Choosing to Be Born

CHOOSE to be born? Impossible, you say. Yes, impossible for all but one. He alone could so choose, for He is God.

He chose His mother and His place of birth. He chose to be born by a miracle—the miracle of God being born with a human body as an infant. He chose to be born when He knew that this birth would lead to a horrible death. He chose to be born in a stable where lambs are wont to be born, for He was to be “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” They called His name Jesus, for He was to “save his people from their sins.”

This glorious incarnation of Christ marks a turning point in human history. Here we have God the Father giving the gift of His own Son because He loved us. Here we have the Son, with no regard for His own concerns, but compelled by a compassionate concern for our need, leaving Heaven’s glory and taking upon Himself the humiliation of the human body, even the body of a baby.

But we dare not pause at the cradle to worship a baby newly born, nor do we bow before a babe in His mother’s arms, for Bethlehem’s cradle is empty. He is no longer the Baby Jesus. Bethlehem was only the vestibule to the holy plan of redemption.

Further, we must not pause to worship the historic Jesus of Nazareth as He walked among the children of men, for His footsteps are not now heard, in Judea. His holy, sinless life became the prelude to the cross that He might be the spotless Lamb, the little Pascal Lamb, to be slain for the sins of the people.

The climax of the world’s history and of God’s dealing with men took place at Calvary’s cross where Christ, clothed with this human body, suffered the humiliation of the judgment of God against sin and sinners. He bore our sins “in his own body on the tree.” He suffered “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” He poured out His life that we might live.

But the Christ hanging on the cross is not the object of our worship, for He no longer hangs under the blazing sun of Golgotha. They took Him down and placed Him in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. We follow Him to the garden where He was buried, but we cannot find a place of worship there, for “he is risen; he is not here.” The open tomb became a portal through which He came, in a glorified body, to ascend into the heavens and to be seated at the Father’s right hand, an high priest who “ever liveth to make intercession” for us. Here in adoration we must worship Him, the Man in glory, in spirit and in truth, for there is “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” “He is thy Lord... worship thou him.” He chose to be born in humility, that He might be exalted in due time as the object of our worship.

This Christ said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Though you cannot choose to be born physically, you can and ought to choose to be born again spiritually. This is done by receiving this crucified and resurrected Christ, the Man in glory, as your personal Saviour and God. Those who choose this to be born again by believing in this matchless Christ will also be exalted in due time into His glorious presence in the heavens.—JOSEPH M. STOWELL, D.D.

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THE MINISTRY
A Song of Gratitude

Lord, you have been good to me,
Year long, life long.
I would sing the clearest, high
Glad thanksgiving song.

I would sing a song of praise
For the glory of the days,
For the years that I have spent:
Years of joy and deep content.

Lord, you have been good, so good,
My heart bursts with gratitude.
Lord, you have been good to me,
Caring for me ceaselessly.

Every prayer that I pray,
Every word that I say,
Everything that I do
I would have them honor you.

Lord, you have been good to me,
Year long, life long—
Help me find the clear, high words
For my grateful song.

—Grace Nott Crowell
From *Silas in the Sun*,
(Harper & Brothers)
What Will God Do Now?

LOUIS H. EVANS

Look back at these “divers manners” in which in timepast God spoke to His world. Here is a picture of Eden—the first failure of mankind. Man is walking with God in the garden in the cool of the evening and suddenly, with rebellious heart, he sins and revolts, and you see a family cringing from the sight of God. You see Cain burying his brother Abel in a shallow grave. Murder! Disobedience! This is the answer to God’s goodness, and a tryst is broken with God. This is the first failure of mankind to respond to the love of God. Will God now vindicate Himself?

The office of sacrifices is instituted, and God gives to humanity this symbol of a contrite heart by which man may come back to God.

Then came Abraham and Israel. Here is a nation that dwells in tents, but they are the recipients of God’s goodness; manna and quail in sufficiency are their lot. He leads them by a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. No father ever coddled a child with more patience and love than God coddled Israel. And what was this nation’s answer? A golden calf, licentiousness, and grumbling. For sacrifices they brought the ringstraked cattle, the oxen that could not plow, and the meal that soured, the bread that mildewed, and the smallest grain.

