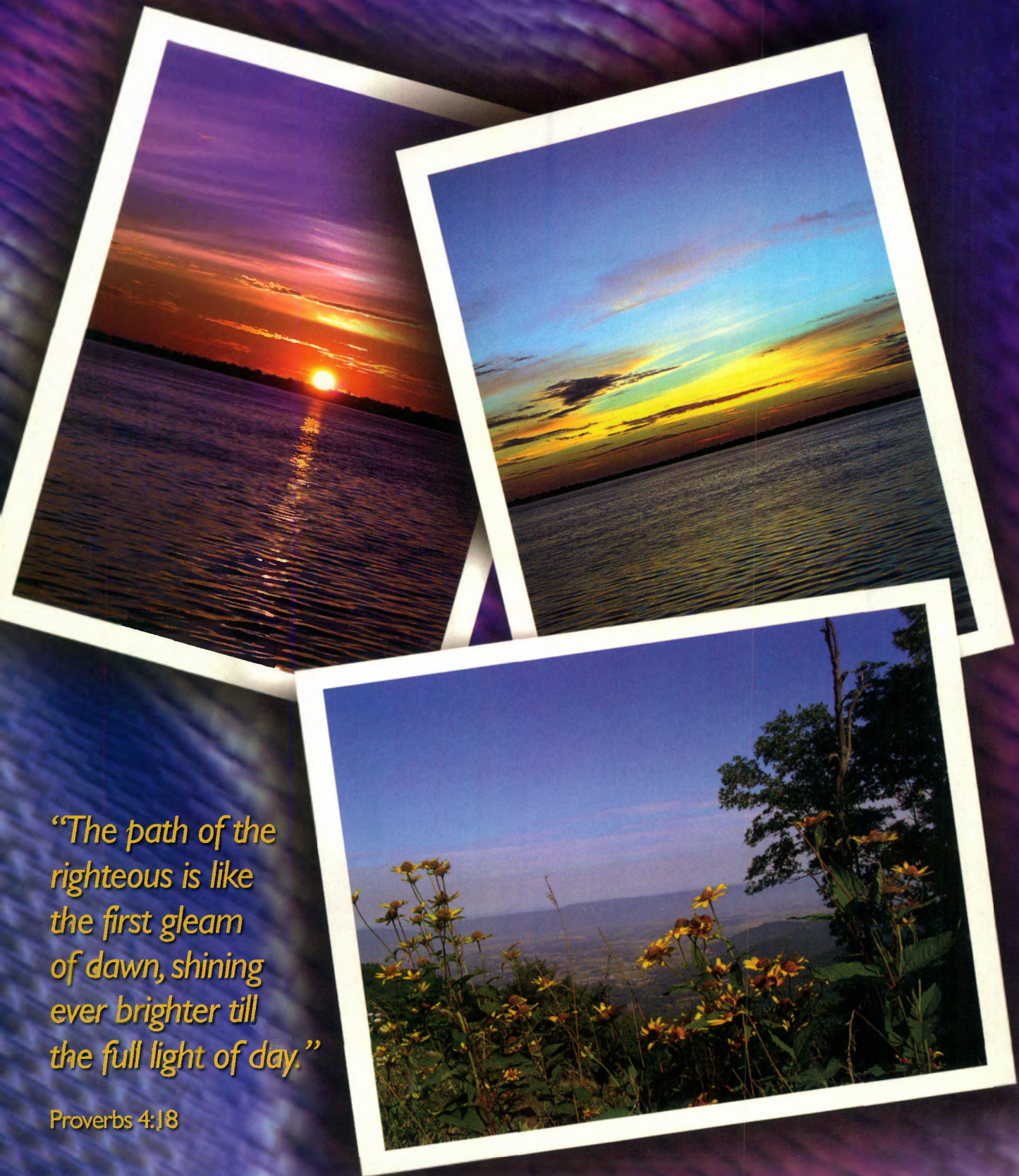


# ELDER'S DIGEST

A Quarterly Resource for local Church Elders Vol. 10 No. 4



*“The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.”*

Proverbs 4:18



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*Cover Photos by Gladys B. Ríos*



## Elder's Digest

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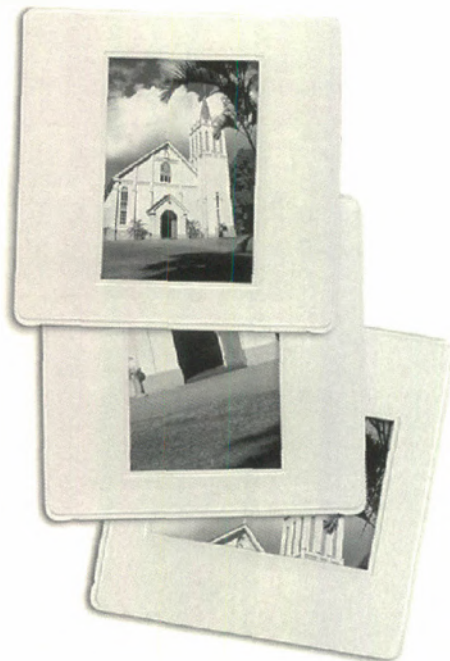
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# Opened and closed doors



Joel Sarli

One of the most serious problems that we face in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today is how to conserve our membership. In the year 2003, for every thousand received into the church by baptism and profession of faith, 450 were dropped for apostasy or as missing. This is a 45 percent loss. That is too great a loss!

The year 2004 was chosen by the General Conference and all divisions as the year of world evangelism and I am sure that most of our elders and leaders in general are engaged in some evangelistic effort.

It is not easy for a person to accept the Adventist truth. It means an entire change in life – in habits, in eating, dressing, and in the day of rest. It takes considerable effort, patience, and prayer.

We spend thousands of dollars in public efforts and satellite evangelism in our endeavor to win souls. We open the front door of the church, but do not close the back door; and many are drifting out. Surely as a leader in the congregation, the elder can give some attention to this important problem and do something about it.

I will not consider in this editorial the reasons or cause of apostasy. I just want to send an appeal to elders and leaders everywhere to

help in preventing many apostasies in the fold where the Lord put us as shepherds.

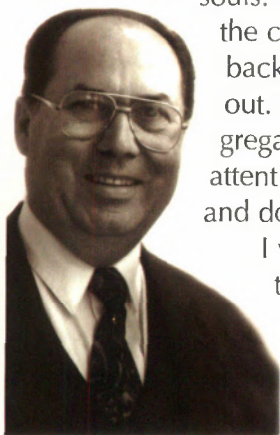
### ***Preventing apostasies***

Here are some suggestions on how you may help in conserving your new members to be happy and active in your congregation:

1. Make sure inquirers thoroughly understand Bible doctrines as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
2. Let them demonstrate by their lives that they have experienced the new birth and are truly converted before the baptism. Lately too many are brought to the church without knowing what they are doing.
3. At the first indication of losing interest or nonattendance at the church services, either visit the person yourself or arrange for others to visit and encourage him/her.
4. Train older members to extend a warm welcome to new church members and visitors.
5. Let us emphasize and hold up before the people the real privileges of being a church member. Let us impress upon our converts the fact that in entering this church they become a part of the great Adventist Family that encircles the world.

### ***Reclaiming former members***

Now when members grow cold and leave the church, or are dismissed, how are we going to win



(Continued on page 5)





Robert H. Pierson

## God answered on the same day

Recently one of our evangelists received a phone call. "You don't know me," a trembling voice began, "but I used to be a Seventh-day Adventist. It has been years since I've been to a service."

The caller faltered, apparently uncertain as to whether the rest of the story should be told. "Yes?" the minister encouraged. "I'm glad you called this morning. Is there some way I can be of help to you?"

The voice in the distance choked a little, then continued.

"I'm ashamed to call you, Elder, but I'm desperately in need of help. Could you possibly spare some time to visit with me for just a few minutes? I would come to your home, but circumstances prevent that."

"Mrs. Green and I will be glad to come right over," the minister interrupted, not waiting to be asked. "What is your name and address?"

With all the information in hand, Elder and Mrs. Green jumped into their little car and were soon spinning down the highway.

"Sounded as though the poor lady was in real distress," the pastor said as they drove along. "Maybe it's some sort of family trouble."

As the car drew up in front of the little run-down house in a poor section of the city, it was evident that some needs existed inside. They knocked at the door and were invited into a cold, bare front room where two untidy little youngsters were tak-

ing in the scene with wide-eyed wonder.

"You see, Elder Green, as I told you on the phone, I was reared a Seventh-day Adventist. But like many other young people, I grew careless and drifted out of the church. A few years ago I married an unbeliever. My husband has been good to me, but we haven't had the happy Christian home God wants His young people to have."

Here Mrs. Black paused. Tears welled up in her eyes. For a few moments it appeared she would not have the courage to go on.

"We are glad you invited us here today," the evangelist encouraged. "God has helped many young people just like you to pick up the tangled threads of twisted lives and straighten them out. We have a wonderful Savior, who wants to help us with every problem."

For a moment Mrs. Black's face lighted up with hope. Then the expression faded into one of despair.

"I know, but I've drifted so far from Him that I don't see how He can hear my prayer or how I could ask Him to help us now!" She faltered again.

"Just what is your problem?" Elder Green asked.

Mrs. Black's glance surveyed the bare room.

"My husband was a taxicab driver," she explained, "but some weeks ago because of a small technicality his driver's license was taken from him. Without his license he has been out of work. You see the results.

Now we are out of food. My husband is out now trying to find work, but always it's the same story. For weeks now he hasn't found anything."

Elder Green took over the conversation from this point.


"We will have food in here today without delay," he assured her. "Our local Dorcas ladies always keep a good supply on hand for just such emergencies. Maybe I can be of some help to your husband in finding work. I know one or two men here in the city that I would be glad to speak to about him."

A kindly conversation followed. Information was received. Words of encouragement were spoken. An earnest appeal was made for Mrs. Black to take renewed courage and to give her heart once more to the Master.

"Sometimes," Elder Green explained, "the Lord permits us to find ourselves in strait places so that we will feel our own helplessness and need of Him. Wouldn't you like to kneel here in prayer with us while we tell God all about your problem and your desires? He will hear and answer if we will but give Him a chance in our lives."

The three knelt together while two little children clung anxiously to their mother and wondered who the visitor was talking to with his eyes closed.

"And, dear Lord, please help Mr. Black to find work today. You know the needs of his family and the new resolves of this young mother. Do, Lord, if it could be Thy will, help him to find work today, and help Sister Black to find her way back into the safety of church fellowship," Elder Green prayed fervently.

That evening at the evangelistic service a new face, beaming with renewed hope, was in the congregation. Mrs. Black could scarcely wait to talk with Elder Green. "I'm so thrilled and thankful!" She almost cried with joy. "My husband had his license restored today and was taken back at his old job today, just as you prayed this morning. I'm so thankful to you. Your visit and prayer this morning helped my husband to find work, and it helped me find my way back to God." Sometimes our loving heavenly Father answers prayers on the very same day! 

