical Literature.

2 Alpha Mu Gamma and Theta Alpha Kappa.

3 *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:111-112. Suggested by Hedwig Jemison.

## GERHARD F. HASEL'S

### HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

#### (MEMORIAL SERVICE MESSAGE)

"But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. . . . For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."

HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

Gerhard Hasel

... I will look with you on the resurrection of the dead...

... But we would not have you ignorant, brethren...

... concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope...

For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Randall W. Younker  
 Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary  
 Andrews University  
 Berrien Springs, Michigan

A little over a week ago the Dean of the Seminary at Andrews University, Dr. Vyhmeister, asked me to say a few words about the hope that Gerhard Hasel had in the future resurrection. A couple of days later I found myself flying west to California to arrange, attend and participate in the funeral of my own step-father, Doyle Saunders, who had died suddenly after a brief and unexpected illness. A week earlier he had been fine—in fact, he had spent a delightful weekend camping with two of his grandchildren.

Suddenly, I found myself drawn against my will into the vortex of that black hole of emptiness and pain that accompanies the loss of a loved one. Sooner than I had anticipated, I was going through a blurred twilight zone in which lack of sleep caused day and night to blend together—a time when you want desperately to be somewhere else. But the demands of reality force you to stay, notifying people of the sad news, making decisions concerning the funeral, burial arrangements, picking flowers, arranging speakers, choosing music, writing the eulogy, taking and making innumerable phone calls (at the same time both annoying and comforting), enduring the shock and strain of the viewing, meeting friends and strangers, providing comfort while being comforted, attending the funeral, driving to the graveyard for the final tearful farewell. . . .

An experience like this tends to shock one from considering a vague, dispassionate, theological discourse on the Christian's hope to a sharp focus on what that hope really is. It is not living in golden mansions, seeing lions play with lambs, flying through the universe on angel wings. I would not deny any of these things and in a certain context all of these things are important. However, the real focus of hope was summed up in a nutshell when my mother tearfully cried,—“I loved him. . . if I could only have him back.”

There is our great desire to have that loved one back. Having the departed person restored to us in full life is all we really care about in the time of grief in the shadow of death. Even more painful

than my mother's sorrow, was witnessing the pain of two of my stepbrothers who had been estranged from their father. Dad was gone now. What could they say?

As I read our passage for today, John 11, I pause at vs. 35: "Jesus wept." Theologians have different ideas about why Jesus wept, but from my own experience at the funerals of loved ones, the sight that touches me the most is witnessing the pain of a spouse, a child, or a grandchild as they break out in anguished cries as the finality of the death of their loved one hits home with all of its stark, brutal force. The only thing that keeps me going at such times is the hope of the Resurrection and eternal life with our Lord and Savior.

Interestingly, perhaps providentially, one of the last subjects Gerhard Hasel applied his intellectual energies to was that of the resurrection—of the dead being *bodily* brought back to life. Michael found Gerhard's paper on the Resurrection, among many other manuscripts, in his study. Gerhard had just completed it and was intending to give it to us for final editing and formatting in preparation for publication in the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*. Michael gave it to us, instead. As with most of Gerhard's articles, this was not just a brief homily. Rather, it was a scholarly treatment of the subject in Gerhard's typical and thorough fashion. Although the *Journal* prefers papers to be restricted to about 20 pages for publication, this one, no doubt already vastly shortened by Gerhard, was over 50 pages and supported with nearly 200 footnotes.

Gerhard set the foundation for his subject by discussing the typical historical-critical attitudes towards the resurrection of Jesus. Not surprisingly, these views deny the bodily resurrection in real time and space—Jesus' resurrection is not really historical in this view. Gerhard's attitude towards these critical positions reminds me of C. S. Lewis who, upon the occasion of a meeting with seminarians at a British theological college, said:

A theology which denies the historicity of nearly everything in the Gospels. . . if offered to the uneducated man can produce only one or the other of two effects. It will make him a Roman Catholic or an atheist. What you offer him he will not recognize as Christianity. If he holds to what he calls Christianity he will leave a Church in which

it is no longer taught and look for one where it is. If he agrees with your version he will no longer call himself a Christian and no longer come to church. In his crude, coarse way, he would respect you much more if you did the same.<sup>1</sup>

These sentiments of C. S. Lewis are not too different, I believe, from those of Gerhard's. Like C. S. Lewis, Gerhard took a much more positive attitude regarding the historicity of Scriptural events, including Christ's resurrection. It was the reality of Jesus' resurrection that gave Gerhard—and us here, today—the hope we crave for the future—eternal life with our God and our loved ones.

After thoroughly examining the liberal scholarly perspectives, Gerhard stacks them up against what Scripture actually says, taking careful note of relevant Hebrew and Greek words and phrases. Gerhard shows that the denial of a literal, historical, bodily resurrection of Christ is not Biblical. Rather, the Scriptures clearly and unequivocally teach that Jesus was resurrected physically, in real time and space,—the bodily resurrection of Jesus was a real historical event.

Most interesting, however, are the implications that Jesus' real, historical and bodily resurrection has for the believer. After discussing a number of these implications Gerhard ends with the following section:

Resurrection and "First Fruits." In 1 Corinthians 15:20 Paul makes another profound statement, "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died." Christ is here presented as the "first fruits" of those who have died. This passage reveals in its two parts the relationship between the reality/factuality of the resurrection of Jesus and the subsequent general resurrection of the dead who died in Christ.

Every expectation of a future resurrection of the dead is dependent on the resurrection of Jesus. If Jesus was not raised from the dead as a physical reality, then no one will be raised from the dead in such a reality either. There can be no future expectation of eschatological hope unless Christ was raised bodily from the dead. "Every future expectation which is not determined by the bodily resurrection of Jesus is for Paul no real hope."

The risen Lord Jesus Christ is the "first fruits" of all believers who

have fallen asleep. His bodily resurrection is the guarantee that they too will be raised as He was raised.

The idea of "first fruits" also implies that the resurrection of the righteous will as surely follow the resurrection of Christ as day follows night (1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14; 1 Thess 4:14; Rom 8:11). Believers still fall asleep, but because they are connected with Jesus Christ, the Risen One, they no longer belong under the power of the first Adam. Death has no final and ultimate power over them (1 Cor 15:25-26).

All the righteous "will be made alive in Christ" (1 Cor 15:22). The verb *zoopoieo*, "to make alive," expresses a future act of creation. This new creative act will happen at the proper time. All believers who remained loyal to Christ (vs. 23: "who belong to Christ" [NRSV]) will be raised "at his coming" (vs. 23). This reveals that the resurrection of the righteous is still a future event involving divine creative power. It will take place when Christ returns in the clouds of heaven; it has not taken place as yet.

The bodily resurrection of Jesus is required so that there will be a genuine resurrection of His people from the dead when he returns at His Second Coming. Then the righteous will be raised (1 Thess 4:14-16) and will be "glorified with Him" (Rom 8:17), will be "with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:17), will "live together with Him" (1 Thess 5:10) and will "reign with Him" (2 Tim 2:12).

As believers we are reminded that even now "our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil 3:22), and when Christ returns, He "will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory" (vs. 23, NASB). The resurrection body of the righteous will be in affinity with the immortal resurrection body of Christ. "At his coming" (1 Cor 15:23, NRSV), "at the last trumpet" (vs. 52), the righteous "dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality" (vss. 52-54, NRSV).

This biblical certainty is provided in and through Jesus' bodily resurrection. Knowing this, believers can "be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord" (vs. 58, NRSV). Our present faith finds its source of immovable power in the physical death *and* bodily resurrection of our Lord, historical events of the past, and in the certainty of the promised bodily resurrection *and* expected immortality as gifts of our Lord in the future.

Although Gerhard did not use this following quote from *Desire*

*of Ages*, p. 804, in his paper, I know he fully believed in it, and I think it gives particular comfort to those of us who are his friends and family who look forward to seeing him again.

The resurrection of Jesus was a type of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The countenance of the risen Saviour, His manner, His speech, were all familiar to his disciples. As Jesus arose from the dead, so those who sleep in Him are to rise again. We shall know our friends, even as the disciples knew Jesus. They may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured, in this mortal life, and they rise in perfect health and symmetry; yet in the glorified body their identity will be perfectly preserved.

I look forward to feeling Gerhard's handshake, seeing his eyes light up with mirth as he recalls a humorous story, hearing his laughter as he shares our joy. And it is after this assurance of this hope of seeing our friend and loved one again, that we can turn back to contemplate the glories of heaven—glories that Gerhard firmly believed in. Imagine the delights in store for a scholar like Gerhard in eternity where we are told that "All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and wisdom of unfallen beings. We shall share the treasures gained through ages upon ages spent in contemplation of God's handiwork. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations" (*Education*, p. 307).

My prayer today is that each one of us here will rededicate ourselves to be a part of that grand reunion, the reality of which Gerhard believed so strongly in, when Jesus comes again.

<sup>1</sup> C. S. Lewis, "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism," in *Christian Reflections* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), p. 153.



FUNERAL SERMON

Richard M. Davidson  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary  
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This is the most painful and agonizing message I have ever prepared or delivered. My esteemed teacher, my major professor who continually called me to greater excellence, my Doktor Vater, my beloved colleague, my theological confidant, my constant inspiration both in scholarship and personal life, my trusted and treasured friend—Dr. Gerhard Hasel—has been cut down in his prime. How can one find words to express the tragic horror of this loss?

In my grief I turned to one of the most moving poetic laments in Scripture, an ode to a fallen leader, in which David mourns the tragic loss of Israel's leader, and especially the personal loss of his beloved friend Jonathan. In the inspired poem shared with all Israel, three times David cries out: "How are the mighty fallen! How are the mighty fallen! How are the mighty fallen!" (2 Sam 1). This week the cry goes up again, in spiritual Israel, "How is the mighty fallen. A mighty leader has fallen. A spiritual giant of giants in Israel has been cut down without warning."

Just a few days ago my family was visiting Sequoia National Park in Central California. We stood awestruck before the giant sequoias: the most gigantic, living things in the world. We were amazed as we stood below one tree, a giant among giants. I thought of its enormous strength and vitality: its awesome capacity for growth and productivity, how it was impervious to internal decay or disease, how it could withstand fire, storm, and the other elements of nature. It was impervious to everything except the violence of the woodsman's axe and saw. Near this giant of giants was a massive stump, and a fallen trunk—a painful reminder of how a giant sequoia had been cut down in its prime. Yet, though fallen, the sequoia remained a giant.

When I received word of Dr. Hasel's sudden death, I couldn't help comparing him with the giant sequoia. He, too, was a giant of giants: a giant intellectually. I was continually amazed by his

memory, his knowledge, his wisdom, and insight. A giant academically, as a teacher; in research and publishing without a peer in our Adventist community.

No one had the impact upon the non-Adventist scholarly world that Dr. Hasel had. When other Adventist scholars were desperately trying to be noticed and get published by a prestigious theological press, Mr. Eerdmans himself was visiting Dr. Hasel in his office at the Seminary to request that Gerhard write another book for Eerdmans publishing house. And the requests never subsided. When I went to the Society of Biblical Literature meetings, I was treated with great respect and holy envy by many theologians of other faiths when I mentioned that Dr. Gerhard Hasel had been my major professor. Both the quantity and thoroughness of his research was enormous. He was a giant of his profession.

He was also a giant as a churchman, in local church leadership and world church responsibilities; a giant of an administrator, whether as OT Department Chairman, as Seminary Dean, or as Director of the Seminary Academic Doctoral programs; a giant as a family man, devoted dad and husband; and a giant of the Word—defending the full authority of Scripture, demonstrating how to dig deeply into the Bible and how to interpret it correctly, confirming the biblical basis and truthfulness of the Adventist mission and message; and yes, he was a giant of a friend, someone you could lean your whole weight on and know that he would never let you down. A giant of giants, impervious to decay, to fire and storm, and yet, like the tragedy of the sequoia, cut down in his prime. How has the might fallen!

Yet even fallen, he remains a giant. His stature is not diminished, will never be diminished. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on’. ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds will follow them’” (Rev 14:13, NIV).