God must be angry now, but He will try still another way.

He will send unto them the prophets. Jeremiah will weep with them. Isaiah will plead with them. Malachi will whip them. Haggai will tell how the faithless may come back to God. Ezekiel will paint pictures for them. But man will kill the prophets, stone them; they will be hunted, haunted, and hounded in the caves of the earth. The altars will be torn down. For still another time God, in divers manners, has tried to win the world, and His love once more has been foiled.

Stop here: “What shall therefore the Lord do?” Shall He strike us now with a hand of iron and crush us like a potter’s vessel? Will God wither these little human fists thrust in His face? Is the universe insane? Has God no flash point, no anger? Let us see.

There is a conference in heaven, as recorded in Hebrews 10: Christ is saying to God, “Father, the blood of bulls and goats thou dost not desire. A body thou hast prepared me. Lo, I go to do thy will.” I see the portals of heaven open. The armies that have guarded the Son of God step back, the portals close behind Him and the hosts are silent. The Prince of Heaven has gone, the right hand at the throne is empty and God’s heart is aching. Out of the ivory palaces into a world of woe! Only a great eternal love could make my Saviour go!

God Bless You

I cannot find a truer word
Nor better to address you;
Nor song nor poem have I heard
Is sweeter than “God bless you.”

God bless you—so I’ve wished you all
Of brightness life possesses.
For can there any joy at all
Be yours unless God blesses?

God bless you—so I breathe a charm
Lest grief’s dark night oppress you.
For how can sorrow bring you harm
If ’tis God’s way to bless you?

And so, “through all thy days
May shadows touch thee never,”
But this alone, God bless thee—
Then art thou safe forever!

—Author Unknown
The star is in the sky at Bethlehem, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." . . . He sent Him also last unto them, saying, "They will reverence my son." But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. He came to Bethlehem but there was no room for Him in the inn. They scoffed at Him in His boyhood town of Nazareth; they gnashed upon Him with their teeth; some followed Him, to be sure, but He became the object of the most unjust trial in history. They scourged the King's Son, they whipped Him, they squeezed His arteries dry on a cross and laid Him in a borrowed tomb.

Dear God, what wilt Thou do with us now? "What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do?"

The Rewards of the Ministry

A Day's Jotting From My Diary

BY A PASTOR-EVANGELIST

Dear Diary,

Another day is over, and what a glorious day it has been! How wonderful it is to be a minister on a day like this. How overwhelmed with gratitude to God I feel. I see and hear so many encouraging things as a minister that the laymen do not have the opportunity to witness. Surely I should be a much better man than I am. How great will be my accountability to God because of these added blessings!

It has been a full day. After my morning devotions and a few items of business and a few phone calls, the telephone rang. It was Mrs. ———. Last week she told me the news. Her husband had leased out his place of business. Now I can cross that prayer request off my prayer list. Last Sabbath he was in church for the first time. "Will you pray now that he'll make the full surrender and be baptized?" she said this morning.

"He came to church last week without my even suggesting it!" What wonderful news! What a wonderful way to begin the day. I will pray!

There were so many pressing calls that the morning hours found me visiting. A Mr. ——— had called the church and wanted literature to read. I called last week, but he was not at home and I left a book for him. In the meantime he called and said he was sorry to miss me, and would like me to call again. I met the appointment this morning.

What a wonderful visit we had! "I have read The Great Controversy, Daniel and Revelation, The Desire of Ages, and God Speaks to Modern Man," he remarked. "How do you go about joining the Adventist Church?" He was thrilled, he was radiant. The sparkle of conversion and full surrender to the last-day message was in his eyes. He was in his first love.

"How did you find the message?" I asked.

"Pastor Harris held some meetings in Little Rock. When he advertised in the paper that he would answer the question 'Millions now dead—where are they?' I decided to go. I went a few times. Pastor ——— from the meetings visited some neighbors, and I was there a few times. I owe my finding the message to Pastor Harris and Pastor ———."