(Continued from page 3)

## Open and closed doors

them back? How did Christ win them back?

Do you remember the story of the lost sheep that Jesus told to His disciples? When the lost sheep was found, what did the shepherd do? Did he take his staff and strike the sheep and say: "You naughty sheep, you caused me so much trouble; I have searched hours to find you, and you have strayed away from the flock. Why didn't you stay with the flock?" No. When he found that sheep, he took it right into his arms. He bound up its wounds. He just pressed that sheep against his heart.


How careful we ought to be in winning back the straying sheep of God's flock to make them understand that God loves them, and that the church really cares when they stray out of the fold of Christ.

How much is a soul worth? It was the very life of our Savior. Surely souls that cost so much ought not to be treated with coldness and contempt. Where there is life there is hope. We are not to give up working for those who may seem to be beyond hope.

"All resources of heaven are at the command of those who are seeking to save the lost. Angels will help you to reach the most careless and the most hardened." — *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 197.

Let us seek out those who have grown cold and indifferent and bring them back into the warm atmosphere of fellowship in the church. They are just as precious as others who have heard this truth. Let us really do something about this.

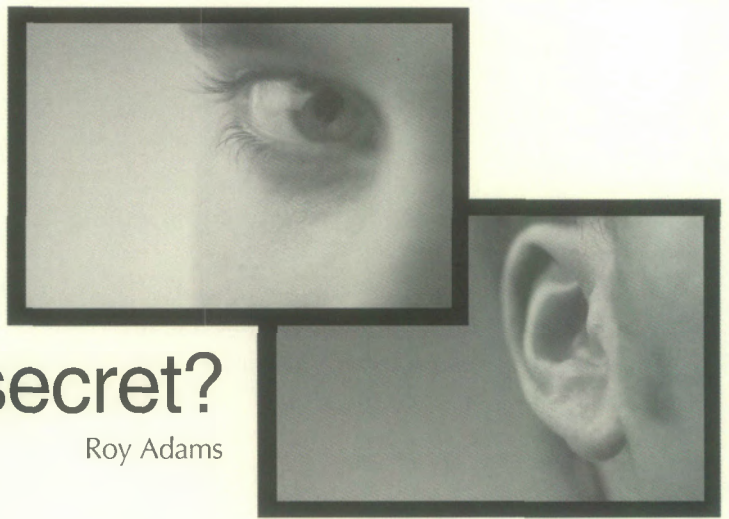
The Lord is married to the backslider and calls him to return, promising to heal his wounds. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him" (Hosea 14:4).

May God give us such a compelling burden for those who have once known this truth, but who have left their first love and strayed away, that we will not rest satisfied until they return to the fold. 

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Robert H. Pierson, former president of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.





# Can you keep a secret?

Roy Adams

Pastor Jones has hit upon just the illustration he needs for a particular point in his sermon. "I wish you could have seen the distraught look on the poor mother's face as she sat in my office telling me about her daughter's attempted suicide," he says. This young lady's trouble began when she was a teenager. Against her parents' urging, she fell in with the wrong crowd in school. She became pregnant and later she went into a state of deep depression. That poor mother came to me deeply disturbed, not only because of what was happening to her daughter but also because of what might happen to the family if word got out. Her husband is one of the pillars in their church and well known in their community.

As the pastor continues to relate his story during the divine worship hour, the heretofore drowsy congregation are all ears. Their attention leads him to feel that he is scoring points, and perhaps he is, but unfortunately at the expense of the poor mother's confidence. True, he might be two thousand miles from the family in question. But what he doesn't know is that in his congregation is a very alert busybody who is vaguely acquainted with the case, waiting for just the information he is supplying in order to piece together a juicy story for the after-church meeting of the Character Defamation League.


Senator Sam Ervin, of Watergate fame, smarting over embarrassing leaks from his Senate committee, complained, "Some people can't keep anything in their heads without having it come out of their mouth!" Senator Sam's words are all too true. The minister, of all professionals, has a most solemn duty to guard that which has been communicated to him in the strictest confidence. Yet our people (although titillated at our disclosures) are often shocked at the freedom with which some of us members of the cler-

gy discuss obviously confidential matters. Upon reflection, some of us may find that we have been remiss in this area and that a major reorientation is necessary. Changes such as the following may be required: (1) We will have to find matters other than the private affairs of our counselees to discuss with our spouse. We may have to tactfully make our wife or husband aware that certain areas of our work must remain in our minds alone. On the other hand, our spouse may find it necessary to remind us by saying (also as tactfully as possible), "Really, dear, should I be hearing this?" (2) We will have to be willing to forfeit some of our most "juicy" sermon illustrations in order to protect confidentiality. (3) In the unusual event that a counselee's experience has the potential of serving the spiritual needs of a wider constituency, we will have to train ourselves to seek permission and to be certain that such permission is granted willingly before using such experiences for illustrative purposes. (4) We may have to bypass the secretaries or church clerks when correspondence on highly sensitive matters is involved in order to protect the counselee.

Although the wise elder will encourage his people to confide in God, there will always be those who need a human arm, if only for a time. The person who has reached the point where he feels he must pour out his private affairs into human ears is already badly hurt. To betray his confidence is to subject him to further injury. But to keep his secrets between himself and you alone is to manufacture a bond of trust that will enable you to help him. The elder who knows when not to talk has a priceless asset. **E**

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Roy Adams is an associate editor of the *Adventist Review*, Silver Spring, Maryland.



# Facing death: does faith make a difference?

Rosalie Haffner Lee

## ***How one couple found that the truth about death can bring genuine comfort both to a dying husband and to his loving wife.***

Sound doctrine, great proof texts, and inspiring sermons on the hope of the resurrection! We knew them all. I had given scores of Bible studies on the great biblical view of death. My husband had preached many an inspiring sermon on the hope of the resurrection. No questioning of true doctrine for us, no shortage of proof texts.

But now we faced the reality of death's cold fingers intruding into our lives, threatening the love and companionship we had enjoyed for nearly thirty years. Would the sound doctrine, the inspiring sermons, and the hope we shared see us through? Would we be able to cope with this inevitable stranger? Would our faith enable us to accept its reality? Could my husband let go and die peacefully, trusting me to God's care? Could I give him permission to die in peace, assuring him that I could face the future alone with courage and confidence?

As a hospital chaplain I had stood by the bedside of many a dying patient, giving comfort to grieving families. Now it was my turn to experience the awful pain of watching a loved one take his final breath, of saying that painful good-bye, of watching a warm body become cold and lifeless. Was my faith just a nice-sounding theory, or would it sustain me through this ordeal?

Thank God, His promises are sure. Our God is real; He lives! His Son tasted death for us, and so He is able to walk with us through our dark valleys. Our faith is not a mere theory but a living relationship with a God, who cares, who experiences our pain with us. This God, through His risen Son, has broken the bonds of death to give us hope beyond the grave.

This does not mean that we do not feel the awful sting of death, the cruel pain of separation, the hot tears, the times of grief that overwhelm us like ocean waves even after months of healing.

It means, rather, that though we grieve, we do not sorrow "as others who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13).

In her book, *Mourning Song*, Joyce Lansdorf tells of attending a funeral where the family members came to the service drunk. She reacted with anger until she realized that they had no hope to cling to and had turned to alcohol to dull the pain.

What a difference faith in Jesus makes! Do we still have sorrow? Yes. Loneliness and tears? Yes. Pain over the loss of our dearest treasures? Yes. But despair and hopelessness? No!

We have comfort in knowing that our loved ones no longer endure the pain and heartache that make up this life. Their physical suffering and pain have ended. My husband suffered numerous kinds of agonies in his final battle with Parkinson's disease. He was unable to do anything for himself; even eating and drinking had to be done for him, artificially.



He had no control over his life. He had lost the dignity and independence that he so much valued. I am comforted in knowing that he is resting in sleep.

Recently I shared with a friend the fact that I had been going through the painful ordeal of sorting through my husband's belongings—his books, papers, and favorite earthly treasures.

She commented innocently that he must be looking down from heaven chuckling at my frustration in making my tough decisions. Without a moment's hesitation I countered that I was thankful, based on my understanding of the Bible, that he was sleeping, completely unaware that I was dispensing with some of his favorite treasures, accumulated over a lifetime.

Yes, there is comfort in knowing that our loved ones are sleeping. In his book, *A Grief Observed*, C. S. Lewis asks a pertinent question. Assuming (as he does) that those who die in Christ are conscious in heaven, why should the separation of two lovers, he asks, be less painful to the one taken than to the one left?

Our loving Father does not take his precious people to heaven immediately at death. If He did so, instead of experiencing the joys of eternity, they would suffer both the sorrows of separation from their loved ones here and the torment of seeing their loved ones in grief, want, sickness, and pain.

No, God's way is best. He allows His dear ones to rest in sleep until a Better Day comes.

I am comforted by the hope of seeing my husband again. Often I stand by his grave, my eyes blinded with tears but my mind picturing what it will be like to see him again, restored to his youthful health and vigor. No wonder the apostle Paul concludes his discussion of the resurrection morning with the admonition, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:18).

Comfort! This is the difference between those who hope and those who despair. We have comfort in knowing that our loved ones rest in peace, comfort in knowing that their suffering and pain have ended, comfort in the promise that in their next moment of consciousness they will look into the face of their Savior.

Because of God's reassuring promises, we and our loved ones may face the realities of death without terror or fear. We can be open and honest in discussing our feelings about death.

Kenneth and I had talked freely about these things through the years. As his illness advanced, he prepared a living will which expressed in writing his preferences about measures to be taken to keep him alive. But during the last weeks of his illness we still had difficult decisions to face. I talked with my husband about the seriousness of his illness and that he was being kept alive only by the feeding tube. Technology could keep him in this living-dying state for a long time, but would this be right or fair to him? Could I keep him suffering and prolong the dying process for the sake of my own feelings?

Difficult as it was, I asked my husband if he wanted this artificial feeding to continue indefinitely. Though he could no longer speak, he shook his head in a vigorous negative.

I spoke with him about death, about the blessing of sleeping in peace after all the suffering he had endured, and about our hope of seeing one another again at the coming of Jesus. He could not reply verbally, but his nods and his eyes spoke eloquently of his hope and his confidence.

One day, after the feeding tube had been disconnected, one of the nurses asked me if I had given him permission to die. The question startled me. Though as a chaplain I was aware that this could be helpful and even important, I needed to be reminded.

So I gave him permission to die. I assured him that it was alright for him to go to sleep and rest from his suffering that I would be alright, for the Lord would take care of me.

### **Death: enemy or friend?**

My experience has brought home to me more personally than ever before this pertinent question: Is death (that is, the first death, not the second) always an enemy, or can it sometimes be a friend?