When I heard the news of Dr. Hasel’s death, I found myself repeating over and over, “Not Dr. Hasel, Lord. Why him, Lord? Why? Why?” Why did the life of this giant of a saint, with still so much to contribute to the cause of truth, have to be cut down? I received word of this tragedy while staying with my elder brother. He is no longer a practicing Christian, largely because he cannot

make sense of tragedies such as this and perceives God as capricious and uncaring. When I told him the news about Dr. Hasel, his penetrating question stung me, “Where was God during this accident?”

I could not give him an easy, pat answer. There are no easy answers. We don’t know all the rules of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, when God is able to step in and avert tragedy, and when He must not in order that the issues in the great controversy may be clarified and the horrible effects of sin and Satan’s work may be revealed. Job did not get an answer why his sons and daughters were suddenly killed. The Bible does not tell us why innocent Jonathan was allowed to die with his father, why John the Baptist was permitted to be killed, why millions of innocent saints were not protected from being cut down in their prime.

My brother is a physicist, and I shared with him something from the natural world that to me provides a parallel with the spiritual world. I recently learned that the new physics, called quantum mechanics, has found that on the subatomic level, things seem to be largely random and unpredictable, even unexplainable and apparently contradictory in patterns of activity. Yet, when one moves to the big picture, to the observable world and the laws of Newtonian physics, everything works together in perfect harmony and orderliness with intricate design.

I suggested to my brother that we are now only able to experience the little picture of reality, parallel to the subatomic level studied in quantum mechanics, in which many details are unexplainable and do not make sense. But God knows the big picture, the cosmic perspective. And as with the harmonious laws of Newtonian physics, could we but see reality as God sees it, in the larger perspective of the great controversy, we would understand and concur with His mysterious providence.

No, we can’t understand and answer the WHY questions now, but like Job, we continue to trust—trust that “[B]ehind the dim unknown, Standeth God within the shadow, Keeping watch above His own” (*James Russell Lowell*). With his passing Dr. Hasel’s death joins with those Christians whose innocent and untimely

deaths cry out, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge" (Rev 6:10, NKJV) and make things right? (Rev 6:10).

The good news is that he and they will not have to wait much longer! In the investigative judgment, about which Dr. Hasel wrote so profoundly and passionately, God's saints, both sleeping and alive, will soon be vindicated and Satan will be unmasked.

In 1879, shortly after the death of James White, who died at about the same age as did Dr. Hasel, Ellen White had a symbolic vision of the investigative judgment. In this vision people were classified under different headings that best represented the trend of their lives. She wrote, "Upon one page of the ledger, under the head of 'Fidelity,' was the name of my husband," (*Life Sketches*, p. 242). As I read her description of the noble character and untiring service of James White, I couldn't help but think of Dr. Hasel when she wrote—"unbending integrity and noble courage to vindicate the right and condemn the wrong. . . He has stood in defense of the truth without yielding a single principle to please the best friend. . . . The truth sent out from the press was like rays of light emanating from the sun in all directions," (*Ibid.*, pp. 243-4). I believe that upon the same page of the ledger with James White, under the heading of "Fidelity," is the name of Dr. Gerhard Hasel.

Soon the investigative judgment will be over and Dr. Hasel and all God's saints will be vindicated. Satan and evil will be justly condemned. Christ will lay aside His priestly attire and clothe Himself with His most glorious kingly robes. He will leave heaven and come to awake His sleeping saints.

If Dr. Hasel were to have a message for us this morning, I believe he would point us to the blessed hope of the Second Advent of Jesus and the Resurrection of His saints. Dr. Hasel wrote major articles and devoted much research to the biblical topic of the Resurrection, especially in the Old Testament. It is with fondness that I remember him reading to us students with forceful vigor from the book of Isaiah which he loved so much: "He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces. . . And it will be said in that day: 'Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation'" (Isa 25:8, 9, NKJV). "Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body

they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa 26:19, NKJV). Again, from Hosea, the book Dr. Hasel was working on for the major (NICOT) commentary series: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction!" (Hos 13:14, NKJV).

I hear Dr. Hasel's confident statement of faith in the words of Job: "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job 19:25-27, NKJV).

I have just finished rereading Dr. Hasel's article on the resurrection which he published in a prestigious German theological journal. There he quotes Daniel 12:2—"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt" (NKJV). In that scholarly article, Dr. Hasel forcefully dares to point out the biblical basis for what is uniquely taught by Seventh-day Adventists—the reality of a special resurrection of God's faithful saints who have died among the remnant in the last days.

And now, my brothers and sisters, and particularly the immediate family of Gerhard, our blessed assurance is that Dr. Hasel will experience the resurrection about which he wrote. God will soon raise up His faithful, spiritual giant in the special resurrection, so that he may join the remnant in watching the Lord's return, and may join us in that shout of triumph: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us!"

Perhaps the greatest NT resurrection promise is 1 Corinthians 15. It draws on the OT resurrection passages and contains those wonderful words of hope in describing the Second Coming: "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. . . . then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is



swallowed up in victory.' 'O Death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?'" (1 Cor 15:51-55, NKJV).

After giving such an assuring and glowing portrayal of the resurrection, Paul concludes his discussion with a "therefore" (vs. 58): "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (NKJV).

This final verse of 1 Corinthians 15 I believe captures the essence of Dr. Hasel's life—steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that his labor was not in vain in the Lord.

And it comes as a "therefore" for all of us who remain to emulate his life. Ellen White wrote after the death of her husband, "The best way in which I and my children can honor the memory of him who has fallen, is to take the work where he left it, and in the strength of Jesus carry it forward to completion. . . ." She then continues in counsel also for those beyond the immediate family: "Some who have stood in the forefront of the battle, zealously resisting incoming evil, fall at the post of duty; the living gaze sorrowfully at the fallen heroes, but there is no time to cease work. They must close up the ranks; seize the banner from the hand palsied by death, and with renewed energy vindicate the truth and the honor of Christ" (*Life Sketches*, pp. 253-254; [= *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:111-112]).

Dr. Hasel gave this same kind of counsel to me repeatedly. After we had discussed the many problems and challenges facing the church, he would almost invariably say, "But we can't be discouraged! The Lord is in charge of this work! The most exciting days in the history of the world are just ahead. We must press forward with unwavering faith and confidence in the Lord. His work will triumph!"

When I learned of Dr. Hasel's death, I was in Colorado just ready to head into the Rockies for a backpacking trip. I could not return here immediately without first seeking out a quiet place to think and pray in the majesty of those rugged mountains that he and his family also loved. With my son, I climbed one of the mountains that is over 14,000 feet high, Mt. Lincoln, named after another fallen giant, and in the privacy of my thoughts on that

wind-swept summit, I poured out my heart in anguish to God over the loss of Dr. Hasel. Then in the register at the top, I signed my name, adding a note in memory of my beloved friend Gerhard. In that register I also wrote of my recommitment to the cause of truth for which Dr. Hasel gave his whole life. I determined to take up the torch which he carried so nobly and courageously, and to carry it with renewed energy and dedication.

May I invite all here this day who share in the blessed hope, to hear Paul's "therefore" in 1 Corinthians 15, to join me in taking up the work where Dr. Hasel left it, to determine anew to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Dr. Hasel, we miss you! Fallen giant, there is an irreplaceable void in our hearts and lives and community and church with your passing. But as you sleep, awaiting the special resurrection, we make a commitment to see you again soon, to spend eternity in the new heavens and the new earth with you! Maranatha! May the Lord soon come!

Many have written tributes to Dr. Hasel. I received one early this morning from a German brother which poetically expresses many thoughts of this sermon.

#### Gerhard Hasel

Like a mighty oak he stood, 'mid a forest of his peers,  
Undaunted and unshaken by the blasts of many years.  
His roots were firmly anchored, 'mid the rocks of God's true Word,  
Giving purpose and conviction to his every deed and word.

With zest and urgent purpose, he did God's word explore  
Like a miner in a cavern, in his quest for precious ore.  
And the gems that he uncovered, were not his to hoard and hide,  
But be shared in joy with others as he called them to his side.

With voice and pen, in thought and deed, in every waking hour  
He sought to guide his fellowmen, to the Source of all true power.  
The Bible was the treasure house from which he drew his store,  
And though he freely shared them all, he never lacked for more.

We mourn this brother's passing and he is laid to rest,  
 We ponder for a reason, but 'tis a senseless quest.  
 With longing hearts we wait the day, when death a conquered foe  
 Shall never make its presence known, nor cause us tears and woe.

Where death has laid a giant down, ten thousand more must rise  
 And take truth's sword that he laid down, and champion for the prize.  
 Take heart my friend, 'twill be not long when we our Saviour see,  
 And with our loved ones laid to rest shall home in glory be.

By Werner Lehmann

## TRIBUTES TO GERHARD F. HASEL

FROM

### FRIENDS IN THE THEOLOGICAL COMMUNITY

On this All Saints Day it seems especially appropriate for me to compose a word of testimony concerning Gerhard Hasel, a distinguished member of your Old Testament faculty and a very dear friend to us here at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His sudden death from a heart condition always comes as a cruel blow to family and friends, and as a solemn reminder that life is uncertain for all of us. We simply do not know when our opportunities for ministry and work will be abruptly terminated.

Gerhard leaves behind him a legacy of faith and quality of character, and we will sorely miss his wisdom and insight as a scholar and a colleague. His course in the Old Testament I remember well, and his memory of him goes back to the year when I was invited to deliver an outside address of a Ph.D. thesis prepared by a fine young man, an scholar whose name I forget, but who was a student of Hasel's.

**"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,  
 as working for the Lord, not for men, since you  
 know that you will receive an inheritance from  
 the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you  
 are serving."**



We mourn this brother's passing and he is led to rest,  
 We ponder his memory and his life and his great trust,  
 With longing hearts we wish that day when death is conquered,  
 We shall never meet his presence here again, but we shall  
 FROM

Where death is not a foe, but life is won,  
 And we shall meet him there, and we shall  
 FRIENDS IN THE THEOLOGICAL COMMUNITY  
 Take heart my friend, 'twill be not long when we our Savior see,  
 And with our loved ones here to rest shall hence be free.

By Wesley Lehman

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,  
 as working for the Lord, not for men, since you  
 know that you will receive an inheritance from  
 the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you  
 are serving.

Gleason L. Archer  
 Trinity Evangelical Divinity School  
 Trinity International University  
 Deerfield, Illinois

On this All Saints Day it seems especially appropriate for me to compose a word of testimony concerning Gerhard Hasel, a distinguished member of your Old Testament faculty and a very esteemed friend to us here at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Sudden death from a car collision always comes as a cruel blow to family and friends, and as a solemn reminder that life is contingent for all of us. We simply do not know when our opportunities for ministry and work will be abruptly terminated.

Gerhard leaves behind him a legacy of faith and nobility of character, and we will surely miss him and his fine insight as biblical scholarship continues its course to the end of this century. I suppose my best memory of him goes back to the year when I was invited to serve as an outside examiner of a Ph.D. thesis prepared by a fine young Mexican scholar, whose name (alas) I forget, but who produced a fine piece of work on a very live OT theme. I appreciated the fellowship with those other members of your faculty who participated in his oral defense.

Our sympathy goes out to his dear ones as they go through the grief process which inevitably follows a sudden death of this sort. We can only look to our blessed Paraclete for His comfort and providential care while the process of healing goes on in his family.

When one considers the fact that for a good period of time he

Walter C. Kaiser  
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary  
South Hamilton, Massachusetts

On the Occasion of the untimely death of my friend Gerhard F. Hasel:

On behalf of the wider Evangelical community of scholars, pastors and lay persons around the world, I want to record our sense of loss and to extend my own sympathies and prayers for our Lord's special strength on the sudden loss of our friend and esteemed colleague, Professor Gerhard F. Hasel. But in a larger sense, we acknowledge that our Lord is still sovereign and wise in all that He does, even though we cannot understand the reasons for all that he does or permits.