"I baptized both Pastor ——— and his wife," I said. I felt a glow of warmth in my heart. Another soul had found the Saviour. I must admit that I also felt some warmth of satisfaction in that I had baptized the minister who had a part in this man's conversion.

Then I went to see Mrs. ———. She had fallen and cracked her hip. A kind member had taken her in because she didn't want her to be alone. But she remarked to me, "I am never alone. This year is the first camp meeting I have missed since Pastor A. V. Olson baptized me in Duluth in 1910. If you ever see him, tell him where I am. I know he'd love to know. I don't know what I would have done without Jesus through all these many years. I've
never felt alone.” What a wonderful testimony! What precious food for my soul from this mother in Israel. How privileged I am to have these experiences that strengthen my faith in Jesus.

My next stop was the hospital. A patient lay dying of cancer. She is a member of the church. She has attended only two or three times in the four years that I have been pastor here. I have visited with her in her home several times, but she seemed cold. Her daughter is in the academy and is a sweet Christian in spite of home influences. The mother has not been living in harmony with our principles. Her name has never been removed from the church books, because we did not want to hurt her daughter.

I prayed all the way to the hospital as I drove along. Once I had dillydallied and failed to talk to a patient who needed salvation. There had been reasons, but not good enough ones to take away the self-condemnation that lay within me as I had conducted her funeral service. If only I hadn’t delayed so long, “Lord, I must talk to this woman today,” I prayed. “Please open the way.”

The nurse was in her room when I entered. The patient broke into tears. “O Pastor ——, I’m so glad you have come,” she said. She thought the Lord was punishing her for her sins. She wanted to give her heart to Jesus again. “Once I had no home of my own, no nice clothes, no car, none of the material things; but I had Jesus and I had peace. O Pastor ——, can’t you help me to find that peace again?” The Holy Spirit drew very near and rested mightily upon us. We talked of God’s faithfulness and His anxiety to forgive us, of faith and feeling of her daughter.

I told her of her daughter’s purchasing *The Desire of Ages*. “I want it for my mother’s birthday,” the daughter had told me. The mother was touched. “It’s wonderful what a Christian education has done for her,” she said. “You know, before I got sick, when I went to work at five in the morning, she would get up and eat breakfast with me just so she could read the Bible to me.”

We had prayer. She asked for something to read. I’ll take something tomorrow. I think I’ll take *Steps to Christ* and read from the chapter on “Faith and Acceptance,” and get her to pray and ask God for forgiveness and thank Him for it, believing that He forgives.

Oh, yes, one thing more. She was in terrific pain. As she cried out with agony of soul for the assurance of forgiveness, and as I read her the promises again, I know she felt that she was taking the hand of Jesus. What a responsibility I have as a minister, what a precious responsibility!

Then there’s that daughter. What a testimony she is for Christian education in spite of her home influences. What a testimony to what the Lord can do with a life. If the Lord can do that with her limited opportunities for Christian experience and growth, how much more I should be growing with all my opportunities.

Dinnertime. A report to my family. Four sets of eyes with tears in them. My wife said, “Another modern-day miracle!” as I told the story of the dying lady. What a reward it is as a minister to be married to a strong Christian character. Many men are not so fortunate as to be able to choose a wife from the very cream of womanhood.

After dinner I met an appointment with Mrs. —— to arrange for the rental of the women’s clubhouse for meetings this fall. All the arrangements have been made. I’m beginning now to pray that the Lord will open the hearts of the people. With the experience with Mr. —— so fresh in my mind from this morning, I am especially eager to preach the Word from the public desk. Who can tell the results of evangelistic preaching and how far reaching they will be? Pastor Harris will never know of this man’s conversion unless he should chance to read these words, but by the man’s own testimony Pastor Harris and Pastor —— were chiefly responsible for his conversion. After all, the Bible does promise, “My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please.”

A call at a different hospital. Then another call on Mrs. —— at her home. She is recovering from a heart attack. I was called out at four the other morning when she had the attack. Today she was worried because she hadn’t made out her will, so we talked about it. She hadn’t made it because she didn’t know how to do it. Her real problem was over how to leave some to the church and the right amount to relatives. She was trying to work it out on the basis of amounts. At some time I had been told that it is best to do it by percentages. In this case that suggestion was just the thing that cleared the smoke away. How
happy she was that I had solved her problem. How happy I am that the Lord can control all our faculties and help us to say the right thing at the right time.