Scripture portrays death predominantly as an enemy. Especially among the Psalms we find many prayers for deliverance from death. And the New Testament writers dwell on the resurrection of Christ as the guarantee that death's power over the human family has been broken. Death itself now is doomed to die. (See 1 Cor. 15:51-57; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:13, 14).

However, Scripture offers another view of death, perhaps not as evident, which also needs consideration. In Ecclesiastes 3:1-3, the wise man



declares that for everything there is a time, "A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up." In the famous Shepherd's Psalm, David declares that he will "fear no evil," even when he walks through "the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps. 23:4).

In Psalm 55:4-6, after describing his painful response to the terrors of death, the psalmist prays for deliverance, not from death, but by death: "O, that I had wings like a dove! For then I would fly-away and be at rest."

### Blessing of death

Both Old and New Testament writers acknowledge that death may actually be a blessing for those who trust in God.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Ps. 116:15).

After describing end-time troubles, John the Revelator hears a voice from heaven pronouncing a benediction: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

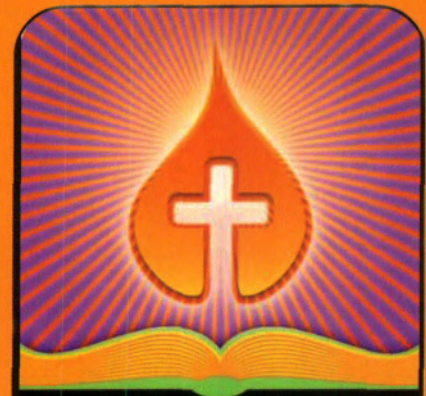
The same Paul who calls death an enemy admits that his preference would really be "to depart and be with Christ" but that he is willing to stay on in this world since his services are needed (Phil. 1:23, 24). He said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (v. 21).

Paul was not confused about the sleep of death (see 1 Cor. 15:51), but he was aware that this sleep would seem but a moment before He would see His Lord. So for him death was not something to be feared and dreaded but was a brief moment before entering eternal life in the Kingdom.

When the time arrived for his death, this great warrior could say confidently, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

John echoes the same thought as he repeats the words of Jesus Himself to the church in Smyrna:

(Continued on page 21)



## ACTS 100

acknowledgement • communion • training • service

### WHY WE DON'T PRAY

What keeps us off our knees?

- ◆ We don't believe God hears us.
- ◆ We're just too busy. We let the tyranny of the urgent control us.
- ◆ We're too caught up in our scientific, natural world to believe God truly cares and is there for us.
- ◆ We just don't know how or what to pray for, so we don't.

Author, Terry Glaspey (*Homecoming*, Jan/Feb, 2003) says, "If you want prayer to flourish, get a better picture of who God is."

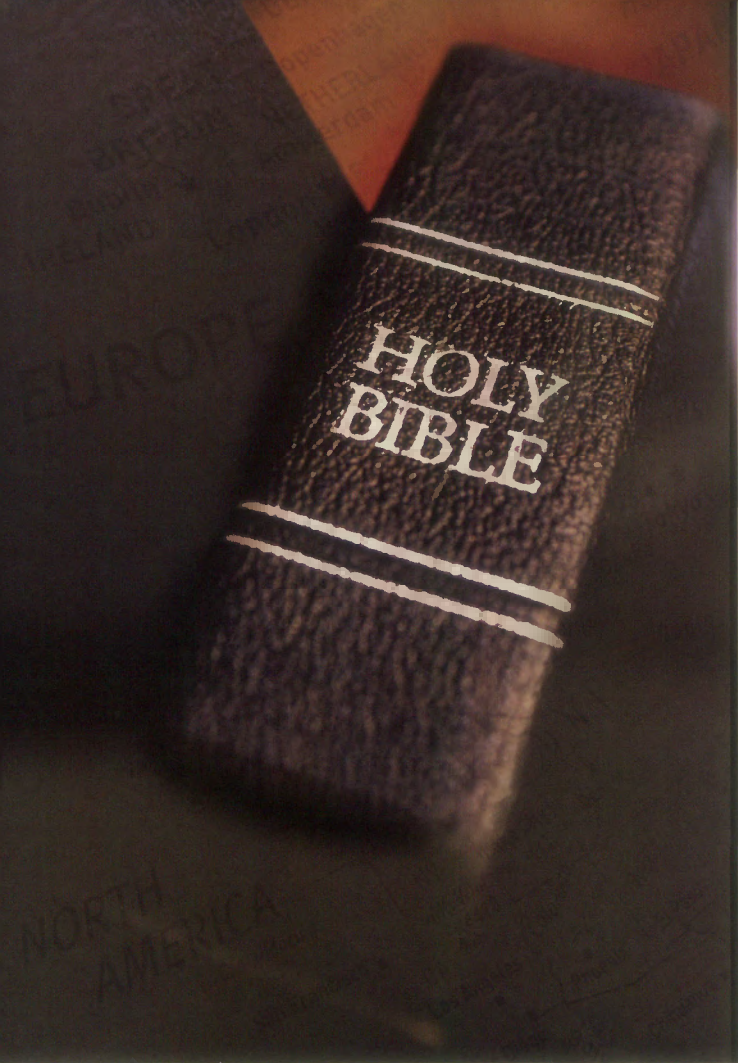
He is not a genie granting our wishes. He is not a distant mirage. He's not one whom we can manipulate with our requests.

Instead He's a personal God who loves us and doesn't ask us to go through myriad physical and spiritual machinations to get His attention. We don't have to use flowery language when we talk to Him and our heartfelt cries won't offend Him.

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ACTS 100





# Putting the Bible on the Map

Anson F. Rainey

**O**f all the books held sacred by the great world religions, the Bible seems to be the only one requiring some geographical knowledge for its understanding. Why is that so? Because a basic element of Biblical faith is the belief in divine revelation through historical events. Since history takes place in space and time, geography (the study of space on the earth's surface) and historical geography (the study of a particular geographical area during the passage of time) become important in a correct understanding of the Bible.

To bring Biblical studies down to earth and put the Bible on the map, we must coordinate the evidence from four major areas of research—physical geography, philology, linguistics, and archeology.

**Physical geography** in the modern sense has been concerned with the land of the Bible ever since the first explorations in the wake of Napoleon's campaign. Cartographers such as Heinrich Kiepert and geographers such as Karl Ritter utilized the information brought back by Edward Robinson, Eli Smith and other scholars.

The survey of western Palestine conducted by a team of British Royal Engineers marked a great milestone of the nineteenth century. The *Memoires* accompanying their map contained detailed descriptions of the mountains, bodies of water, and the visible archeological remains of each area. Today, maps of Palestine are constantly under revision, based on surveys begun during the British and French mandates and continued by the govern-



ments of Israel, Jordan, and other neighboring states.

**Philology**, the study of ancient texts, includes textual criticism, literary analysis, language and style — in short, all the familiar aspects of Biblical research. Even in the Biblical text we find a concern for geographical annotation. For example, most of the place names in Genesis 14 are clarified by the addition of the more recent name — "Bela, which is Zoar" (verse 2), "En-mishpat, which is Kadesh" (verse 7) — evidencing a concern that the reader be able to orient himself geographically. Some towns that in the pre-Israelite period had different names from those in use at the time of the Bible writer are carefully designated. (See Judges 1:23 and 18:29 for reference to Bethel, formerly called Luz, and Dan, earlier known as Laish). In order to appreciate fully the significance of certain passages, the Biblical writers felt that one should know where they took place.

Modern philological research, in ancient Israel must utilize both the Bible and the growing body of texts in Egyptian, Babylonian, Hebrew, and other Semitic dialects that date to the period. Such Bible versions as Septuagint and Vulgate, as well as Rabbinic writings and the works of the Church Fathers, are essential tools. Medieval Arab geographers and pilgrim itineraries are also important (though the latter are fraught with difficulties).

**Toponymy**, the study of place names, has been the subject of linguist analysis for more than a century. The great pioneers Eli Smith and E. H. Palmer, as well as other scholars have utilized ancient sources mentioned above in an attempt to establish the early meaning of names. The Arabic names recorded during the past 170 years are also analyzed and compared with their ancient counterparts. Some of the names have been remarkably preserved from the earliest written records (twentieth century B.C.) to modern times.

**Archeology** is a many-faceted discipline. The most dramatic archeological activity, of course, is excavation of an ancient site, but for historical and geographical purposes the survey (an examination of the earth's surface) is tremendously important. Today, various teams are conducting an intensive survey, kilometer by kilometer, to record every trace of ancient remains. Museum researchers and other specialists are studying the materials brought

to light by these excavation and surveys.

Yet, all this flurry of activity must not be allowed to obscure the fact that our concern is with history. Material culture does have its own story to tell, but it can do so only when direct contacts with the written sources can be demonstrated, thus creating a true historical framework. Neighboring countries to Israel (Egypt, Syria, and Iraq) have enriched us with thousands of inscriptions; Palestine has been very poor in this regard.

The link between archeology and history is often geography. If we can identify a site with a town known from historical sources, then we can know something of the recorded history of a place and thus perhaps correlate it with the excavation. An important check in correlating historical sources and excavated evidence at a given site is that site's period of occupation. But how does one know when the site was occupied?

A cornerstone in Palestinian archeology is the use of pottery vessels and fragments for dating purposes. The changes in pottery form and technique are as easily recognizable to a trained eye as the different designs of automobile grills. However, the relative dating of pottery is one thing; the absolute dating is another. One cannot simply pick up a piece of an ancient pot and pronounce what year it was made. To give a fixed historical date, the archeologist must find the pottery in a layer that can be accurately related to some known historical event. If the pots come from a floor or tomb where datable coins also are found, his job is relatively easy. But in the Old Testament period, coins were not yet in use (they didn't appear until postexilic times). Datable inscriptions would also help, but they are few and far between. Usually the archeologist must depend on circumstantial evidence alone.

Thus it becomes very important that as archeology interprets the discoveries made in the field, it correlates correctly the information found in the ancient written sources regarding the historical geography of the area. For example, 1 Kings 16:24 reads: "And he [Omri] bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria." When archeologists began their work at Samaria, they took 1 Kings 16:24 to mean that

(Continued on page 15)

# The crime of being young

Clovis G. Chappell

*"And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth."*  
1 Samuel 17:42.

## I. A story that is still alive

Here is a story so gripping and human that it will live forever.

Israel is being invaded by an old and persistent enemy, the Philistines. When the armies stand facing each other, a champion comes forward from the ranks of the Philistines and proposes to settle the issue by single combat.

Such contests, as you know, were quite common in classical and medieval times.

This champion was all that could be desired in the way of brute force. He was nine feet in height. He had a coat of mail that weighed one hundred and fifty pounds. He had a spear like a weaver's beam, and a voice like the roar of a lion. At his challenge, the knees of the most heroic in the army of Israel went weak, and no man dared fight him. Each day this champion renewed his challenge, becoming all the while more arrogant and bold and insulting. Each day the Israelites refused to accept, thus weakening their morale and becoming more cowed and shamed and hopeless.