It is a joy to reflect on the life and ministry of this especially gifted servant of God. His contributions to the life and ministry of the evangelical community at large will continue to go on for generations to come in the providence of our God, and as we await His coming.

Beginning with his doctoral study on the theme of the "remnant" in the Old Testament, Gerhard was at once marked out as an individual who would be greatly used in the academic halls and pulpits of our day. That study was followed by many others, but particularly noteworthy were his frequent contributions to the area of Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments. Few had mastered the breadth of the literature that had accumulated in the areas of historical and theological studies in the Old Testament as Gerhard had. His natural abilities in the European languages, as well as his linguistic skills as an Orientalist, always made what he had to say on exegetical and theological matters in the Old Testament well worth while.

As recently as 1991, I had the pleasure to commend his volume entitled *Understanding the Book of Amos* by saying, "A virtual *tour de force* of surveying some 800 separate contributions." I went on to say, "From now on serious studies of the prophet Amos will need to commence with this volume." This was so typical of the type of work that Gerhard did.

When one considers the fact that for a good period of time he

also carried administrative duties at the Seminary while he strove to maintain his scholarship and writing, his accomplishments are all the more impressive.

My one great regret is that apparently we will not be able to enjoy his own complete *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* that he had wanted to make his *magnum opus* and the crowning achievement of his studies. That, I know, was his goal and desire, for he had often mentioned it and talked about it in my presence.

It was my pleasure to have Gerhard teach one of my classes at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. And he kindly invited me to his Old Testament Theology course to teach one of his classes at Berrien Springs. The students loved it as we joined in a vigorous debate about what was the center of Old Testament Theology and how one should go about writing such a volume. That memory will always be one of my fondest recollections of some of the other good times we shared on the telephone or at one or another of the professional Biblical Society meetings where we got to chat with one another briefly each year.

The wider community of evangelical scholars will deeply miss our friend and wonderful colleague in the days ahead, but we are grateful to God for giving him to us for all the days we did have him among us. Indeed, we are taught in Scripture that the death of God's saints is precious in His sight. We can only thank our God a thousand times over for His gift of the life of Dr. Gerhard F. Hasel and pray that the good effects of this valiant servant of His will continue to last until that great day when we are all reunited with each other and our Lord.

We thank God for Gerhard's standing for the truthfulness and authority of Scripture. Never did he cave in to the critical fashions of the scholarship of our day. We thank our God for Gerhard's love for the Church and the way he selflessly served it as he did so for the honor and glory of his Lord. We thank God for Gerhard's godly life and for the legacy of students, colleagues and readers that he has left behind to finish the work he began. We all are heirs of a wonderful legacy of Christian scholarship and Churchmanship that he has left. Thanks be unto God!

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints"  
Psalms 116:15.

Elmer A. Martens

Professor of Old Testament

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

Fresno, California

"How are the mighty fallen!" These were the anguished words of David in his lament over the loss of Israel's leaders and his friend Jonathan. "How are the mighty fallen!" These are the involuntary words of sadness spoken by many of us and our colleagues around the world for a brother of tall stature among us, Professor Gerhard F. Hasel.

In his scholarly contributions to Biblical studies, Professor Hasel stood tall. For twenty years, ever since 1974, his articles over a wide range of topics have appeared in some 20 different journals. The introductory volume to New Testament theology, and especially the book, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, now in its fourth edition, alone secure for him an undisputed place as a leading Biblical theologian. Gerhard was one who mastered volumes of information. I understand, via hearsay, one teacher refers to him as "Footnote Hasel." Somewhat disconcerting to the rest of us, he seemed always to be abreast of the latest publication in our field. In private conversation it was common for him to reference a recent book, or one about to be published, likely out of Europe, in a matter of fact way as though to any scholar worth his or her salt such information should not come as a surprise.

Dr. Hasel stood tall in championing an orthodox, evangelical Christianity that was unashamed of its claims about Jesus Christ and its high view of the Scriptures in a pluralist world. In a personal letter to me, dated January 2, 1990, he commented on approaches to biblical interpretation. "The question is whether we shall adopt common presuppositions such as those that drive the historical-critical method. . . or whether our presuppositions are to be formed by the revealed Word of God in order to be adequate and appropriate for that revealed Word. Over the years I have come to be convinced that if we attempt to come to Scripture from 'below' or from the 'outside,' Scripture will become or be seen only from 'below' or from

the 'outside.'" He continued by commenting on the normativity that Scripture should have.

He positioned himself with easy affinity within the Evangelical community. I refer particularly to his role of building bridges from his denominational group to evangelicals. Some here will recall his address given at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in which he spoke to the differences between Biblical and Systematic Theology. As always he was lucid and articulate as well as passionate. Without doubt he greatly helped to dismantle reservations, not to mention stereotypes, which have sometimes been attached by theological conservatives to Seventh-day Adventism.

Gerhard Hasel stood tall as a model churchman. He was not an iconoclastic, cloistered scholar. I know, for in trying to reach him by telephone in conjunction with our joint literary project, the family would report, "O he is not home, he is in South Africa." Or it might be Asia. God had given him remarkable abilities of communication. An international itinerant, he was in demand, not only by academic institutions, but by the church. His concern was for global Christianity. In our fleeting conversations at conventions, he would share the burden of his heart. I experienced him as a kind, warm, and genuinely caring Christian brother, with a care for persons but also for the well-being of the church.

The poet David mourned the loss of front-rank leaders taken by death in a military war. With Gerhard Hasel's death the evangelical community mourns the loss of a front-rank champion for the cause of God's kingdom. Though we thankfully pay tribute to a colleague of tall spiritual stature among us, we lament his absence from our side, shake our heads in dismay and sheer disbelief, and say, "How are the mighty fallen."

Willem A. VanGemeren

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Trinity International University

Deerfield, Illinois

Five years ago, while I was still teaching at Reformed Theological Seminary (Jackson, MS), I received a call from Gerhard. He had received my invitation to contribute to *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology*, and wanted to find out some more information. He had a passion for biblical theology that goes back to his days as a graduate student. His work on the "remnant" has made a significant contribution to the study of the Old Testament and, of course, his book *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*.

Over the years, he has been insistent on keeping the growth of the discipline of biblical theology before the students of the Scriptures. When it seemed that biblical theology was dying, his timely reviews on the "retrospects and prospects" and "major recent issues" were successful in reminding the scholarly community that the discipline was still alive in that scholars were still contributing to the discipline. His ecumenicity is apparent in his fair reviews of conservatives and nonconservatives. One could not easily disagree with his review because it was based on an objective grid.

But, what was refreshing was his set of basic proposals for doing biblical theology. In these proposals, we find the spirit of Gerhard Hasel. In an age where the historical dimension has been separated from the theological, he affirmed the importance of a historical-theological discipline. The discipline, being rooted in the study of the text, linked biblical theology with exegesis. Again, he sought an integrative framework for doing biblical theology. Instead of being guided by one theme, he rejoiced in the multiformity of themes. This multiformity was well expressed in his goal of developing a "multiplex" and "complex" theology that was true to the great variety in the Old Testament, but even more so, he wanted to be true to the great variety of the teaching of both testaments.

With this background, Gerhard was well suited to contribute





to the theological dictionary. While he had committed himself to write several articles, he and I were mutually interested in his further involvement by serving as associate editor of the dictionary project. We pursued this more than a year ago. He received administrative permission by the Spring of this year, and was looking forward to giving more time to writing and editing. In God's providence, he was taken away from us. I shall miss him, his scholarship, and his interest in making biblical theology accessible to the Christian community.

Gerhard has left a legacy, but not a vacancy. This is because he was unique, and there is no successor to carry his mantle. Gerhard was here to reflect the glory of God, and in his departure, the glory of God to whom he has borne witness continues to speak of God's greatness, majesty, and splendor. I conclude with the familiar words of Ps 145:3: "Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise, his greatness no one can fathom" (NIV).

### TRIBUTES TO GERHARD F. HASEL

FROM  
STUDENT FRIENDS

During the summer of 1975, I was a student at Newbold College in England where I took courses under Dr. W. G. C. and John Murdoch. I particularly remember one morning as we were studying the eschatology of Jeremiah with Dr. W. G. C. Murdoch, he asked, "Do any of you know Gerhard Hasel?" Unprompted, "Yes, he is a brilliant eschatologist," he was written a dissertation on Isaiah's concept of the "remnant." This was the first time I heard of Dr. Gerhard Hasel. I was so impressed by what I learned about him that I desired to meet him.

My desire was fulfilled only a few weeks later at the historic city of Vienna that summer when the General Conference session was being held in the North American continent.

"For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
And He shall stand at last on the earth;  
And after my skin is destroyed,  
this I know,  
That in my flesh I shall see God,  
Whom I shall see for myself,  
And my eyes shall behold,  
and not another."

I have always felt that philosophy and learning must be employed in the service of faith, and I saw a shining example of that in Dr. Hasel. As a teacher and scholar he deserved the title *Philosophus*. He expounded the Scriptures with authority and accuracy. He gave me a deep insight into the subtle presuppositions of the so-called "historical-critical method" as a hermeneutic tool, which tends to obscure the Word of God. I still remember the joy and peace of his mind as he explained these things to me.

He has left a remarkable gift and the ability to give a vast amount of material covering a vast expanse



of time into relatively few pages. His books dealing with basic issues in both the Old and New Testament speak for themselves in this respect. No wonder these works are being used by many seminaries. Apart from textbooks, he authored numerous articles which have been published in scholarly journals.

He had the gift of an analytical mind, by which he examined the evidence critically and constructively. His encyclopedic breadth of knowledge in theological matters was very outstanding. He was generous and unselfish in his teaching, always sharing vital information with, and inspiring his students to greater heights of achievement. I remember him always exhorting us to read, write, and attend professional meetings.

Many a time at the Seminary library, where I work, I have seen him in a pensive mood, brooding over an open book. He wore a serious mien, and it appeared he was getting ready to take on the whole world. But beneath that visage was a man, true, kind-hearted, gentle and loving—a Christian and a gentleman. Indeed, he was a man with an uncanny sense of humor. On one occasion, he invited me to his office to inform me that the committee had given generous financial help toward my doctoral studies. He explained that the help covered my tuition only. "However," he continued, "in the German army, as it is usually said, Hermann, you must survive on air." I felt like clicking my heels and responding "jawohl, Herr General!" But, I waited till he had finished talking and replied, "Freut mich, ich bedanke mich." He lifted up his eyes slowly from the paper, looked at me, and asked, "Where did you learn that?" It is needless to say that we both had a good laugh together. On another occasion, I was at his office again for some consultation when Dr. Johannes Erbes my Aramaic teacher came in to say something to him. As he entered, he played upon my name in Aramaic by shouting "qum!" I immediately stood up to attention, and the three of us could not contain our laughter!

Gerhard Hasel was a pastor and a man of God. When I arrived on campus in 1992 to start my doctoral studies, the first words he said to me were, "What shall we do to make you happy?" Despite his busy schedule, he had time for individuals and especially needy students like me. I remember how he prayed fervently for me and assured me by the words of the prayer that my needs had already

been met by God. He did not hesitate to give me his personal copy-card to make photo copies of material that would help me in my studies, and when he became aware that I did not have a personal computer, a tool that is necessary for doctoral work, he made sure that the funds were provided for me for that purpose! In fact, I am just one of many students for whom he arranged financial packages.

The tragic death of Dr. Gerhard Hasel is an irreparable loss not only to his immediate family, but to the world church and the world of biblical scholarship. It is even more painful because he was snatched from us in his prime. Cicero once said "Ad bene vivendum breve tempus satis est." (For living well a short time is long enough.) However comforting these words may be, they are devoid of the eschatological hope that Gerhard Hasel believed, taught, and lived for. He was a child of God, and like Job he would say: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27).