David's arrival was to mean the dawning of a new day. But nobody believed it. Goliath, the champion, looked upon him with utter contempt. This would not have been so bad had his contempt not been shared by the soldiers on both sides of the line. This contempt found its fullest expression in the biting words of David's own elder brother, Eliab. Saul was more friendly, but the best he could do was to look wistfully at the young fellow and shake his head. He was desperately eager for a champion, but he could see no hope here. "Thou art not able," he murmurs sadly, "for thou art but a youth." What was wrong with David? What was his crime? Why did they receive him with such an utter lack of enthusiasm? There seems only one answer: He was guilty of being young. Now, age and youth have always had a tendency clash. Here, for instance, is a story that comes out of the book of Ezra. After Jerusalem had been conquered and her people carried away into exile, it was the fondest dream of certain pious and patriotic Jews that they might once again return to Jerusalem and rebuild their ruined city and restore their desecrated temple. After long years of waiting, their dream has been so far realized that a handful of them has returned and restored the walls and in some measure rebuilt the city. And now they have come to that which was the very climax of their hopes. They are laying the foundation of the temple. When this was done there went up a loud shout of sheer joy. But mingled with this shout of joy were the sobbing of some who seemed utterly brokenhearted. Who was doing the shouting? It was the youth. They were looking ahead. They were thinking what a glorious temple theirs was to be, and how sure they were to meet God in it in the days to come. It was the old folks that were sobbing. They were thinking of the temple that they knew when they were young. It was so much bigger and more beautiful than this one, that a glimpse of it through the haze of memory made them burst into tears.

This clash of age with youth is quite vigorously alive today. You young people certainly have us worried. We are wondering just what you are going to do next.

Not a few of us elders feel that you are about the worst generation the world has yet seen. Then there is little doubt that we are worrying you, not greatly, but enough to be annoying. We are making you wonder just how you are going to get it across to us that we have forgotten the score, lost step, and are at least a half century behind the times. How can you let us know, without hurting us too much, that we are just fossils, kindly fossils maybe; at times harsh and stupid fossils, perhaps; but fossils nonetheless.



Now, while this age-old conflict between age and youth is easy to explain, it is hard to correct. It is so difficult to get springtime and autumn to see each other's viewpoint. You who are young have never been old. Therefore it is hard for you to put yourselves in our places. It is hard for you to realize that soon you, with your burdens and wrinkles and graying hair, will seem prosaic to your juniors as we to you. Then we who are older have such a tremendous tendency to forget that we were ever young. Once we knew everything, even as you. Once, too, we were not absolutely perfect, as surprising as that confession may seem. We forget this, and therefore, fail to put ourselves in your places. Thus our attitude too often becomes one of carping criticism rather than one of sympathy. It was so in the case of David in the long ago. When he came forward eager to help, his elders tried to kill his enthusiasm by finding fault.

Look at the charges brought against youthful David. They have a decidedly modern flavor about them.

## II. The charge against David

**1. David is accused of seeking a big job while he is making a mess of the one he has.** "Why are you here?" asks his indignant brother. "With whom have you left those few poor sheep?" What Eliab means is that David simply will not settle down to the faithful performance of his duty. "You do not stick to your job," he tells him, "as I did when I was a boy." What a familiar falsehood that is, and how utterly useless! "You are bent on beginning at the top," he continues. "You want to build a spire without taking time to lay a foundation. You are eager to get into a hogshead when, as a matter of fact, you are rattling around in the shell of a mustard seed. You must start at the bottom and work up, as I did."

Now, this is a serious charge. This is the case because the only sure way to get ready for tomorrow is to be faithful in the use of today. The best road into a bigger job is making the most possible out of one that is small. Some of our youth forget this. But David did not. He may have had just a few sheep, but he kept them faithfully. When one night a bear came after one of his lambs, the bear did not get the lamb, but David got the bear. The story is the same when a lion had undertaken a raid on his flock. Though his task was small, and though it was performed under no human eye, he did it faithfully and well, even at the cost of risking his life.

**2. David is accused of being forward.** "I know your forwardness," says this angry elder brother. "I know how cocksure you are, how certain you are that you know everything. You have absolutely no respect for your elders. You have no reverence for anything nor anybody." That, too, sounds a bit familiar. It is what many of us are thinking of modern youth, and not without reason. It was in some measure true of David. It is possibly yet more true of the youth of today. Certainly you who are young have no disposition to flatter your elders by your too high regard for their opinions. You shock us by your discussions of subjects once taboo. You shock us even more by your frank confession of delinquencies that our generation would never have thought of confessing. Then when we become alarmed, you regard us with about as much seriousness as a young duck disporting itself upon a pond would manifest toward a fussy old hen that was frantic with fear lest her adopted offspring might not be able to swim. Yes, youth is usually a bit forward. But that is not altogether bad. The certainty that you can improve upon your elders is one of the secrets of your strength.

**3. Another charge against David is that of self-will.** "I know your self-will," says this indignant brother. "You are bent on having your own way. You are determined to live your own life, to do absolutely as you please." This is a charge that is especially up-to-date. We seem to be in the midst of a veritable orgy of doing as we please. We are at present about the most lawless nation on the earth. Our biggest single business is crime. The majority of those engaged in the crime business are young. The average age of our present day criminal is only nineteen years. Self-will is certainly, therefore, one of the besetting sins of the youth of today.

But in this, our young people are far more sinned against than sinning. The tragic breakdown did not begin with them, but further back. Many of the safeguards that we older folks knew in our youth have



become greatly weakened, or have been thrown into the discard. For instance, our generation has witnessed a weakening of the restraints born of religion. "Where there is no vision, the people cast off-restraint." Vast numbers of us elders have lost all sense of God, and have, therefore, cast off restraint. Many of our youth are but shattered fragments of broken homes. Others come from homes where there is no serious effort at right training, either by precept or example. Where self-will is the law of life for so many fathers and mothers it is not surprising that it has put its defiling touch upon some of our youth.

**4. The final charge against David is that he is not serious.** He is a mere thrill hunter. He cares for nothing but a good time. For instance, he has come to the front just to see the battle. He cares nothing for the outcome. It matters not to him whether Israel wins or loses, rises to honor, or sinks into shame. All he is concerned about is the thrill of seeing the battle. He is forever seeking something that will pack a punch, that will give him a kick. There are many today who are ready to bewail the fact that our young people are so dreadfully wanting in seriousness, that they are so thoroughly flippant. It is a serious charge, and one that is far older than the story of this youthful shepherd lad.

### III. The truth about David

Let us learn it, not from his critics, but from his own conduct.

**1. He is tremendously in earnest.** True, he is quite young. The roses of springtime bloom upon his cheeks and the light of morning sparkles in his eye. Yet he is not flippant. Saul himself is hardly more deeply concerned for the destinies of Israel than he. And somewhat of this deep seriousness we dare claim for the youth of today. We have all passed, during recent years, through a bit of a fiery furnace. Nor have any of us come out altogether without the smell of fire upon our garments. Youth bears its wounds and scars even as you and I. But whatever faults we may charge against them, flippancy is not one of them. Not for long, I dare say, has there been a generation of youth more genuinely serious than the one with which we are privileged to work. This is in itself greatly hopeful.

**2. David has a capacity for a fine moral indignation.** When he hears the insulting challenge of this giant of brute force, he expects to see the hand of every soldier of Israel leap to the sword. He expects to see every man eager for battle. But when he realizes that the only response that they dare to make the swaggering bully is a tame and spineless submission, his expectancy gives way to shame, and his shame to hot anger. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine," he asks with glowing cheeks and flashing eyes, "that he should defy the armies of the living God?" We like these brave and burning words, all of us. We are glad to see David refuse to worship the god of things as they are. We rejoice that he will not allow bullying wrongs to go unchallenged today just because they went unchallenged yesterday.

Now, this capacity to blaze against wrong has been a characteristic of youth at its best through the centuries. It is one of the most heartening facts of our day. Social injustice, race prejudice, the hell and madness of war are being challenged and fought today as never before. This is pre-eminently a youth movement. By this I do not mean that all who are engaged in it are young in years. But real youth is not a mere matter of the almanac, it is a matter of the heart. As long as we can rise against wrong in hot indignation, we have youth, whatever the calendar may say. But when we come tamely to submit, that means that we are old, however few our birthdays.

"The lamp of youth will be clean burnt out,  
But we will subsist on the smell of it.  
Whatever we do, we will fold our hands,  
And suck our gums, and think well of it.  
Yes, we shall be perfectly pleased with ourselves  
And that is the perfectest hell of it."


**3. Finally, he has courage.** David is possessed of this high virtue that is universally admired. It is fine to be in earnest about the things that count. It is fine to be able to burn with a clean indignation against wrong. But even all this is not enough. We must have the grit to do something about it. David might have given vent to his indignation by merely criticizing his elders as they had criticized him. He might have squandered his energies in boasting what he would do in their place, or what he was going to do when he was older and better prepared. But he does not wait for some easy



tomorrow when the odds against him might not be so great. With a fine madness that stirs our hearts, he offers to do battle then and there. Then and there he takes upon himself the weighty task of doing the impossible. That is the call to the youth of today. To answer it requires courage of the highest order.

How has David come by such courage? It was not born of his consciousness of superior strength. No more was it the result of his belief in the superiority of his equipment. He knows that in these he is no match for Goliath. His courage was born of his faith in God. He believes that the supreme forces are those that are spiritual. "Thou comest to me with a sword and spear and shield, but I am come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom thou hast defied." Here is the secret of courage at its highest and best. "I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved." In the courage born of faith, this youth went forth to battle and to victory.

And now the scene shifts from that far-off time to our desperate and difficult days. Colossal wrongs still stalk abroad, and gigantic evils loll about us unafraid. In our need we appeal to you who are young. It is up to you to help bring in a better day. To this end you were born, and for this cause you came into the world. Of course, you may refuse to heed the call. You may take a coward's way and bewail the fact that the times are out of joint and that you were ever born to set them right. But you may also take the way of faith and courage and throw yourselves wholeheartedly into the fight. If you do this, as I believe you will, your very difficulties will become advantages. You will be enabled, to sing with joy as you zestfully press the battle:

*"Blest is it in this dawn to be alive;  
But to be young, is very heaven."* 

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Clovis G. Chappell, outstanding Biblical preacher of the beginning of the twentieth century.

(Continued from page 11)

### Putting the Bible on the map

Omri was buying an unoccupied hill on which to build his city. If so, the earliest remains (the deepest) would date from about 850 B.C., the time when Omri built his city. But when the finds were published, and the date of 850 B.C. was assigned to them, both American and Israeli scholars protested that the pottery found in the lowest level, below the floors of the first fortified citadel, resembled ceramics dated elsewhere, not to the eighth century, but to the tenth or early ninth centuries B.C. They asserted that the excavators should have associated the pottery shards not with the first fortification walls, but with a previous occupation.