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Throughout the centuries of time, great leaders for God—Moses, Deborah, Elijah, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, Paul, Luther, Calvin, Owen, Wesley, James and Ellen White, to mention but a few—have been characterized by a resolute faith in God, and a holy zeal for His honor and glory. The zeal spoken of here should be understood in the manner defined by the prominent Anglican scholar, James I. Packer:

It is not fanaticism; it is not wildness; it is not irresponsible enthusiasm; it is not any form of pushy egoism. It is rather, a humble, reverent, businesslike, single-minded commitment to the hallowing of God's name and the doing of his will.<sup>1</sup>

Whenever situations occur in which God's truth and honor are being jeopardized, rather than allowing the matter to go away by default, God raises up these leaders to impress the issue upon people's attention in order "to compel if possible a change of heart about it—even at personal risk."<sup>2</sup> The effectiveness of their respective ministries abide in the force and power of their lives and the eloquence of the truth which they teach. But because their convictions are stronger than their apathy, such leaders are not only admired, but they are also misunderstood.

The late Dr. Gerhard F. Hasel possessed and displayed the above kind of faith and zeal during his ministry as pastor, theologian, and church administrator.<sup>3</sup>

The tribute that follows was delivered at his funeral, on August 18, 1994, at the Village Seventh-day Adventist Church, Berrien Springs, Michigan.<sup>4</sup> Borrowing the title from a Ghanaian proverb, the eulogy is designed not only to measure the height of the deceased, but also to give comfort, assurance, and direction to the bereaved. Beyond its immediate context, however, this tribute may also be read as an encouragement to those who find themselves in grief, on account of their dedication to and proclamation of the message of *The Magnificent Disappointment*.<sup>5</sup>

### A Mighty Oak Has Fallen

Today, in Africa we would say, "A Mighty Oak Has Fallen!" For at this solemn hour, and in this quiet place, we have come to bid farewell to our pastor, our teacher, and our friend.

It was here, in this small Berrien Village, that this world-class scholar chose to spend much of his professional life. It was here that he lived, worked, and suffered. It is therefore, significant that the world has compressed itself into this little township so as to pay its final tribute to a gallant Christian statesman, a courageous preacher of the gospel, and a visionary church leader.

But as we pay fitting tributes to Dr. Gerhard F. Hasel, we need not forget that during his lifetime, his labors were not always appreciated. He was often misunderstood, sometimes misrepresented, and occasionally vilified.<sup>6</sup> Permit me to share with you, from Dr. Hasel's experiences, some of the things he has taught me on how to respond to criticisms:

**Employing Wit and Humor.** Dr. Hasel earned his worldwide recognition by demonstrating that it is possible to become an eminent scholar without surrendering Biblical truth. But those who misunderstood him saw this effort as turning back the clock of "progressive" Adventism by 27 years.

If Dr. Hasel were to respond to this, I think, he would just smile, and with characteristic sense of humor and wit, he would whisper: "I wish I could have turned the clock back by 2,000 years—to the days when Christ established the foundations of Seventh-day Adventism."

**Citing Historical Precedence.** Dr. Hasel possessed an unwavering and a determined spirit. But those who could not comprehend the force and persuasiveness of his moral and Biblical convictions, misinterpreted his commitment as dogmatic, intolerant, and even authoritarian.

If Dr. Hasel were to respond to this, I think, he would reply in words reminiscent of Martin Luther: "My conscience is bound to the word of God, and unless I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture I cannot do otherwise."

**Illustrating with Biblical Examples.** Dr. Hasel prized the quest for Biblical truth over theological tranquility. But those who were uncomfortable with him would have preferred him to be an

Obadiah in the house of Ahab and Jezebel. They wanted him to maintain the *status quo*, rather than rock the boat in Ahab's house and risk the lives of God's prophets.

If Dr. Hasel were to respond, I think, he would open his Bible to 1 Kings 18, and after a rigorous exegesis and an insightful theologization, he would conclude in this manner: "*Although God can use god-fearing Obadiahs in times of apostasy in Israel, the roles of Elijahs are equally indispensable. Without Elijahs to confront Ahab, Obadiahs will always be forced to 'find grass to save [Ahab's] horses and mules alive,' instead of finding grace to save men and women for eternity. Therefore, Elijahs are needed—despite the fact that they are always misrepresented, branded, and attacked as 'they that troubleth Israel.'*"

**Responding with Silence.** Dr. Hasel was loved and greatly admired by different classes of people. But those who sowed doubts concerning him could not understand what there was about him that attracted students and teachers, church members and pastors, church leaders and even little children. To his distractors, Dr. Hasel was egocentric or even politically ambitious. They, therefore, whispered to his admirers: "Flee from his presence; can't you see that he is exploiting you and manipulating you for his vested interests and ambitions?"<sup>7</sup>

If Dr. Hasel had heard such remarks, I think, he would have responded with silence. For he believed that those who knew him best will one day have the opportunity of giving their own testimony.

What then do those who knew Dr. Hasel say in response to these misrepresentations?

To these, *we* can only smile and reply: "Did you really know Dr. Hasel? Did you spend time to visit and pray with him? Did you understand what really motivated him in life? Did you make an effort to know *who he was*, and *for what he stood*? If you did, you would know him as we did:

—*We knew him* as a man of integrity: and because of this integrity he would not twist the words nor misrepresent the positions of others—however much their views differed from his.

—*We knew him* as a man of principle and boldness: and because

of this boldness he would not wait until his retirement to declare and articulate his true theological views.

—*We knew him* as a model Christian teacher: not only did he possess a deep intellectual and spiritual insight that made him alert and ever ready to analyze and to challenge every departure from Biblical Christianity, he was also able to make complicated theological issues very simple. Even more, he was humble in his professional accomplishments.

—*We knew him* as a Christian gentleman: one whose countenance repelled every form of arrogance, mediocrity and pettiness, and one whose deportment and personal appearance were worthy of emulation.

—*We knew him* as a sympathetic friend: one who was very firm in the discipline of his friends, and yet, extremely sensitive in caring for their needs.

—*We knew him*, above all, as a noble Christian: one who had a love for Christ, a deep respect for Scriptures, a ready commitment to costly discipleship, and a lifelong yearning for the second Advent.

Because *we knew him* and *what he stood for*, we could not flee from his presence while he was yet alive, and even now in his death, we cannot banish him from our memory, nor discredit his tremendous contribution to the Remnant Church.

In just a few minutes, we shall all file out of this sanctuary to the Rosehill Cemetery where we shall commit the perishable remains of this great man to the ground. We do so, secured in the knowledge that the body we shall place in the ground will be a seed which will soon germinate (1 Cor 15:42-44; 51-57).

Yes, "A Mighty Oak Has Fallen!" But let not those who neither know our Lord, nor His providential leading, think that the departure of Dr. Hasel will deal a fatal blow to the cause of Christ for which he gave his life. For we do know that mighty oaks do not necessarily fall because they are old, tired, or even cut down. Mighty oaks fall in order to give room for many more oaks to grow.<sup>8</sup> Thus, our Heavenly Father has deemed it fit to call His mighty warrior to lay down his sword and shield so as to raise not one Hasel, but many more Hasels in his place. His personal life may now be ended, but what he stood for cannot die.

### The Challenge Before Us

Today, at this very hour, the torch is being passed on to another generation of Bible-believing Adventist scholars and preachers from all the different regions of the world. To us has been bequeathed a priceless legacy of Adventist faith.

Let us, now, also make a commitment to love Jesus Christ as our Lord, to have a respect for Scriptures as His Word, to stand for Him at whatever cost, and to hasten the Second Coming of our Lord.

Let us, now, also make a pledge to pursue the highest form of theological scholarship that will not surrender "the Truth."

Let us resolve to cherish a pastoral concern, an evangelistic fervor, and a prophetic daring to speak for God wherever we find ourselves.

Let us join hands and ranks and, today, make a commitment to those who fought alongside Dr. Hasel—the Raoul Dederens, the Mervyn Maxwells, the Raymond Holmes, and many others<sup>9</sup>—who are still in our midst. Let us, by the grace of God, assure them that their labors in our behalf will not be in vain, and that we are prepared to hold fast to what is True rather than to what is new.<sup>10</sup>

And with these commitments,

—let us go back, as students and faculty, to our classrooms

—let us go back, as pastors and laypeople, to our churches

—let us go back, as administrators and evangelists, to our offices

—let us all go out of this place, and in unity and in humility *preserve, practice, and proclaim* the everlasting gospel for which Dr. Gerhard Hasel so faithfully labored (Rev 14:6-12).

### A Final Word to the Bereaved

And finally, to the bereaved family, permit me to share with you a comforting statement from the writings of one *theologian* whose works greatly shaped the thoughts of Dr. Hasel. The statement concerns the "Blessed Hope" of the resurrection. Dr. Hasel spoke on this subject of the resurrection, exactly four months ago, at the last International Convention of the Adventist Theological Society (April 14-17, 1994, Southern College, TN). You may recognize the statement I am about to read as coming from the pen of Ellen G. White:<sup>11</sup>

... All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying. As we realize the tender care of Him who makes all things work together for our good, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. In the home of the redeemed there will be no tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. 'The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.' Isaiah 33:24. One rich tide of happiness will flow and deepen as eternity rolls on.

We are still amidst the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities. Let us consider most earnestly the blessed hereafter. Let our faith pierce through every cloud of darkness and behold Him who died for the sins of the world. He has opened the gates of paradise to all who receive and believe on Him. To them He gives power to become the sons and daughters of God. Let the afflictions which pain us so grievously become instructive lessons, teaching us to press forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ. Let us be encouraged by the thought that the Lord is soon to come. Let this hope gladden our hearts. . . .

We are homeward bound. He who loved us so much as to die for us hath builded for us a city. The New Jerusalem is our place of rest. There will be no sadness in the city of God. No wail of sorrow, no dirge of crushed hopes and buried affections, will evermore be heard. Soon the garments of heaviness will be changed for the wedding garment. Soon we shall witness the coronation of our King. Those whose lives have been hidden with Christ, those who on this earth have fought the good fight of faith, will shine forth with the Redeemer's glory in the kingdom of God

It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness. 'Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry' [Hebrews 10:35-37]. Look up, look up, and let your faith

continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future glory that is for the redeemed. 'Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.' James 5:7, 8.

This is our hope; this was the hope of Dr. Gerhard F. Hasel; and to this hope I invite you, the members of the bereaved family, to ever cherish. **MARANATHA!**

<sup>1</sup> James I. Packer, *A Passion for Faithfulness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995), 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>3</sup> The contention here is not that Dr. Hasel (or any other great leader, for that matter) was infallible or sinless. Such a quality can only be ascribed to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. All others—notwithstanding the excellence of their character and the distinction of their accomplishments—have been sinful human beings who have needed the redeeming grace of Christ. What is being suggested, however, is that in spite of his human limitations and frailties, Dr. Hasel represents those rare finds, aptly described by Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), 57: "The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though heavens fall."

<sup>4</sup> Solomon once said: "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart" (Eccl 7:2). Funerals not only remind us of our own mortalities, but they also force us to reflect seriously upon life and to make a wholehearted commitment to the things that really count. The tribute that follows is intended to bring about that kind of awareness and response. Besides a few minor changes and the endnotes that have been inserted to clarify some points, this tribute is the original text of the eulogy delivered at Hasel's funeral. The object of the tribute was to challenge professing Christians to make a wholehearted commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord, to respect Holy Scriptures as His trustworthy Word, to stand for Him at whatever cost, and to hasten His second coming through a life of holiness and loving service. This is the cause for which Dr. Hasel faithfully labored.

<sup>5</sup> C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Magnificent Disappointment: What Really Happened in 1844. . . and Its Meaning for Today* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> In her commentary upon the events leading to the arrest and untimely death of the apostle Paul, Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1911), 417-418, makes an insightful statement that is pertinent to our present remarks: "A neglect to appreciate and improve the provisions of divine grace has deprived the church of many a blessing. How often would the Lord have

prolonged the work of some faithful minister, had his labors been appreciated! But if the church permits the enemy of souls to pervert the understanding, so that they misrepresent and misinterpret the words and acts of the servant of Christ; if they allow themselves to stand in his way and hinder his usefulness, the Lord sometimes removes from them the blessing which He gave."