The basic error of the Samaria excavators lay in their interpretation of 1 Kings 16:24. The town was named Samaria (Hebrew Shamron) after Shemer, its former owner. When Omri purchased the site, it was apparently not an unoccupied hill but a developed settlement of the Shemer clan. Perusal of passages such as 1 Chron. 4:1-23 shows the intimate relationship between the clan structure of an Israelite tribe and the geographical place names in its territory. This fundamental truth of historical geography the excavators ignored.

The lesson is that pottery can "prove" impossible claims. The archeologist must either have a sound philological training or risk basing his interpretations on an inadequate understanding of the historical geography revealed in the written sources. 

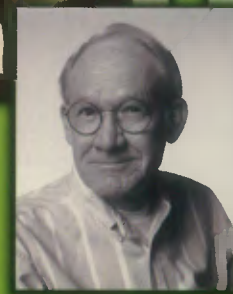
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Anson F. Rainey, Ph.D., was an associate professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages at Tel Aviv University at Ramat Aviv, Israel, when he wrote this article that appeared in *Ministry*, January 1979.

# ACCEPTED in CHRIST

How hard it is for humanity,  
long accustomed to cherish  
doubt, to grasp this great truth!

Ellen G. White



"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

This message is for the world, for "whosoever" means that any and all who comply with the condition may share the blessing. All who look unto Jesus, believing in Him as their personal Savior, shall "not perish, but have everlasting life." Every provision has been made that we may have the everlasting reward. Christ is our sacrifice, our substitute, our surety, our divine intercessor; He is made unto us righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24).

The intercession of Christ in our behalf is that of presenting His divine merits in the offering of Himself to the Father as our substitute and surety; for He ascended up on high to make an atonement for our transgressions. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1).

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (chap. 4:10). "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

From these scriptures it is evident that it is not God's will that you should be distrustful, and torture

your soul with the fear that God will not accept you because you are sinful and unworthy. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to You." Present your case before him, pleading the merits of the blood shed for you upon Calvary's cross. Satan will accuse you of being a great sinner, and you must admit this, but you can say: "I know I am a sinner, and that is the reason I need a Savior. Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John 1:7). 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (verse 9). I have no merit or goodness whereby I may claim salvation, but I present before God the all-atoning blood of the spotless Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is my only plea. The name of Jesus gives me access to the Father. His ear, His heart, is open to my faintest pleading, and He supplies my deepest necessities."

It is the righteousness of Christ that makes the penitent sinner acceptable to God and works his justification. However sinful has been his life, if he believes in Jesus as his personal Savior he stands before God in the spotless robe of Christ's imputed righteousness.

The sinner so recently dead in trespasses and sins is quickened by faith in Christ. He sees by faith that Jesus is his Savior, and alive forevermore, able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. In the atonement made for him the believer sees such breadth, and length, and height, and depth



# I know I am a sinner, and that is the reason I need a Savior.

of efficiency—sees such completeness of salvation, purchased at such infinite cost, that his soul is filled with praise and thanksgiving. He sees as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and is changed into the same image as by the Spirit of the Lord. He sees the robe of Christ's righteousness, woven in the loom of heaven, wrought by His obedience, and imputed to the repenting soul through faith in His name. When the sinner has a view of the matchless charms of Jesus, sin no longer looks attractive to him; for he beholds the Chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely. He realizes by a personal experience the power of the gospel, whose vastness of design is equaled only by its preciousness of purpose.

We have a living Savior. He is not in Joseph's new tomb; He is risen from the dead, and has ascended on high as a substitute and surety for every believing soul. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). The sinner is justified through the merits of Jesus, and this is God's acknowledgment of the perfection of the ransom paid for man. That Christ was obedient even unto the death of the cross is a pledge of the repenting sinner's acceptance with the Father. Then shall we permit ourselves to have a vacillating experience of doubting and believing, believing and doubting? Jesus is the pledge of our acceptance with God. We stand in favor before God, not because of any merit in ourselves, but because of our faith in "the Lord our righteousness."

Jesus stands in the holy of holies, now to appear in the presence of God for us. There He ceases not to present His people moment by moment, complete in Himself. But because we are thus represented before the Father, we are not to imagine that we are to presume upon His mercy, and become careless, indifferent, and self-indulgent. Christ is not the minister of sin. We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith.

Perfection through our own good works we can never attain. The soul who sees Jesus by faith, repudiates his own righteousness. He sees himself as incomplete, his repentance insufficient, his strongest faith but feebleness, his most costly sacrifice as meager, and he sinks in humility at the foot of the cross. But a voice speaks to him from the oracles of God's word. In amazement he hears the message, "Ye are complete in him." Now all is at rest in his soul. No longer must he strive to find some worthiness in him-

self, some meritorious deed by which to gain the favor of God. Beholding the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, he finds the peace of Christ; for pardon is written against his name, and he accepts the word of God, "Ye are complete in him." How hard is it for humanity, long accustomed to cherish doubt, to grasp this great truth! But what peace it brings to the soul, what vital life! In looking to ourselves for righteousness, by which to find acceptance with God, we look to the wrong place, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (chap. 3:23). We are to look to Jesus; "for we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). You are to find your completeness by beholding the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Standing before the broken law of God, the sinner cannot cleanse himself; but, believing in Christ, he is the object of His infinite love and clothed in His spotless righteousness. For those who believe in Christ, Jesus prayed: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth . . . That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent even me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given to them; that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:17-22).

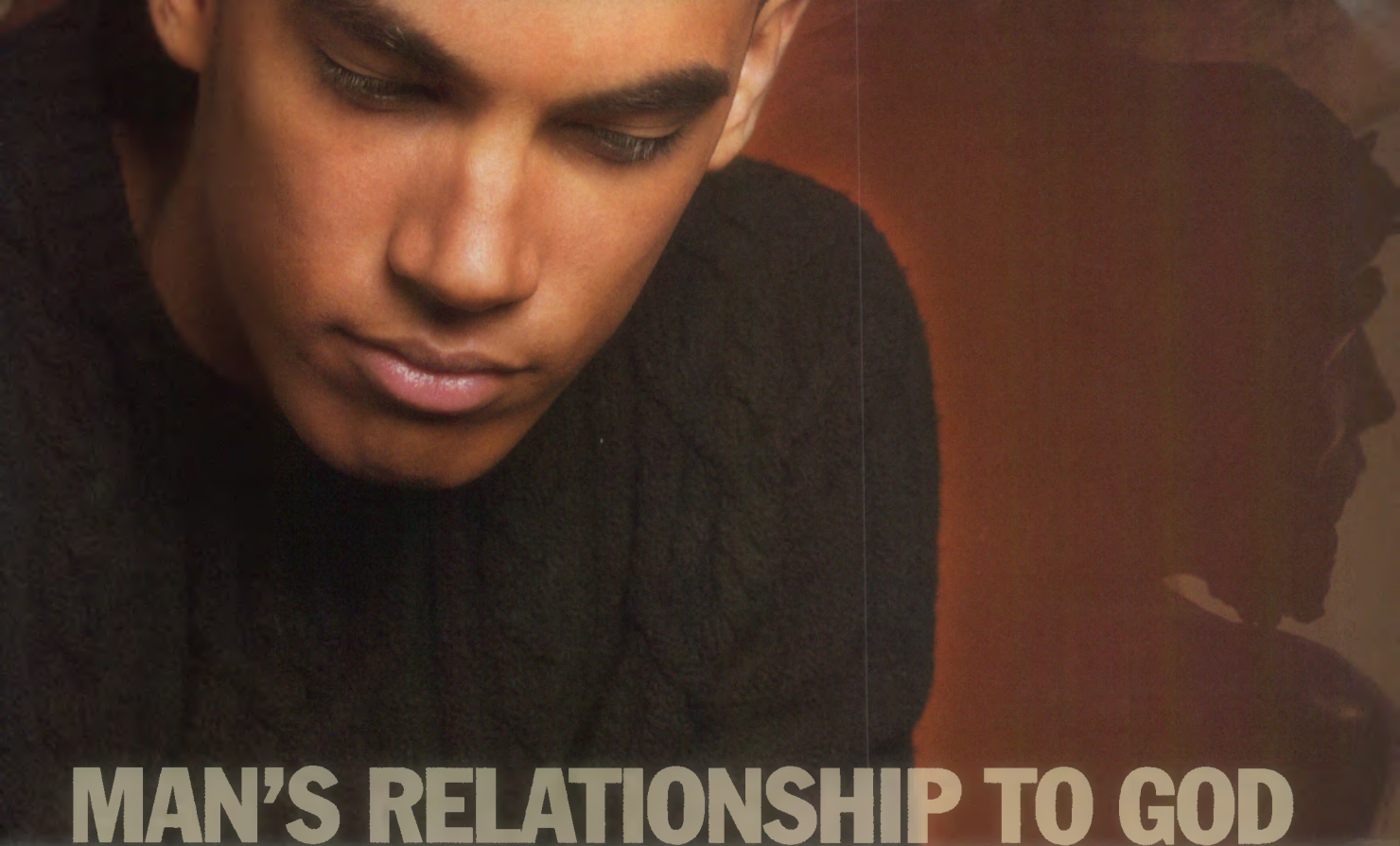
"O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:25, 26).

Who can comprehend the nature of that righteousness which makes the believing sinner whole, presenting him to God without spot or wrinkle or any such thing? We have the pledged word of God that Christ is made unto us righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. God grant that we may rely upon His word with implicit trust, and enjoy His richest blessing. "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16:27). **†**

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Ellen White—Church leader, lecturer, preacher, counselor. She has been called the most prolific woman writer of all time, having written some 25 million words for publication.





# MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

*Mel Rees*

**N**o matter how much of this world's goods a person might think he owns, no matter how many deeds of title he might have, he can never be an owner. His claim to ownership is always subject to forces beyond his control. Fire, flood, tornado, conquest, and even termites can make his claims worthless, because mankind has never been able to completely control the environment.

A claim to ownership may even be refuted by the refusal of his fellows to recognize his claim. Legal maneuvering may nullify it. Our great system of superhighways has forced people to move from homes for which they held valid deeds of ownership. And, even if a person could successfully defend his ownership claims during his lifetime, he would have to relinquish them at death, for they will inevitably fall into other hands.

Solomon recognized the difficulty in trying to perpetuate ownership. He said, "Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me" (Eccl. 2:18).

## **Man's relationship to God established**

From the beginning, a person's relationship to God has always been that of a manager, not an

owner. This fact was clearly established when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth" (Gen. 1:26).

This fact must have been impressed on Adam's mind by the tree that God planted in the Garden and forbade him to touch. The penalty was severe enough to show how God regarded ownership. From the record it appears that Adam had no difficulty in naming every animal and flower, but he didn't seem able to manage the orchard! After his transgression, he hid from God. Owners don't have to hide. Then he was evicted from his home—he didn't even own that.

## **The example of Israel**

Just before God brought Israel into the land of Canaan, He instructed Moses to warn the people regarding their attitude concerning ownership. Moses told the people: "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God . . . it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deut. 8:11, 18). He said that just as soon as their flocks and herds multiplied and their silver and gold was multiplied and their stomachs were full, there would be a tendency to forget God.



He even told them what would happen to them if they forgot. But they could avoid these dire consequences if they followed the safeguards that God had provided to help them remember.

Each year the men were required to go—first to Shiloh, later to Jerusalem—to worship the Lord. At these feasts they were to present their tithes and offerings. There were other requirements that would keep this Owner-manager relation crystal clear.

On the day after the yearly Passover Sabbath, a sheaf of freshly ripened grain (barley) was waved before the altar of the Lord as an acknowledgment that all was His. No grain was to be harvested until this recognition was made.

On the day of Pentecost two loaves of bread, baked with leaven and wheat flour from the new crops, were presented to God as still another expression of their recognition of His supreme ownership.

In the seventh month came the Feast of Tabernacles. This was a time of rejoicing, for the harvest had been gathered into the granaries. On this occasion the choicest of the orchard, the olive grove, and the vineyard were presented to the Lord.

To further impress on their minds His love and watchcare, God protected their lands during their journeys to these feasts. Every man who could make the journey was required to attend. They left their wives with small children and the old people back on the farm. There wasn't one able-bodied man in all Israel to protect these defenseless people from the marauding bands of the enemies that surrounded them. Their protection required a miracle. God simply took the desire for their lands out of the hearts of the heathen during this period when His instructions were being followed: "For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year" (Ex. 34:24).

But somehow as time passed, these people lost sight of God as the owner of the lands that they farmed, and found to their sorrow they couldn't hold them against their enemies. They just couldn't control their environment.

### **The owner-manager relationship**

To really understand the owner-manager relationship, one must recognize the difference between an owner and a manager. In ownership there are unlimited privileges; that is, an owner may use or dispose of his goods as he desires. The

manager has certain restrictions, and a violation of these constitutes the crime of embezzlement. Man-made laws have always imposed severe penalties on perpetrators of this crime, for it is a felony.

One of the best illustrations of this limitation in management is found in the story of the young Hebrew, Joseph. Through no fault of his own (except perhaps for a bit of talebearing on his brothers, and naiveté in telling the family of some unusual dreams) he found himself a slave to the wealthy and influential Potiphar, the captain of the Egyptian Pharaoh's guard. Because of his faithfulness to duty, Joseph was finally elevated to a position of almost absolute authority in the Egyptian's household. That Joseph recognized that this authority did not include everything his master possessed is clearly shown by his refusal to enter into a liaison with his mistress, Potiphar's beautiful but adulterous wife: "But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:8, 9).

Joseph recognized that a violation of the restriction in the management of the property of another constitutes a crime. His faithful adherence to this principle was a great bulwark that protected his moral integrity. On the other hand, when Adam took of the forbidden fruit he became an embezzler and was subject to the penalties for the violation.

### **The first sin a violation of this principle**

The first sin in heaven was also a violation of this Owner-manager relationship. Lucifer, a created being, refused to recognize his relationship to God. Cast out from the courts of glory, he enticed Eve by a delusive argument to forget that she wasn't an owner. Adam, because of his fatal fascination for his lovely wife, willingly violated the only restriction in his manager-relationship to God, and has bequeathed to his descendants the inordinate desire for ownership.

### **Christianity is based on the same principle**

This eternal principle can be seen in the words of Jesus when He said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). Paul, self-assured,

zealous, wasn't a very good manager (for God) until that fateful day on the road to Damascus when, amazed and bewildered, he cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). This is the question of one who is looking for orders from a superior, not the words of an owner. From that time on to the end of his life he strove to accomplish only one thing—the will of his Master.

The problem of the ages has been that people have embraced the pagan theory of ownership rather than the Christian tenet that every person is a manager of God's goods. A Christian looks for a spiritual relationship with his Maker, not to the possession of material temporal things. It is heard over and over again in his prayers and in the songs that he sings. Without this belief, he would be wasting a great deal of time and effort that he now spends in religious activities. This hope provides meaning and direction to his life that is not enjoyed by the unbeliever.

### **Right attitude brings security**

As a manager under God, a person can enjoy the freedom of dependence. He can be sure that all his plans are under divine control and direction. He also has the assurance that the daily needs of both him and his family will be supplied.

This is what Jesus was trying so urgently to get folks to see in His Sermon on the Mount. He told them that happiness didn't consist in owning things, this produces only headaches. The more things, the bigger the headache. True happiness includes the knowledge that God will provide all the necessities of life no matter what conditions might exist. He explained it by calling attention to God's watchcare over the birds, the grass, and the flowers.

Perhaps a certain farmer understood it best.

Reading his well-worn Bible one day, he saw this great truth of God's ownership. Falling to his knees he prayed, "I'm sorry, God. I thought I owned this farm. Now I see You really own it—I'm just the manager. So I'm going to give it back to You. But I hope You'll forgive me, because we do things a bit strange down here. You see, I'll have to keep my name on the deed; but You and I will both know who really owns it!"

Down in the little village his neighbors thought he had been out in the sun too long when he told them that he had given his farm back to the one who owned it—especially when they found out it was God. But, not allowing their jests to disturb

him, he explained that this took all the worry from his shoulders. "I just get down on my knees each morning and ask God to show me how He wants His farm run, and that's the way I run it, just as good as I can."

One day a plague of grasshoppers came. They ate their way across his neighbor's farm. When they got to his fence they didn't stop, roll over on their backs, and die; they swept across his farm, too, and consumed every blade of grass. The neighbor could hardly wait to see him.

"I'll bet this changes your mind about God owning your farm," he greeted him.

"Why, not at all," calmly replied the farmer.

"I don't get it," said the neighbor.

"It's simple. God owns the farm and He owns the grasshoppers. If He wants to pasture His grasshoppers on His farm, it's alright by me!"

Job recognized God's ownership when he told his wife; "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). He could suffer the loss of all the possessions he controlled with calmness because he didn't regard them as his. In reality, what Job lost was his job as manager—temporarily.

### **Rx for happiness**

And so it is with a person who considers himself God's steward—His manager. He can rest in the assurance that regardless of circumstances he is under the direction and protection of the Owner of the world. He can walk in confidence knowing that his Master has a thousand ways to care for him of which he knows nothing.

Jesus explained it this way: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Placing trust and confidence in God at all times and under all circumstances will free a person from worry over the uncertainties of life. This can only be experienced when he recognizes that God is the Owner—he is only the manager of the things with which he has been entrusted. This is the position for which he was created. **E**

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Mel Rees, former Stewardship Director of the General Conference.



(Continued from page 9)

### Facing death: does faith make a difference?

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer . . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). The death of God's faithful is the last thing they are aware of before they receive immortality at Jesus' coming.

Death certainly is an enemy, but because our Savior has broken the bonds of death, because He lives, we need no longer fear it. We may at times see it as a blessed release from the sufferings of this life.

We may face the grave as only a sleep, not with the hopeless despair of a final end with total nonexistence. We need not be confused, as many are, with mysticism and uncertainty about what lies beyond the moment of death.

The certainty of our hope in Christ will enable us to face death with confidence. It will enable us to give our loved ones permission to go to sleep in Jesus. It will give us courage to make the hard decisions so painful to us but in the best interest of a suffering, dying loved one. And finally, it will sustain us in our sorrow.

"To the believer, death is but a small matter. Christ speaks of it as if it were of little moment. To the Christian, death is but a sleep, a moment of silence and darkness. The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church, and glorify it with Him" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 787).

"Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall 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 thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:54-55).

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:18). **E**

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Rosalie Haffner Lee, retired Bible worker and Hospital Chaplain. Author, *Never Far From Grace*.

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## Salvation only in Jesus

Francis D. Nichol

**Question:** *Do Seventh-day Adventists preach that salvation can be obtained by keeping the law? Did Mrs. E. G. White endorse in her writing this view?*

**Answer:** Various aspects of this charge have been discussed already. We therefore shall confine our present answer to the claim that Mrs. White believed and taught that salvation is found, not in Christ, but in the law. We shall let her answer for herself, by quoting from an article she wrote in the year 1889.

### Mrs. White speaks

"One time when I was traveling in Oregon on a steamer, a number of persons collected upon the hurricane deck, just outside of my stateroom, the door of my room being open. A \_\_\_\_\_ minister was talking to them concerning the law. After a while he said: "Mrs. White is on board, and she is a great stickler for the law. She says that no one can be saved except through keeping the law. She places all our salvation on the perfect keeping of the law."

After he had misrepresented me and the Seventh-day Adventists for some time, I went to him and said: "Elder B., Mrs. White is here to speak for herself. I have listened to your words, and will assure you that Mrs. White believes no such thing. There is no quality in law to save the transgressor. It was because the law was broken, and there was nothing but death before the sinner, that He who was equal with the Father, came to earth and took upon Him the garb of humanity. It was because of man's sin that Christ stepped down from the royal throne, laid aside His royal robe, and clothed His divinity with humanity. He came to bring to man moral power, to unite the fallen race with Himself, that through faith in Jesus Christ we may become partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Says the apostle, 'Sin is the transgression of the law.' But Christ was manifested to take away sin, to save His people from their sins. The soul that believes in Christ may be cleansed from all defilement, and, through the grace of Christ, may be restored to divine favor.


"The law points to Christ, and every transgression of the law can be atoned for only by the blood of

the Son of God. The law is like a mirror, to reveal to man his defects of character, but there is nothing in the law that will remedy the defects it points out. Paul declares: 'I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' Why did he preach repentance toward God? — Because man had broken the law of God, and therefore was not in harmony with God. Why did he preach faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ? — Because Christ had died on Calvary, and had opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in, and be cleansed. . . ."

"The death of Christ is an unanswerable argument that demonstrates the unchangeable character of the law of God. If God could have changed one precept of His law, then Christ need not have died."

I said to the minister, "Did you ever hear me speak?" He answered that he had not. "In the thousands of pages I have written, have you ever read anything to the effect that I believe the law will save us?" He answered, "No." "Then why have you made the statements which you have? I hope you will not repeat them again." — Mrs. E. G. White in *Signs of the Times*, Sept. 23, 1889, p. 578, "The Unchangeable Character of the Law." (Footnote states that it was a sermon preached at Chicago, Illinois, April 9, 1889.)