<sup>7</sup> Notice again what Ellen White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 418, has said about situations of this kind: "Satan is constantly working through his agents to dishearten and destroy those whom God has chosen to accomplish a great and good work. They may be ready to sacrifice even life itself for the advancement of the cause of Christ, yet the great deceiver will suggest to their brethren doubts concerning them which, if entertained, would undermine confidence in their integrity of character, and thus cripple their usefulness. Too often he succeeds in bringing sorrow upon them, through their own brethren, such sorrow of heart that God graciously interposes to give His persecuted servants rest. After the hands are folded upon the pulseless breast, when the voice of warning and encouragement is silent, then the obdurate may be aroused to see and prize the blessings they have cast from them. Their death may accomplish that which their life has failed to do."

<sup>8</sup> Herein lies the profundity of the Ghanaian proverb, *a mighty oak has fallen*. The expression is not merely an announcement of the sudden fall of a huge oak, nor even a public declaration of why it was regarded as a stalwart tree among its peers, but more importantly, the proverb is a call upon the smaller oaks (which grew in the shadow of the huge one) not to be unduly shaken by the unexpected loss of the mighty oak. It summons the bereaved oaks to sink their roots a little deeper into the ground, and to stretch forth their branches and leaves a little higher towards the sun, if they are to obtain the resources needed for them to fill the vacuum created by the unanticipated departure of the deceased. Thus understood, this African maxim is the strongest encouragement and motivation that can be given in the face of tragedy.

<sup>9</sup> In a personal letter (dated August 19, 1994) addressed to Dr. Raoul Dederen, and Dr. C. Mervyn Maxwell, and copied to Dr. Raymond Holmes (who was unable to be at the funeral), I explained to them why their names were singled out for mention at the funeral. The relevant section of the letter reads: "You may recall that during my tribute to Dr. Hasel yesterday, I made a reference to your names. I did so not only because you are fitting representatives of the 'retired' church workers who are still rendering a faithful service to God, but also because I wanted to publicly express my appreciation for what you have meant to me. You have both demonstrated that while Bible-believing scholars may genuinely hold differences of opinion on certain theological issues, it is possible for them, as they diligently seek for Divine illumination on those subjects, to display a gracious Christian spirit toward one another and to stand united on incontrovertible truth."

<sup>10</sup> To question the "new" can expose one's self to the charge of being a prisoner of the pre-scientific past, or to the criticism of lacking the ability to take the present seriously. But there are some dangers in always preferring the "new" over the "old" and the true. Undergirding most interests in new theologies and new moralities is the theory of evolution which teaches that the latest is better than the earliest. While the "new" may not necessarily be opposed to the "true," in many minds the word "new" has become the operative word for determining what is true. We may all do well to listen to the caution by Peter Taylor Forsyth:

"I am sure no new theology can really be theology, whatever its novelty, unless it express[es] and develop[s] the old faith which made those theologies that are now old the mightiest things of the age when they were new." Quoted in Kenneth Hamilton, *What's New in Religion?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), p. 6.

11 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1948), 9:286-288.

Ganoune Diop, Ph.D. Candidate  
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Berrien Springs, Michigan

Stunned by the shocking news of a leader's death  
We refused to face what seems unreal.

How could a mighty man fall in the midst of God's people,  
One who carried the banner of integrity  
and commitment to our High Priest's cause?

How could a warrior go at this time,  
One who stood firm on the ground of biblical authority and truth,  
devoting himself to making every thought captive to its revelation?

How could a man of God step over and  
away from this place that benefited so much from his service—  
One who without intimidation whatsoever  
carried so many of us through the hermeneutical and theological  
quicksand, providing us guidance and visions, boosting our commit-  
ment to the Lord Jesus Christ and to His Church?

How could one who through Your providence, O God, among those  
who helped me personally shape a new Christ-centered worldview  
since my exodus from Islam, now be out of my reach? How?

How could a soldier, a defender of the faith  
be suddenly taken from us,  
One who relentlessly uplifted the present truth  
to prepare a people for Jesus' glorious coming?

Overwhelmed, but not overcome,  
we have decided even this day  
not to let dread have its way, to creep and settle in our bones.  
Rather, we cling to our hope,  
a hope that goes beyond the veil of death.



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### TRIBUTES TO GERHARD F. HASEL

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

BY

### CHURCH ASSOCIATES AND COLLEAGUES

How does one place the death of a colleague and friend into  
 one perspective? We were planning to room together Thursday  
 night in Ogden, Utah, because we both had papers to read at the  
 Biblical Research Institute Science Committee the next morning.  
 But that night I had no room.

On Wednesday I arrived in Salt Lake City to conduct some  
 research at the University of Utah. Thankfully, on Thursday eve-  
 ning, I had the privilege of staying with the Mormon Tabernacle  
 Choir during their weekly evening rehearsal which helped to fortify  
 me for the tragic news I received later that night when I arrived in  
 Ogden. The next morning I was asked to read Hasel's paper to the  
 BRISOC group. I found it a difficult task. However, before I presented  
 the paper, Bill Hasegawa, a member of the choir, in a period in which  
 he remembered Hasel's words, said:

**"As for me, I will see Your face in  
 righteousness;  
 I shall be satisfied when I awake in  
 Your likeness."**

Hasel's paper dealt with the question concerning the  
 Hebrew word for day, *Yom*, in Genesis 1. Gerhard presented an  
 exhaustive scholarly study documenting the reasons why the term  
 meant the way it did, rather than long ages or some  
 metaphorical symbolic meaning. As usual, he referred to the latest  
 scholarly research on the topic, including a reference to a 1994  
 publication, entitled *The Creation Hypothesis*, which, in my  
 opinion, is the finest assemblage of scholarly articles in print  
 dealing with the evidences of scientific creation in the  
 natural world for the use of a divine  
 creating cause of biological forms.

How does one attempt to put all these events into some  
 perspective? Concerning the day of Gerhard's death I wait for God  
 to reveal in the hereafter. But now that Hasel's passing is a reality,  
 we that we will never forget what he was about academically at  
 the time of his death. I hope we will not forget his nature  
 and his contribution.

TRIBUTES TO GERHARD T. HASSEL  
BY  
CHURCH ASSOCIATES AND COLLEAGUES

We for me I will see Your face in  
I shall be satisfied when I awake in  
Your likeness.

John T. Baldwin  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary  
Andrews University  
Berrien Springs, Michigan

How does one place the death of a colleague and friend into some perspective? We were planning to room together Thursday night in Ogden, Utah, because we both had papers to read at the Biblical Research Institute Science Committee the next morning. But that night I had no roommate.

On Wednesday I arrived in Salt Lake City to conduct some research at the University of Utah. Thankfully, on Thursday evening, I had the privilege of singing with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir during their weekly evening rehearsal which helped to fortify me for the tragic news I received later that night when I arrived in Ogden. The next morning I was asked to read Hasel's paper to the BRISCO group, a difficult task indeed. However, before I presented the paper, Bill Shea led in an hour-long testimony period in which we remembered our fallen colleague and closed with earnest prayers for God's continued presence in our lives, in the Hasel family, and for His guidance in the work of BRISCO.

Hasel's paper was devoted to the question concerning the Hebrew word for day, *yom*, in Genesis 1. Gerhard presented an exhaustive scholarly study documenting the reasons why the term represents a literal 24 hour day, rather than long ages or some metaphorical symbolic meaning. As usual, he referred to the latest scholarly research on the topic, including a reference to a 1994 publication entitled: *The Creation Hypothesis*, which, in my opinion, is the finest assemblage of scholarly articles in print showing the evidences in the natural world for the need of a divine creating cause of biological forms.

How does one attempt to put all these events into some perspective? Concerning the why of Gerhard's death I wait for God to address in the hereafter. But now that Hasel's passing is a reality, I hope that we will never forget what he was about academically at the time of his death, that is, I hope we will not forget the nature of his final academic contribution.

Gerhard Hasel died in a scholarly endeavor he dearly loved—working with the creation texts, and clearly establishing that the word *day* in Genesis 1 is intended to mean a literal 24 hour day. This academic activity in association with Hasel's death has significant implications. First, it means that Hasel died defending the truth of the great biblical doctrine of creation. But more particularly, he gave his life while vindicating the truth not only of the Mosaic intention of a literal six-day creation week, but also of the historical accuracy of a literal six-day creation in this post Darwinian age, in a time when most biblical scholars of note reject the latter conclusion as wholly anachronistic because of the existence of allegedly overwhelming scientific evidence supposedly rendering a literal interpretation of the creation texts untenable.

Second, a literal six-day creation is the basis of the seventh-day Sabbath, which in turn is the basis of that part of the *First Angel's* Message in Revelation 14 calling us to worship God as Creator. Furthermore, it is the basis of the *Third Angel's* Message where God lovingly calls all people in this end-time to honor His entire will. Without the historical accuracy of a six-day creation the meaning of the Three Angel's Messages are fatally undermined. Thus, in the second place, Gerhard Hasel died supporting God's remnant peoples' message, the Three Angel's Messages, to be shared before the return of Jesus. This is most interesting when we recall that Gerhard Hasel wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on the topic of the "remnant." Therefore, his last academic act was to uphold the biblical and implied scientific truth of the God-designed message to be given by the remnant church to the world.

In conclusion, may Dr. Hasel's passing serve to refocus our attention upon the reality, scientific truthfulness, and practical, personal relevancy of God's profound, saving messages, and upon the privilege and responsibility of sharing these themes. May his passing prompt us to greater community, to the up-building of each other, and to a responsible, academically informed, vigorous reaffirmation of God's distinct last day message, so that it will not dim, but will shine only more brightly to God's glory until Christ comes.

Robert H. Carter

Past-President

Lake Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

During my seventeen years of service at the Lake Union Conference office, it was my privilege to establish a very cordial friendship with Dr. Gerhard Hasel. It is a friendship that I will always cherish. His firm handshake, broad smiles, and warm greetings always brought cheer to my heart.

Many were the times that he would stop by my office and share with me his dreams for a more effective ministry. One did not have to be around Gerhard very long before recognizing that he loved his church and the message it espoused. Some have referred to him as a "defender of the faith." I would be hard put to identify someone who could uphold the teaching of Seventh-day Adventists more ably than he.

He was also a pre-eminent scholar. His literary contributions in the field of theology are recognized both within and without our denomination.

Dr. Hasel felt that if we were to have a strong church, then we must have a well prepared ministry. His efforts as Dean and Professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary were focused on that dual objective. It was under his inspiration and leadership that programs were developed at the Seminary to:

- a. Provide seasoned pastors the opportunity to sharpen their skills and earn higher degrees.
- b. To make sure that seminarians received both practical and theoretical training.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church will always be indebted to the distinguished career of this dedicated former preacher of righteousness.

Norman R. Gulley  
 Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists  
 Collegedale, Tennessee

Dr. Gerhard Hasel was an internationally known and respected scholar. He was a man of deep conviction and believed in the authority of Scripture. His consistent upholding of a high view of Scripture was central to his articles written for the Adventist Theological Society, in which he served as its second president. With his knowledge of German scholarship he knew what lesser views of Scripture had done. I admired Gerhard for standing tall for his convictions. His article on the Sabbath in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* is a case in point.

Gerhard Hasel was not only a well known Old Testament scholar, but a real friend. I remember when I was doing some research on Daniel, he was willing to take the time and give me insights into one aspect of the year-day principle as supported by Daniel. I remember when he put my name down to join his MCI "Friends and Family" circle. We joined, and had many a free call as we talked from time to time. I always enjoyed phoning Gerhard, and miss the lively conversations which always ended with Gerhard saying, "God bless you."

Gerhard was a family man, with a wonderful wife, a son and two daughters. I could sense the closeness of the family when Gerhard invited some of us to dinner at their home. He was a very good host. He encouraged conversation from his guests, and we all had a terrific time.

A year ago, after the ATS meetings in Washington D.C. and Maryland, some of the ATS officers had an important meeting with a church leader. After this was over, Gerhard took me to the airport in his rented car. There was never a dull moment when you were with Gerhard. We had an hour before we would be boarding different planes, and he regaled me with human interest accounts reaching back to his time at Southern College, and more recently when he was the Dean of the Theological Seminary at Andrews University. The hour sped by all too quickly.