### Comment on Mrs. White's Words

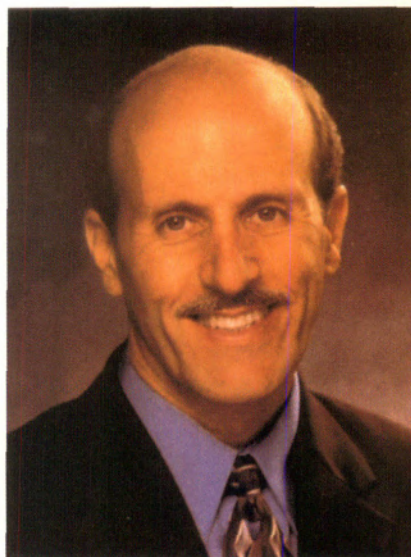
Those who present the objection we are here considering will agree with us that if they were studying the Bible they would insist that the Bible writers be allowed to speak for themselves. We agree, insisting only that Mrs. White also be allowed to speak for herself. When she is thus permitted to speak, the whole objection before us disappears, for Seventh-day Adventists subscribe without reserve to what Mrs. White here says. 

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From the book *Answers to Objections* pp. 387, 388.



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Theodore Monod

# Looking unto Jesus

*This precious and inspiring appeal appeared as No. 1 of the Apples of Gold Library — a series of small pamphlets published in the 1890's by the Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California. The infinite importance of keeping our eyes fastened upon the Savior is as valid today as it was at the close of the last century (if not more so). The editor of Elder's Digest is sending it forth with a plea to make Jesus first, last, and best in our daily experience. We urge our readers to study carefully this document. The Editor.*

**Looking unto Jesus** — In the Scriptures, to learn who He is, what He has done, what He gives, what He requires, to find in His character our pattern, in His teachings our instructions, in His precepts our law, in His promises our stay, in His person and in His work a full satisfaction offered to every want of our souls.

**Looking unto Jesus** — Crucified to find in His blood poured out our ransom, our pardon, our peace.

**Looking unto Jesus** — Risen again, to find in Him that righteousness which alone can justify us, and through which, unworthy though we are, we may draw near, with full assurance in His name,

unto Him who is His Father and our Father, His God and our God.

**Looking unto Jesus** — Glorified, to find in Him our advocate with the Father, making complete, through His intercession, the merciful work of our salvation; appearing even now in the presence of God for us, and supplying the imperfection of our prayers by the power of those which the Father heareth always.

**Looking unto Jesus** — As revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, to find in constant communion with Him, the cleansing of our sin-stained hearts, the illumination of our darkened minds, the transformation of our perverse wills, to the end that we may triumph over the world and the devil, resisting their violence through Jesus our strength, bringing their devices to naught through Jesus our wisdom, upheld by the sympathy of Jesus who was Himself tempted in all points, and by the help of Jesus, who resisted and conquered.

**Looking unto Jesus** — That we may receive from Him the work and the cross of each day, with grace which is sufficient to bear the cross and do the work; patient through His patience; active by His activity; loving with His love; asking



not "What can I do?" but, "What can He not do?" relying upon His strength, which is made perfect in weakness.

**Looking unto Jesus** — That the brightness of His face may enlighten our darkness; that our joy may be holy, and our grief subdued; that He may humble us to exalt us in due time; that He may afflict and then comfort us; that He may strip us of our self-righteousness to enrich us with His own; that He may teach us how to pray, and answer our prayers, so that while we are in the world, we are not of the world, our life being hid with Him in God, and our words bearing Him witness before men.

**Looking unto Jesus** — Who has reascended to His Father's house to prepare a place for us, that this blessed hope may give us courage to live without murmuring, and to die without regret, when the day shall come to meet the last enemy whom He has conquered for us-whom we shall conquer through Him.

**Looking unto Jesus** — Who gives repentance as well as remission of sins, to receive from Him a heart that feels its wants, and cries for mercy at His feet.

**Looking unto Jesus** — That He may teach us to look unto Him who is the Author and Object of our faith, that He may keep us in that faith of which He also is the Finisher.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not ourselves, our thoughts, our wishes, our plans; unto Jesus, and not unto the world, its allurements, its examples, maxims, its opinions; unto Jesus, and not unto Satan, whether he tries to affright us with his rage or to seduce with his flatteries. We could avoid backsliding by looking unto Jesus, and following Him wherever He leads the way, careful not even to cast a glance at any other way, lest we should lose sight of that in which He leads us.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to our brethren; not even to the best and most beloved among them. If we follow a man, we run the risk of losing our way; but if we follow Jesus, we are certain we shall never go astray. Besides, by putting a man between Christ and us, it happens that the man imperceptibly grows in our eyes, while Christ becomes less; and soon we know not how to find Christ without finding the man, and if the latter fails us, all is lost. But if, on the contrary, Jesus stands between us and our dearest friends, our attachment to our friends will be less direct, and at the same time more sweet; less passionate and

purser; less necessary, but more useful.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to the obstacles we meet in our path. From the moment that we stop to consider them, they astonish and unnerve us and cast us down, incapable as we are of comprehending either the reason why they are permitted or the means by which we may overcome them. The apostle began to sink as soon as he turned to look at the boisterous billows; but as long as he continued looking unto Jesus, he walked upon the billows as upon a rock. The harder our task and the heavier our cross, the more it behooves us to look to Jesus only.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to the temporal blessings which we enjoy. By looking at these blessings first, we run the risk of being so much captivated by them that they even hide from our view Him who gives them. When we look unto Jesus first, we receive all these blessings as from Him; they are chosen by His wisdom, given by His love; a thousand times more precious because received at His hands, to be enjoyed in communion with Him, and used for His glory.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to our strength; for with that we can only glorify ourselves. To glorify God we need the strength of God.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to our weakness. Have we ever become stronger by lamenting our weakness? But if we look unto Jesus, His strength shall fortify our hearts, and we shall break forth into songs of praise.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to our sins. The contemplation of sin brings only death; the contemplation of Jesus brings life. It was not by looking at their wounds, but by beholding the brazen serpent, that the Israelites were healed.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to the law. The law gives us its commands, but does not impart the strength necessary to obey them. The law always condemns, it never pardons. To be under the law is to be out of the reach of grace. In the same measure as we make our obedience the means of our salvation, we shall lose our peace, our strength, our joy, because we forget that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). As soon as the law has constrained us to seek salvation only in Christ, He alone can command obedience, an obedience which asks no less than our whole hearts and our most secret

(Continued on page 29)

# God's word

Ron Runyan

## HANDS OFF, BRETHREN!

[The Christian church is giving much thought to the nature of Scripture and inspiration. Can we define inspiration more specifically than inspiration itself has done? What about "errors" in the Bible? Can we determine what is divine and what is human? Inspired counsel warns, "Hands off!"]

**E**ach generation has picked out different "errors" in Scripture because its world view has been different. Origen thought that Scripture was in error when it placed in Christ's mouth the words "If one strikes your right cheek, turn the other cheek" (see Matt. 5:39). This statement could not possibly have been made, said Origen, because one would need to use his more awkward left hand to strike the right cheek! To us it is absurd to see an error here; it is simply a manner of speaking.

To us who live in the Western world, influenced heavily by Greek methods of thinking, the gospels seem to be in error when they give divergent accounts of the cock crowing (com-

pare Mark 14:30 with Matt. 26:34, Luke 22:34, John 13:38). But in so doing, are we also imposing our own cultural norms upon Scripture? If we were speaking to a Hebrew at the time when the Gospels were written, our concern might be to him just as absurd as Origen's concern is to us. We see clearly that Origen's concern was cultural because we are not part of his culture; it is much harder for us to see that our own concern is cultural.

Therefore, it is important that we allow revelation to speak for itself regarding its own nature rather than imposing on it our cultural norms.

Much study needs to be done before taking a stand on the inerrancy of the *original* writings



of the apostles and prophets. We must be reluctant to go beyond inspiration itself in defining the nature of inspiration, for whenever we determine the nature of Scripture from our own viewpoint, we end up with a concept that conforms to our world view.

It will be helpful to provide a summary of Ellen White's statements regarding difficulties and errors in Scripture.

"God's Word," she says, "is infallible; for God cannot err." *My Life Today*, p. 27. "Man is fallible, but God's Word is infallible." — *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 416. Notice that the fallibility of man is not compared with the infallibility of God but with the infallibility of God's Word. The term *God's Word* here clearly means, in its context, the Bible. Some have argued that the term *infallibility* in Ellen White's day did not mean "without error." That concept, however, is not supported either by the context (which equates infallibility with the fact that God cannot err) nor by the *Oxford Dictionary of the English Language*, which lists as the primary meaning of infallible (even in the latter half of the nineteenth century) "not liable to error."

Mrs. White's clearest statements delineating the nature of errors in Scripture are to be found in *Selected Messages*, book 1, p.16, and in *Early Writings*, pp. 220 and 221, where she states that errors resulting from copyists and translators exist. She also notes that when copies were few, some men, intending to improve upon what was said, actually distorted the message by making changes.

Some have felt that *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 20, directly affirms errors in Scripture. The pertinent passage says: "The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes." A careful reading

will show that to use this paragraph to affirm errors in Scripture would mean the necessity of affirming errors in Christ Himself. What is declared is that *human language* is imperfect, since different meanings are expressed by the same word.

Ellen White also attributes seeming difficulties in Scripture to careless, superficial, or prejudiced readers (*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 20, 25); the sinfulness of man (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on 1 Kings 22:7, 8; p. 1036; *Steps to Christ*, pp. 110, 111; *Early Writings*, pp. 90, 91); our own weakness and ignorance, which make us incapable of comprehending and appropriating the truth contained in the text (*Education*, pp. 170, 171; *My Life Today*, p. 342; *Steps to Christ*, p. 106); interpretations of Scripture that came in during the Dark Ages (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 710); imperfections in human understanding of language; and the perversity of the human mind, which is ingenious in evading truth (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 19).

Some difficulties are there because God in His wisdom has not yet opened the meaning of those passages to man (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 377). There are other passages of Scripture whose difficulties will be understood only in the future life (*Gospel Workers*, p. 312; *Steps to Christ*, p. 113). It seems that Mrs. White identifies the real difficulty as being in man himself rather than in God's Word.

She has very serious warnings against those who come to Scripture with preconceived ideas as to its nature and who by thus imposing their human theories actually put human judgment in place of the Word of God. Some, she says, who take only a surface view of the Scriptures will, with their superficial knowledge that they think is very deep, talk of contradictions in the Bible (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 20). Others, she says, dissect God's Word, attempting to determine *what is revelation and what is not*. Do we not sometimes do just this when, unwilling to state that God's revelation itself is faulty, we say that it is the

human transmission of that revelation by the prophet that is in error? By so doing we are drawing a line between what is divinely revealed and what is human transmission, and thus we are deciding between what is revelation and what is not. Some would answer that they are simply trying to broaden the definition of inspiration to include errors. But Ellen White's counsel is: "Hands off, brethren! Do not touch the ark. Do not lay your hand upon it. . . . When men begin to meddle with God's Word I want to tell them to take their hands off, for they do not know what they are doing." — *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on 2 Tim. 3:16, p. 920.