The last time I phoned Gerhard was about two weeks before his tragic accident. He was telling me about his son Michael and the

way God has so wonderfully blessed him in his doctoral studies and mentioned some specific providences. He talked about Michael's archaeological dig during the summer when he had a leadership role. He was so proud of you Michael, and I know that was mutual. I remember how Gerhard and Michael attended professional meetings together, as friends and colleagues. It is a real testimony to a father who can inspire his son to follow in his footsteps to become another Hasel Old Testament scholar. I admire Gerhard for that.

So, as I think of Gerhard today, I give him tribute as a great scholar, a genuine friend, and a family man. Yet, above all Gerhard loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and was unafraid to place Him as preeminent in all his work. On April 14, 1994, I had the privilege of introducing Gerhard before he gave his last presentation to the Adventist Theological Society, at the sixth international ATS convention held at Southern College, Tennessee. The title of Gerhard's presentation was "The Importance of Belief in the Resurrection of Jesus." How fitting that he should talk about the resurrection of His Savior, which is the basis of his own resurrection. We trust that the glorious resurrection of the saints will come soon, so that we can be with our esteemed brother and friend once again, and forever. "Even so, come Lord Jesus, quickly come."

Gordon M. Hyde

Former Director, Biblical Research Institute  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

My first acquaintance with Dr. Gerhard Hasel dates to the mid-1960's when he served as a member of the Religion Department faculty at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, in Collegedale, Tennessee. In course of time, it was our privilege to come to know as special friends his much-beloved wife Hilde and the three M's—the children Michael, Marlana, and Melissa.

By the end of the decade, we had both moved—he to Andrews University and I to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists where it was my privilege to undertake the planning and formation of the Biblical Research Institute, with its several standing committees of research, administration, and publishing. In that total operation I was always most grateful to have Gerhard as a major counselor, critic, and contributor. (I have been even more pleased to see that since my move out of the Biblical Research Institute office, the subsequent leadership there has published Hasel at least as frequently as we did earlier. I applaud their judgment!)

When today more and more Seventh-day Adventists are recognizing that to be true to our Spirit-directed mission we must reach out the hand to those other Christians than ourselves who champion the authority of Scripture and who worship both at the cross and the empty tomb of the Christ and await His return—as genuinely as do any of us—it is particularly gratifying to note the high esteem in which Gerhard Hasel's contributions to biblical theology are held in the Evangelical world.

Permit a little personal postscript: There were special facets to the warmth of the friendship of the Hydés and Hasels. Gerhard and I both had German fathers (and I carried the surname of Heide into my late twenties). But *my* father emigrated to London as a boy of fourteen. So while Gerhard always carried touches of a German accent, mine (you may perhaps have noticed) are somewhat British. Incidentally, at different times we each emigrated to the U.S.A. in quest of a baccalaureate Adventist education and beyond, married over here, and were each blessed with three children.

May we solicit your continued love and prayers for Gerhard's family (and when I presented this tribute initially, the Christmas holiday season was approaching). Please also intercede with God to bring along to His cause a number of replacements for Gerhard.

BY

AND

THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

"I have fought the good fight,  
I have finished the race,  
I have kept the faith.  
Henceforth there is laid up for me  
the crown of righteousness, which the Lord,  
the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day,  
and not only to me but also to all who love his  
appearing."

May we solicit your continued love and prayers for Gerhard's family (and when I preside, this tribute initially the Christmas holiday season was appropriate). I'll see also intercede with God to bring along to his sons a number of replacements for Gerhard.

My first acquaintance with Dr. Gerhard Hasel dates to the fall of 1967 when he served as a member of the Religion Department faculty at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists in Collegedale, Tennessee. In course of time it was our privilege to meet to know as special friends his much-beloved wife Bilde and their three Me—the children Michael, Marlene, and Melissa.

By the end of the decade, we had both moved—his to Andrews University and I to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists where it was my privilege to undertake the planning and formation of the Biblical Research Institute, with its several departments of research, administration, and publishing. In the total operation I was always most grateful to have Gerhard as a major consultant, critic, and contributor. I have been ever desirous to see that some of my heirs out of the Biblical Research Institute office, the subsequent leadership there has published Hasel at least as frequently as we do earlier. I applaud your judgment!

When today more and more Seventh-day Adventists are recognizing that to be true to our Lord's teachings we must put out the hand to those other Christians than ourselves who claim the authority of Scripture and who worship both as the Jews and the early Christians of the Church and Jesus' religion—genuinely as do any of us—it is particularly gratifying to see a high esteem in which Gerhard Hasel's contributions to biblical theology are held in the Evangelical world.

Permit a little personal postscript: There were special gifts to the warmth of the friendship of the Hynds and Hasels. Gerhart and I both had German fathers (and I carried the surname of Hasel into my late twenties). But my father emigrated to England at age of fourteen. So while Gerhard always carried patches of a German accent, mine (you may perhaps have noticed) are somewhat British. Incidentally at different times we each emigrated to the U.S.A. in quest of a better career. I arrived in 1955 and stayed, incidentally, ever being and ever with my own children.

TRIBUTES TO GERHARD F. HASEL

BY

CHURCH OFFICERS

AND

THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

President  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists  
Silver Spring, Maryland

On behalf of the Church Officers, we want to extend our sympathy to the bereaved family and to the death of Dr. Gerhard Hasel.

Dr. Hasel was a bright and shining star in theological circles both within and outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Only eternity will reveal the full extent and degree of his powerful impact on the Church and the world. His many books and articles will live on for him. He will be missed by his peers and associates in the various theological societies and academies of which he was a respected member.

Students at all levels and throughout the world feel the positive influence of this Christian scholar. They are better people because of his teachings.

"I have fought the good fight,  
I have finished the race,  
I have kept the faith.  
Henceforth there is laid up for me  
the crown of righteousness, which the Lord,  
the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day,  
and not only to me but also to all who love his  
appearing."

Let me share with you the consolation of his many years of service. True, he has fallen, but he has left behind a legacy of these words: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." I know your pain and your grief. I have shared in my heart on earth, that I may live with you in heaven." (Letter to Ages, p. 483).

TRIBUTES TO GERHARD F. HASEL

BY

CHURCH OFFICERS

AND

THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

I have fought the good fight,  
I have finished the race,  
I have kept the faith.  
Henceforth there is laid up for me  
the crown of righteousness, which the Lord,  
the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day,  
and not only to me but also to all who love his  
appearing."

Robert S. Folkenberg

President

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Silver Spring, Maryland

On behalf of the General Conference family, we want to extend our sympathy to those who mourn the tragic and untimely death of Dr. Gerhard Hasel.

Dr. Hasel was a bright and shining star in theological circles both within and outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Only eternity will reveal the full extent and degree of his powerful impact on this church through his teaching and writing while at Southern College and the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. His numerous books and articles will live after him. He will be missed by his peers and associates in the various theological societies and academies of which he was a respected member.

Students at all levels and throughout the world felt the positive influence of this Christian educator. They are better people because of the example he set and the life he lived.

Let me convey my own deep appreciation of his many years of service. Truly, a mighty warrior for God has fallen. Take comfort in these words:

"I [Jesus] have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live" (*Desire of Ages*, p. 483).

Robert J. Kloosterhuis  
Chairman of the Board, Andrews University  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Dr. Gerhard Hasel's untimely, unexpected death has created an immense void. The effects of this tragic event will be felt by scholars in general, and by Seventh-day Adventist theologians in particular. Yes, a Christian and a respected student of the Word has fallen. The loss is indeed enormous.

His absence will be noted by scholars, students, and friends both within and outside of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He possessed a powerful erudite pen and employed it effectively and copiously. He was held in high esteem in the scholarly world. He was respected and accepted as an authority in his sphere of study and expertise. For many, to cite Dr. Hasel was sufficient, weighty, and trustworthy.

Dr. Hasel's contributions to the scholarly world were prodigious, influential, and far reaching. His scholarship brought stature, prominence, and preeminence to the Seminary, to his colleagues, and to his church. Our church, our society, we ourselves have altered, adjusted, and changed our concepts, perceptions, and perspectives on many issues due to his scholarship and talents.

Dr. Hasel was a man of strong qualities. What he said he believed. What he believed he lived. There was no confusion between his confession and his profession. There was no room for doubt regarding his convictions or where he stood on a given issue. His defense was lucid, well-articulated, and forthright. His analysis of issues were perceptive. They put in bold relief the principle points and clearly delineated the direction to pursue. When it came to defending the authority of scripture, there were no "ifs," "ands," "buts," or "maybes" in his vocabulary. As a man of convictions, all knew where he stood.

I believe Dr. Hasel was a sincere, dedicated servant of Jesus Christ. His hope was anchored in the Savior and His Word. Methinks, if he were able to speak to us at this very moment, his admonition would be positive, his words filled with assurance, his voice lifted up in praise and adoration to the Son of God and encouragement to his loved ones. He would most assuredly point

us forward and upward to "the blessed hope." Yes, a son, a husband, a father, a brother, a friend, a leader in the church has fallen. But he shall rise again on that glad morning.

On behalf of the Andrews Board of Trustees, I extend their profound condolences and deep heartfelt, Christian sorrow. A prince in Israel has fallen. We shall miss him.



**C. Raymond Holmes**

Past-President, Adventist Theological Society  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Retired  
Andrews University

This issue of *The Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* is designed as a tribute to Dr. Gerhard Hasel, professor of Old Testament and Director of the Ph.D./Th.D. programs at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, and former Dean of the Seminary.

Dr. Hasel served as the second president of the Adventist Theological Society (ATS) 1990-1992, and his presidency constituted a primary factor in its consolidation. He confessed to some of his confidants that he considered his contribution to the development of ATS as one of the most important and satisfying of his life and ministry.

His death was certainly untimely in that with his beloved Church facing crucial issues relative to biblical authority and biblical interpretation, his determined and assured voice was so desperately needed.

Dr. Hasel was a leading figure of conservative Adventist theology, and he was recognized as a major theologian within the larger Protestant Christian context. No other Seventh-day Adventist theologian enjoyed such respect and confidence both within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and among Protestants in general as the tributes in this issue attest.

Though primarily an Old Testament scholar he was truly a biblical theologian in that his interests and expertise included the New Testament as well. His abilities as a scholar were even broader—embracing Christian ethics, biblical archaeology, and systematic theology.

In the first 150 years of Seventh-day Adventist history he ranked as one of the great Adventist biblical scholars, and in the opinion of many of his colleagues he was rapidly emerging as a major theological figure and mind.

I was privileged to serve on the faculty of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary during his deanship. When the

history of the Seminary is written, his deanship will prove to have been vital during a sensitive period of Seventh-day Adventist theological history.

As an administrator he was acutely perspicacious. His thought penetrated beneath political forces and concentrated on the theological significance. He had the ability to quickly recognize the long range implications of proposals and decisions, and did not hesitate to let the weight of his opinion be felt when he determined criticality regarding the role and purpose of the Seminary. He was single-mindedly committed to larger goals than the advancement of his own career.

When all the words of honor have been said, the greatest tribute that could be made to the memory of our friend and colleague will be our determination to continue to build on the solid foundation he helped to construct for the Adventist Theological Society. His tragic death must not be allowed to dampen our enthusiasm for the purpose and goals of ATS, but rather inspire the ongoing development of creatively conservative Adventist theology of which he was a major figure.

Let those of us who shared his faith and convictions vow to continue in the strong biblical faith to which his life bore uncompromising witness. While the contribution of ATS to the Church and to Seventh-day Adventist theology will continue, we are profoundly grateful that he was with us for a little while providing an example to be admired and emulated.

Jack J. Blanco

Past-President, Adventist Theological Society  
Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists  
Collegedale, Tennessee

It was late on the evening of August 11, 1994 that I received a phone call from someone in the community asking me if I had heard that Dr. Hasel had been killed. This person thought that since I was a friend and colleague of his, I would want to know what she had heard. I thanked the caller and told her I would try to verify it. I could not imagine it to be true. I immediately phoned Dr. Vhymeister, Dean of the Seminary, and was assured that such was the case. Dr. Hasel had been killed in a car accident on his way to a BRI Science Committee (BRISCO) meeting.

The next morning I shared the news with my colleagues; some had not heard. They also expressed disbelief and had difficulty accepting the fact that it was really so. It is always more difficult to accept the sudden death of a close friend or loved one than the passing of a stranger. And this was the case with us in accepting the passing of Gerhard. There is no need for me to elaborate on the immediate cause of his death, how he died. We know the details. The other question of why he died now, is not so easy to answer. "Why did this have to happen to a man who was so committed to Christ and to the upholding of Scripture, and at time in his life when he was the most productive?"

I have not known Dr. Hasel as long nor have I worked with him as closely as have some of you. However, the short time that I did work with him left me without a doubt that here was a man who was committed to using all the talents and gifts that God had given him to uphold the authority of Scripture. *Sola Scriptura* became his motto and *Ein' Feste Burg* became his song. For him Scripture needed no outside help to establish its authority. While he appreciated and used the various sciences to clarify what was written, for him Scripture was the Word of God incarnate in human expression. He would brook no compromise on its authority and was well able to defend his position.

As I consider the circumstances of his passing, I cannot help

but thinking how easy it would have been for the Lord to commission an angel to give the car that Dr. Hasel was driving a little push to get it out of the way of the oncoming vehicle. Then I ask myself, "Why did the Lord not do this? Was Gerhard's work done that God intended for him to do? Had he completed his mission for the Lord?" But what of those articles and contributions that were left unfinished, such as his work as associate editor of *The New International Dictionary of the Old Testament*, or the various other publications still incomplete?

Maybe we ought to take a careful look at the contributions to Christ's commission Dr. Hasel has made in order to better understand what God has in mind for us to do. Through Gerhard's uncompleted articles and publications is the Lord trying to show us that more work of this kind needs to be done? We can only try to second-guess God's purpose in his life and death. But it seems to me that the passing of our friend and colleague does call for a reassessment of our own mission, both individually and as a society, so that we do not drop the torch that he carried so nobly and ably until the day of his departure from us.

Dr. Hasel's fellowship with colleagues extended well beyond his own denomination. He fellowshipped with all, but found the closest fellowship with those who also were unashamedly committed to the self-authenticating authority of Scripture. His prodigious contributions to Theology whether through journals, books, or in the classroom give evidence of his firm and fervent commitment to Jesus Christ and to what he believed. It did not take long before those who associated with him knew where he stood on these cardinal issues of our common faith.

Though Gerhard was not one of the founders of the Adventist Theological Society, once he became a member he put his whole heart and soul into its mission, became its second president. As past-president he continued to serve as Vice-President for Publications. Much of the credit for the growth and success of the Society goes to him, and it is an understatement to say that we will miss his energy, wisdom, and scholarly skills. We will miss lighting our flames from his torch, basking in his friendship, rejoicing in his successes, extending to him a handshake and giving him a brotherly hug. It is with sadness that we say good-bye, but it is with hope in

the resurrection, posited in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that we look forward to meeting him again.

E. Edward Zinke

President, Adventist Theological Society  
Silver Spring, Maryland

Dr. Gerhard F. Hasel died Thursday afternoon, August 11, 1994, in an automobile accident near Ogden, Utah. He was returning in a rented automobile to his motel where he was scheduled to participate in the annual meetings of the Biblical Research Institute Science Committee (BRISCO) when he was killed.

At the time of his death Dr. Hasel was the J. N. Andrews Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology and the Director of the Ph.D./Th.D. programs at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Many considered Dr. Hasel the foremost theologian in the Adventist church today, an opinion I fully share.

It is because of his significant theological contribution that this issue of the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Gerhard Hasel. The tributes contained in this issue speak of our appreciation for his work and of our dedication to the God of the Bible which he worshiped.

My tribute to Gerhard has already been published several times.<sup>1</sup> I will not repeat those comments, but I do wish to emphasize his contribution to the theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Gerhard started his teaching ministry at the time my generation was receiving its education. In the Seventh-day Adventist system, we students found a church that, at least intellectually, seemed to be drifting into humanism. Humanism drove the philosophies and therefore the concepts of knowledge of our age. We used our senses to gather and test data. Our minds synthesized this data into knowledge. We tested this knowledge with further investigation. The proof was in the pudding—we were a generation that could produce and afford a 450-horse power car, put a man on the moon, and perform wonders in the operating room.

We were in control of the future. Further experimenting would bring further knowledge which would solve more problems.

Progress was ours. We were the right generation in the right spot to reap the results of right thinking. The scientific method was King, no—it was god. It could answer questions not only in matters of physics and biology, it could also provide a model for the study of history, psychology, sociology, economics, and even the Bible.

If the Bible was to be accepted as true, it had to be proven scientifically, archaeologically, historically, geologically, and (for those who accepted them as viable disciplines), psychologically and sociologically. The network of truth was discovered and defined by the scientific method. This concept of the nature and acquisition of knowledge is a form of humanism. While some Adventist scholars openly and knowingly accepted and advocated humanism, for most its acceptance was more implicit and unarticulated. Scientific humanism simply described the obvious way things are. There was a naive and uncritical acceptance of 19th and 20th century western culture and its intellectual thought forms.

The Bible was accepted and studied within the context of our contemporary humanistic culture. It was tested for its truthfulness on the basis of these humanistic disciplines. Man, come of age, was finally in control of the Word of God. Within the Adventist scholarly community, the Bible was often interpreted both consciously and unconsciously as one would any other piece of literature—from the standpoint of the historical-critical method—a method which arose out of the age of the enlightenment and has therefore had a major impact on contemporary liberal studies. The Bible was studied for its origin in ancient near eastern culture—the concept that the Bible is the folk literature of ancient Hebrew and Christian culture was seen as integral to its acceptance, interpretation and finally to its preaching. When confronted with this kind of thinking, one of my minister colleagues asked in bewilderment, "Ed, isn't there something that Jesus said that I can know about?"

Following in the wake of this humanistic path, there began to arise questions about such fundamental Adventist understanding as a six day creation, a short chronology and the Biblical claim of a worldwide flood, the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. The role of Ellen G. White as a prophet to the church was also questioned on the same humanistic basis.

It was within the context of this uncritical acceptance of humanistic scientific methods that Gerhard came upon the scene. He had been trained in critical, humanistic methods and therefore understood their workings from the inside. However, Gerhard was a skeptic—he was not willing to accept the thought processes of contemporary culture without critical evaluation. Gerhard did the unthinkable. He questioned that which was absolutely unquestioned in our society—the absolute validity of scientific reason, the contemporary method of humanism.

Gerhard "jumped ship"! He had the audacity of turning the cannon around! The weapon was no longer aimed at the Bible, it was now aimed at contemporary humanism. The canon was no longer grounded in the principles of critical reason; it was founded upon the Bible. The Bible was no longer scrutinized by the methods of contemporary cultures. These methods were now scrutinized by the Bible, a revolutionary idea, so novel that it was absolutely ridiculous, nonsensical, naive, dangerous, a threat to contemporary scholarship and culture (as one of my professors said, "Ed, how can you live in the twentieth century and think that way?").

It seldom occurs in history that an individual so radically changes the direction of thought of his contemporaries. This was the case with the 16th century reformers, and so it also was the case with Gerhard. Gerhard took a 180 degree turn in the road to return to the fundamentals upon which the Adventist church was started: the sole authority of Scripture as the foundation of our world view, concept of knowledge and thinking processes, knowledge of God and understanding of doctrine, and of the living of our lives.

As is usual with such broad sweeping movements in history, Gerhard was not the only one in the church to capture the essence of this new return to Adventist thinking, but he was certainly at its forefront. Gerhard was a scholar of scholars. Very bright, energetic, forward reaching and prolific. As a result of this new direction in Theology, there is today a powerful movement back to the thinking that gave this church its original reason for existence—its mission that gave justification to its prophetic emergence—the proclamation of the everlasting gospel.

Because of Gerhard's contribution, there is now a renewed understanding and resurgence of Seventh-day Adventist theology

within the church. There is a new appreciation of Creation, the Judgment, the authority and unity of the Bible and many other doctrines of the church. The book of Daniel has been rescued from the second century and returned to the sixth century. The book of Isaiah is seen to be a unity. The synoptic problem has itself become the problem, and the words of Christ can be heard again. Genesis 1 and 2 are a unity and can be accepted as representing what really took place. God, Moses and Sinai really did cross paths, the children of Israel were really delivered at the Red Sea. Christ really did do the unthinkable, He died for our sins, He was bodily resurrected from the dead, ascended into heaven, is now ministering in the Most Holy Place and will return for us—the remnant of His seed—in a literal, visible Second Coming. There will be a literal new earth and an end of sin and sinners.

For the intellectual climate in the church within which Gerhard started his ministry, it was very important that the church be modern in every respect including its thinking process. Gerhard, however, gave a renewed emphasis to the Adventist biblical viewpoint. For him, it was important that the church be thoroughly biblical, including its thinking process.

The Three Angels' Messages do not rest upon the feebleness of human reason and scholarship. They can be preached with certainty. Gerhard has and will continue to contribute to the proclamation of the gospel both within and by the church. We can be grateful that God gave us his ministry for a short while.

Appropriately enough, Gerhard's last presentation to the Adventist Theological Society was on the resurrection. That presentation is printed in this *Journal*!

Come Lord Jesus!

<sup>1</sup> E. Edward Zinke, "The President's Page: Tribute in Honor of Gerhard F. Hasel," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 1-5.

tion" or "lifting up" (*hupsoō*) on the cross for "the expiation. . . of our sins" (1 John 2:2).<sup>2</sup> Jesus had explained to Nicodemus: "As Moses *lifted up* (*hupsoo*) the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man *be lifted up* (*hupsoo*)" (John 3:14). Near the end of His life He made a similar statement to the Greeks who had sought an interview in the court of the Temple: "I, when I *am lifted up* (*hupsoō*) from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this," adds John, "to show by what death he was to die" (John 12:32-33). In a very real sense Christ's atoning death on the cross, though it appeared at first to be a terrible defeat, was truly the "lifting up"—the exaltation—of a victor! The Father's enthronement of Christ at Pentecost (A.D. 31) acknowledged His Son's magnificent accomplishment (Acts 2).

#### Glorified Redeemer

Christ's heavenly exaltation is also described by the apostles as His glorification. Peter declared to the crowd in Solomon's Porch that God had "*glorified* (*doxazō*) his servant Jesus" whom they had denied (Acts 3:13 cf. 2:33). John comments that in the days of Jesus' ministry, "The Spirit had not been given [a reference to Pentecost, Acts 2] "because Jesus was not yet *glorified*" (*doxazō*, John 7:39). He also observes that the apostles' understanding of their Master's life (involving the prophecies about it) was clarified after "Jesus *was glorified*" (*doxazō*, John 12:16).

The Father glorified Jesus—that is, honored the incarnate Christ by appointing Him "the heir of all things" (Heb 1:2). In addition, He conferred on Christ "all authority (*exousia*) in heaven and in earth" (Matt 28:18), recognizing Him as "the *head* (*kephalē*) over all things for the church" (Eph 1:22).<sup>3</sup> All the attributes of kingly majesty, dignity, and splendor were bestowed upon Christ. Holy angels and the representatives of the unfallen worlds honored the Redeemer and submitted willingly to His sovereignty (cf. Job 1:6; 1 Pet 3:22).

The book of Revelation symbolizes the enthronement of the exalted Christ under the figure of a lamb standing "in the midst" of God's throne "as though it had been slain" (Rev 5:6; 7:17). Twenty-eight times throughout the Apocalypse Christ is referred to as "the Lamb," and the throne of God's universal dominion

receives the title: "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (cf. Rev 3:21; 22:1, 3).

Revelation 5:6 is the first visionary description of Christ's enthronement beside His Father. The emphasis of the scene is upon the Redeemer's atoning sacrifice. "Worthy art thou," exclaim the living creatures and elders, "for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev 5:8-9).