It is sometimes tempting to attempt to determine the nature of Scripture by inductive reasoning. Since it is stated that God has had His hand on Scripture down through the ages and, furthermore, that He has allowed errors to creep into the transmission of Scripture, therefore, if He did not protect His Word during transmission, certainly He would not have protected it while the prophet was writing it out. Another argument runs like this: God is infallible, but man is fallible. In the Bible we have God's revelation transmitted through human instrumentalities. Human instrumentalities are fallible; therefore, the Bible is fallible. These arguments come from our contemporary age rather than from Inspiration. They fail to take into consideration what Inspiration has to say regarding the nature of Scripture, and they fail to recognize that the Bible is actually the voice of God speaking to us as clearly as if God Himself were present.

Mrs. White warns us to be afraid of those who express disbelief in some scriptures (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 383, 384) and says that those who question the reliability of some Scripture records have let go their anchor (*Signs of the Times*, May 12, 1909).

It appeals to our logic to state that we must accept what we find when we come to

Scripture. However, we need to recognize that it is our culture that determines what we find. We are told that scriptural difficulties can never be mastered by the same methods that are employed in grappling with philosophical problems (*The Great Controversy*, p. 599). Thus we cannot allow our historical-scientific methods to determine the nature of Scripture. Instead, we must have a clear "Thus saith the Lord" (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 709). Difficulties must be seen in the light of the whole of Scripture and must be studied under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (*Early Writings*, p. 221; *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 692; *Messages to Young People*, p. 259).

Ellen White also tells us how to relate to difficulties in Scripture. She declares that she takes the Bible just as it reads, and suggests that we let the Word of God stand just as it is (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 711). We are not to attempt to correct the errors of the Bible. No man can improve the Bible by suggesting what the Lord meant to say or ought to have said (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 16). It is not our responsibility to explain every seeming difficulty in the Bible in order to meet the cavils of skeptics and infidels. In trying to explain what we understand imperfectly, we are in danger of confusing the minds of others in reference to points that are clear and easy to understand (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 705, 706). The Word of God, when taken as a whole, is a perfect chain, one portion linking into and explaining another (*Early Writings*, p. 221).

As the church continues to give study to this sensitive issue, it must be committed to the necessity of a "Thus said the Lord" in determining the nature of revelation. The Lord has given us much light; we would do well to avoid going ahead of that light. **E**

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Ron Runyan wrote this article that appeared in *Ministry*, August 1979.



(Continued from page 25)

## Looking unto Jesus

thoughts, but which is no longer an iron yoke and an intolerable burden—an obedience which He makes lovely while it is also obligatory—an obedience which He not only enjoins, but inspires, and which, well understood, is less a consequence of our salvation than a part of the same, and like every other part is the gift of free grace.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to what we are doing for Him. If we are too much taken up with our work, we may forget our Master—we may have our hands full and our hearts empty; but if we are constantly looking unto Jesus, we cannot forget our work; if our hearts are filled with His love, our hands will also be active in His service.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to the apparent success of our efforts. Apparent success is not always the measure of real success, and besides, God has not enjoined success upon us, but only labor; He will ask an account of our labor, but not of our success. Why, then, should we be too much concerned about it? We must sow the seed; God will gather the fruit, if not today, it will be tomorrow; if not for us, it will be for others. Even if success were to be granted to us, it would always be dangerous to look complacently upon it. On the one hand, we are tempted to claim for ourselves some of the glory; on the other, we are too prone to slacken our zeal when we see good results arising from it, and that is the very time when we ought to put forth double energy. To look at our success is to walk by sight; to look unto Jesus and to persevere in following and in serving Him despite all discouragements, is to walk by faith.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to the gifts that we have received or are now receiving from Him. As to the grace of yesterday, it has been withdrawn with the work of yesterday; we can use it no longer; we ought not to dwell upon it any longer. As to the grace of today, given for the work of today, it is entrusted to us, not to be contemplated, but to be used; not to be paraded, that we may appear rich, but to be employed at once, that we may in our poverty look unto Jesus.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to the depths of sorrow we feel for our sins, or to the degree of

humility they produce in us. If they humble us so that we no longer delight in ourselves; if they cast us down, so that we look to Jesus, that He may deliver us from them, that is all that He requires of us; and it is looking unto Him which above everything else shall cause our tears to flow and our pride to fall.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to the liveliness of our joy or the fervor of our love. Otherwise, if our love seems to grow cold, and our joy is dim—whether on account of lukewarmness or for the trial of our faith—as soon as these emotions have passed, we shall think that we have lost our strength, and we shall give way to hopeless discouragement, if not to shameful inactivity. Ah! Let us rather remember that if the sweetness of religious emotions be sometimes wanting, faith and its power are left us; and that we may be always abounding in the work of the Lord, let us be constantly looking, not to our wayward hearts, but unto Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

**Looking unto Jesus** — And not to our faith. The last artifice of Satan, when he cannot lead us out of the way, is to turn our eyes away from Jesus to look at our faith, and so to discourage us, if it is weak; to puff us up, if it is strong; and in either case to weaken it. For it is not our faith which makes us strong, but it is Jesus through faith. We are not strengthened by contemplating our faith, but by looking unto Jesus.

**Looking unto Jesus** — For it is from Him and in Him that we should learn, not only without injury, but for the good of our souls, as much as it is meet that we should know of the world and of ourselves—of our misery, our dangers, our resources, our victory; seeing all these things in their true light, because He shall show them to us at the very time and in the very measure when the knowledge shall be best calculated to produce in us the fruit of humility and wisdom, of gratitude and courage, of watchfulness and prayer. All that is well for us to know Jesus will teach us. All that He does not teach us, it is better for us not to know.

**Looking unto Jesus** — During all the time which He has allotted us here below—unto Jesus ever anew, without allowing either the remembrance of

(Continued on page 31)



James A. Cress



# Power in the blood

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Try the Apostle Paul's motto. Preach Jesus. Jesus only. Preach Jesus crucified. Preach Jesus as the antidote for sin. Preach Jesus as our Creator, our Example, our Substitute, our Assurance, our Mediator, and our soon-coming King.

You need not preach anything else. If you think you have exhausted the topic of Jesus, begin again and retell the old, old story. Repetition refreshes your own heart even as it strangely warms the heart of your listeners.

What is so essential about preaching Jesus crucified? It is the gospel itself—Jesus taking my place. I deserve to die; Jesus took my place. "Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed.'"<sup>1</sup>

Beautiful, simple, clear, concise, abundant, bountiful, full to the uttermost with forgiveness and restoration. Years ago I jotted some notes and adapted a presentation by Maxie Dunham into a powerful message on the importance of Jesus' shed blood. Passover declares, in anticipation of the redeemer, "The blood shall be a token" (Exod. 12:13). A token of what? What does Jesus blood mean to you and me?

**Safety and Security.** The experience of Passover ultimately meant protection. God did not merely bypass the homes protected by the blood. He stood guard, protecting each blood-sprinkled door and the people safely ensconced under that blood. Think of

it. Protected by the blood. Protected even in the hour of judgment. Protected from sin's penalty. Protected from death's onslaught. How? Protected by the blood . . . if we choose to stay! Dunham said, "Some talk casually, even glibly, about 'eternal security' as though the burden were upon the Lord to keep us safe once we accept Him as Saviour! Don't presume on God's grace. God has done His part! Christ has paid the awful price for our salvation, paid the price in His own blood! We are protected only as long as we continually claim the power of the blood!"

**Submission.** Although the blood was shed when the Lamb was sacrificed, it had to be applied at home. Picture the awesome scene. The Lord in the form of an Angel of Judgment moving over the land with piercing eyes, looking hither and yon and claiming the firstborn in awesome judgment, yet passing over those houses sealed with the blood. Passing over those identified by the blood as having heard God's call and chosen faithfulness.

Here's the reality. The hour of judgment was going to bring death to every house. Blood would be shed. For the unrepentant, the death of the firstborn child. For the repentant, the death of the only begotten Son of God. The result depends on whose blood was shed. It was a messy job to apply the blood. The process was unpleasant. But it brought a most pleasant reality. The sprinkled blood spoke of faith, of obedience, of testimony, of submission.

**Substitution.** The lamb was slain for the whole house. Israel was saved by a lamb—the best and most perfect that could be found. Entering through their blood-sprinkled doors, they feasted on the



(Continued from page 29)

## Looking unto Jesus

the past, which we know so little of, or the cares of an unknown future to distract our thoughts; unto Jesus now, if we have never looked unto Him; unto Jesus again, if we have ceased to do so; unto Jesus always, with a fire fixed and steadfast gaze, "changed into the same image from glory to glory" and thus waiting for the hour when He shall call us to pass from earth to heaven, and from time to eternity, the promised, the blessed hour, when at last we shall be "like him, for we shall see him as he is." **E**

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Theodore Monod, born 1836, was a French Protestant clergyman and editor, who labored extensively in France and the United States, during the nineteenth century.

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lamb which had been slain for them. Of course, substitution is not all there is to the subject of atonement. It is an inexhaustible topic, but a simple truth. We will study it for all eternity, but we can accept and experience it at this moment. Paraphrasing Spurgeon, "I pray that we do not subscribe to some lax theology which teaches that the Lord Jesus did something or other which in some way or other, is in some degree or other connected with the salvation of men!" Don't make it too complex. Don't make it too difficult. Do make it plain. I deserve to die. Jesus took my place. Substitution. Specific. Individual. For me. Jesus took my place!

**Soul cleansing.** The lamb was without blemish; the bread without leaven. There was the absence of sin in the sacrifice which will lead us to the absence of sin in those covered by the blood. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." Whatever your past, it is forgiven, forgotten. You cannot have been too bad that the blood of Jesus cannot cover your past. As our great mediator, Jesus pleads His own blood on our behalf. His cleansing leads to full regeneration.

**Service.** The purpose of cleansing service. "How much more shall the blood of Christ . . . cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:14). Jesus accepts me "just as I am,"

but He doesn't leave me there. He foreordained at our creation and our recreation that we would serve Him as our living God. Having been cleansed, we must be about the works of His kingdom. **E**

1. Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 25.

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James A. Cress is the Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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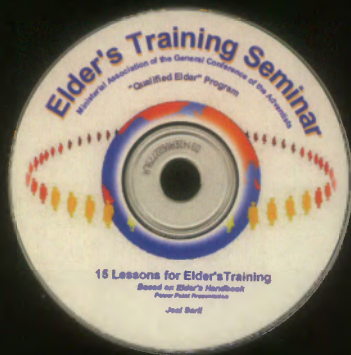
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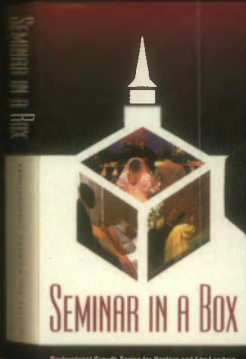
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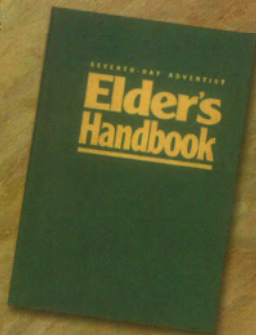
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