The ascription of praise and honor to the Lamb is repeated and enlarged upon by the myriads of angels who joyfully exclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power (*dunamis*) and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" (Rev 5:11-12).

This particular scene, symbolizing Christ as a once-slain—but again living—lamb standing at the throne of God, carries a significant truth (Rev 5:6). The tense of the verb ("had been slain") in the original language (a perfect, passive, participle) denotes that Christ had been slain in the past, but the *results* obtained by His death *remain* and are always available for the redemption of repentant sinners.<sup>4</sup> The horns and eyes of the symbol indicate the glorified Christ's absolute power and wisdom. But the Apocalypse's repeated emphasis on Christ's title: "the Lamb," and the underscoring by the Greek perfect tense of the continuous efficacy of His sacrifice, clearly mark out the heavenly sanctuary as the command center from which the glorified Redeemer will now carry forward to a successful conclusion all aspects of the Plan of Salvation.<sup>5</sup>

#### Enthroned King

Upon Christ's ascension to the heavenly realm, God "made him sit at his right hand" (Eph 1:20). Sharing the eternal throne of universal dominion (Rev 3:21), Christ occupies a kingship "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come" (Eph 1:21). In this position God "has put all things under his feet" (Eph 1:22)—and continues to do so until His Messianic reign is accomplished (cf. 1 Cor 15:24-28).

The expression, to "sit at his [God's] right hand" occurs (with slight variations) 20 times in the NT (if we count Gospel parallels

and citations of Psalm 110:1).<sup>6</sup> The NT statements are all based on Psalm 110, a Davidic writing. "The *Lord* [*Yahweh*] says to *my lord* [*Adoni*]: 'Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool'" (vs. 1). It is evident from His discussion with the Pharisees that both Jesus and the scribes understood the personage addressed as "my lord" to be the Messiah or Christ.<sup>7</sup>

Since the NT writers accept Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfillment of all the messianic prophecies, they recognize His enthronement as co-Ruler with the Father as the direct fulfillment of Psalm 110:1. The expression, "at my right hand," connotes a *place* or position of honor (that is, at God's side), but is in nowise intended to locate the whereabouts of Christ's physical presence in the heavenly sanctuary.

"To sit at God's right hand" is a figurative phrase indicating the Saviour's new, exalted dignity, full authority and majesty, His rank and preeminence over the created universe. Christ Himself speaks of the glorified redeemed in a similar manner when He promises: "They will sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne" (Rev 3:21). Obviously, the phrasing speaks of their dignity as "fellow heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:17) and not of a sitting on a single, literal throne which would be impossible for the millions of redeemed persons.

In what manner does Christ now "reign"? What is the nature of His kingdom? When Christ stood before Pilate, He plainly indicated He sought no earthly empire to rule. "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world" (John 18:36).

The advent of "the kingdom of God," which Christ early on announced as imminent, was the kingdom of His grace. Repentance from sin and faith in Him as Saviour were the requirements for entrance (Mark 1:15). The Holy Spirit would work in the heart to bring about an entirely new life (John 3:3-8; cf. 2 Cor 5:17). Many of Christ's parables taught the characteristics of that spiritual kingdom and of those who would become its subjects.

When the Pharisees, who thought only in terms of political rule, challenged Him about "when" the announced kingdom was coming, He replied: "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs

to be observed; nor will they say, "Lo, here it is!" or "There!" for behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21, margin). Those who accept Christ as Saviour and Lord not only obtain "redemption, the forgiveness of sins" from the Father, but are also "delivered. . . from the dominion of darkness and *transferred. . . to the kingdom of his beloved Son*" (Col 3:13-14, emphasis added).

In this age (the Messianic Age) Christ reigns from "the throne of *grace*" in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 4:16). The NT writers view the previous ages from Adam to the Messiah as moving toward "the climax of history" (Heb 9:26, NEB)—literally, "[the] completion of the ages." Thus, the era in which Christ's first advent, death, resurrection, and subsequent reign from heaven take place is viewed as "these last days" (Heb 1:2) or "the last days" (Acts 2:17).<sup>8</sup> The present era of Christ's reign of grace *also* has its end-time events that will culminate in our Lord's *second* advent to take His people to Himself (Matt 24:32-33; Heb 9:28).

The reign of Christ from the "throne of grace" is not something mystical or intangible. Through the agency of His church He is extending the borders of His kingdom throughout the world. Just as He once said to the Jewish leaders—"My Father is working until now, and I myself am working: (John 5:17, NASB)—so now He rules in the nations of this world to carry out "the eternal purpose" (Eph 3:11) to bring the plan of salvation to a triumphant conclusion and to terminate the rule of sin.

"Then comes the end, when he [Christ] delivers the kingdom to God the Father *after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he [Christ] must reign* until he [God the Father] has put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor 15:24-25, emphasis added). When, at the end of the age—at the end of Christ's reign of grace—the seventh angel blows his trumpet, "The kingdom of the world [will] become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ!" At that point Christ moves into the rulership of the kingdom of glory, "and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev 11:15) upon "his glorious throne" (literally, "upon his throne of glory," Matt 25:31).

But Christ's kingship will always be subordinate to that of the Father. Just as in the incarnation, God the Son condescended to take humanity's nature so as to be our Representative Head, just so He volunteers to remain in that position eternally. "And when

all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28, NASB).

### Invested High Priest

In his speech to the Jews assembled in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, Peter explained that the Joel-predicted outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which they were witnessing, was the Divine announcement that Jesus of Nazareth had been enthroned at God's right hand as Lord and Christ.

"This Jesus God raised up, . . . *Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God*, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, *he has poured out this which you see and hear*. For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself says, '*The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.*' Let all the house of Israel therefore *know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ*, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:32-36, emphasis added).

But Peter understood Christ's heavenly role to involve more than kingship. A few weeks later he proclaimed in the Temple courts that Jesus "is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as *Prince (archēgos)* and a *Savior (sōtēr)*, to grant (*didōmi*, give) repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31, NASB, emphasis added). In this declaration Peter combines the princely or kingly rule of Christ with that of priesthood. In Israel it was the priesthood (the high priest and his associate priests) who dealt with the issues of sin, repentance, and forgiveness.

The apostolic author of Hebrews sums up the argument of the first half of his epistle with an affirmation similar to Peter's: "Now the point in what we are saying is this: *we have such a high priest*, one who is *seated at the right hand of the throne* of the Majesty in heaven, *a minister in the sanctuary (ta hagia) and the true tent* which is set up not by man but by the Lord" (Heb 8:1-2, emphasis added).

Thus, it is evident that in the mind of Peter and his brethren Pentecost (Acts 2) marked not only the enthronement of the exalted and glorified Christ as King, but also His investiture as High Priest. He was inaugurated to be a royal priest on Heaven's highest throne.

Whereas in Israel, kingship and priesthood were separated (inherited by descendants of Judah and Levi respectively), in Jesus Christ the two roles are united.

But Christ is not merely occupying an impersonal position. He is *humanity's* King-Priest, *our* Royal High Priest, forever linked to us through His incarnation so that He may minister in our behalf the salvation Heaven has devised. "Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, *to make expiation for the sins of the people*. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted" (Heb 2:17-18, emphasis added).

The blood of Jesus Christ is Heaven's currency in its business of salvation. That is, the *merits* of His sinless life and atoning death are what He pleads before God in behalf of every repentant sinner who comes seeking forgiveness and acceptance. As John writes: "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2, emphasis added). And the apostolic author of Hebrews adds: "Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25).

It is fitting, as Christians, that we should continually look back to Calvary, for there the basis of our salvation was achieved. Every communion service recalls the central truth of the Christian faith: Christ's atoning death (1 Cor 11:26). And it is equally fitting that we eagerly anticipate His Second Coming, the great consummation of the plan of redemption (Heb 9:28). But it is also a Christian's great privilege to focus his/her faith and life's energies in this present era upon the living Christ in the heavenly sanctuary ministering "in the presence of God on our behalf" (Heb 9:24)!

We approach the living Christ—our High Priest—through the medium of prayer. And we can do this with confidence. He bears our humanity; He has experienced our pain and sorrows. He understands our fears, our hurts, our griefs. "Since therefore we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to the religion we profess. For ours is not a high priest unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but

one who, because of his likeness to us, has been tested every way, only without sin. Let us therefore boldly approach the throne of our gracious God, where we may receive mercy and in his grace find timely help" (Heb 4:14-16, NEB).

### Prophetic Portrayals of Priesthood

**King-Priest Like Melchizedek (Ps 110:1, 4).** While the Levitical system foreshadowed the priesthood of Christ, certain OT prophecies plainly stated the fact. David wrote the most ancient of these predictions in Psalm 110, the same prophecy that foretold the enthronement of the Messiah at God's right hand (vs. 1). After this opening statement, God continues speaking to the Messiah: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek'" (vs. 4).

This divine commission provides the biblical argument for the apostolic author of Hebrews to prove that the typical, Levitical priesthood with its sacrificial rituals and festivals had come to an end with the Father's appointment of Jesus Christ to a priesthood like Melchizedek's.<sup>9</sup> "Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, . . . 'Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek'" (Heb 5:5-6; cf. 7:11-19).

Melchizedek was an Amorite king whom Abraham met during his sojourn in the land of Canaan sometime during the first quarter of the second millennium, B.C. Evidently, the king ruled over a city-state, Salem (known later as Jerusalem, cf. Ps 76:2). Melchizedek was a priest of "God Most High" as well as a king (Gen 14:17-21). This brief allusion to the Deity indicates that the worship of the true God, originally held by all the immediate descendants of Noah, had not died out entirely. Apparently a genuine faith in the Creator still existed in some family lines other than Abraham's, and the patriarch did not hesitate to give this priestly believer a tenth (tithe) of the spoils of war (vs. 21; Heb 7:14).<sup>10</sup>

Several hundred years later the Holy Spirit selected the Salem king as a type of the coming Messiah, bidding David to write: "You [the Messiah] are a priest for ever *after the order* of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4, emphasis added). The focus of the prediction is on "the order" or the "nature of" (*taxis*, Heb 5:6) the ruler's priesthood.



That is, the Messiah would assume a priesthood similar to Melchizedek's.<sup>11</sup> Thus, approximately a thousand years before Christ's first advent, Inspiration foretold that the Messiah would rule from God's throne as a *king-priest*! Christ would unite in His person the roles of king-ship and priesthood and would rule and minister in this double capacity at His Father's side.

**Ministry of Intercession (Isa 53:11-12).** The 8th century B.C. Isaiah, often referred to as the "Gospel Prophet," wrote of the Messiah's priestly ministry. The reference is recorded among what are commonly known as the "Servant Songs." The central personage in the fourth song (Isa 52:13-53:12) is sometimes designated "the Suffering Servant." He graphically portrays the Saviour's substitutionary death for the sins of humanity.

Liberal scholarship rejects the identification of the "Suffering Servant" with Jesus of Nazareth, but Jesus applied the prophecy to Himself on the night of His betrayal. Citing a key line in Isaiah 53:12, He said: "I will tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me, 'And he was reckoned with the transgressors'; for what is written about me has its fulfillment" (Luke 22:37). The early Christians were in full agreement with this identification (cf. 1 Pet 2:24; Acts 8:30-35).

Although the main focus of the song is on the Messiah's substitutionary sufferings, the last two verses make a clear reference to His future, priestly intercession.

"He [the Messiah] shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant [the Messiah], *make many to be accounted righteous* (*šdq*);<sup>12</sup> and he shall bear (*sbl*) their iniquities. . . . [H]e poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore (*ns'*) the sin of many, and made *intercession* (*pg'*)<sup>13</sup> for the transgressors" (Isa 53:11-12).

When joined together, the last lines of each verse (vss. 11, 12) seem to form a literary chiasm in themselves:

A. The righteous one, my servant, [shall] make many to be accounted righteous;

B. He shall bear their iniquities (vs. 11).

B' He bore the sin of many,

A' [He] made intercession for the transgressors (vs. 12).