The gate clicked behind me as I drove my car to Juvenile Hall. "This place would be hard to get out of," I thought. The boy I went to see had stolen a car, narrowly escaped killing two pedestrians, and totally demolished the car. His mother had been a member, but had slipped away. She asked me to call on the boy. He would be transferred to another city in a day or two. I might have the opportunity to make only this one call. I must make it count.

We talked about many things. I finally asked him about Jesus, and talked to him about giving his heart to Jesus. "This is the only way to real happiness in life and the assurance of eternal life," I told him. He was serious and sober. I'm praying that someday soon he will find his way, and that he will think much about what was said. Poor boy. How fortunate I am not to have a background like his. What a challenge is mine to work with God in reaching these wayward youth.

It has been a full day. Every day is not like this. Some days bring fewer joys and more sorrows. Some days present fewer favorable circumstances to strengthen faith, awaken love, and cause me to grow. But every day has its rewards. The rewards of being a minister are truly great!

Why I Am a Seventh-day Adventist

PAUL P. FELT

Kentucky-Tennessee Conference

I stand before you this morning, brethren, not to tell you why you should be Seventh-day Adventists, but on your own invitation, to tell you why I am one. It would have been easy to just read you a statement of the fundamental doctrines held by all Seventh-day Adventists. Its wording has been carefully examined and approved by our General Conference. I feel impressed, however, to present to you at this time my personal reasons for the faith that is in me.

A member of this association, who has since moved away, once told me that he feared I was in danger of the sin against the Holy Spirit. Why? Because I had dared to question, and then to reject, what the supposedly great Bible scholars of our great universities and popular seminaries think they have discovered about the Bible.

What these scholars teach, I was taught, and my father was taught before me. With this background, when I first became acquainted with the Seventh-day Adventists a little over seven years ago, I knew of no authority in matters of religious belief more sure than my own private judgment. To me, the Bible was the greatest collection of religious literature in the world, most of it true, some of it positively false, and much of it legendary.

My first reason, then, for being a Seventh day Adventist is that it is through these people that the Lord led me to have faith in His Word. And it was Bible prophecy, more than any other one factor, that brought me out of the quicksand of the so-called higher criticism into faith in the firm "Thus saith the Lord" of the prophets and apostles. With seven years of college and seminary education behind me, I found at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., the most thorough scholarship and the most truly scientific passion for truth I have ever found in any educational institution.

A Seventh-day Adventist, by very definition, is a fundamentalist concerning the accuracy and the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Is it conceivable that anyone would pay the price of faithfulness to God's own wording of the fourth commandment if he did not believe that God had literally spoken that commandment on Sinai, and written it with His own finger? Can you imagine a man daring to swim against the
swelling tide of worldliness and tradition, keeping holy the day that Jesus kept, if he did not believe in the literal accuracy of the Bible story of creation? Would a people with doubts about the Bible dare to proclaim to all the world that Christ is coming soon in power and great glory, and that in this event lies our only hope for world peace?

    Christ is coming! let creation
    Bid her groans and travails cease;
    Let the glorious proclamation
    Hope restore and faith increase;
    Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
    Come, Thou blessed Prince of Peace!

    With that "blessed hope" before us,
    Let no harp remain unstrung;
    Let the mighty Advent chorus
    Onward roll, from tongue to tongue;
    Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
    Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!

My second reason for being a Seventh-day Adventist is that I came to believe that their entire message is what the Bible teaches. The gospel of this worldwide movement is an integrated whole, accepted in all its essentials by all its members in all lands. I wish I could say that every one of us is perfectly fulfilling the prayer of Christ "that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:22). As individuals we have fallen so far short of the perfect consecration, the perfect ideal to which God calls His people, that our movement itself lags far behind in accomplishing the work to which we believe God has called it.

The Everlasting Gospel

This message we understand to be "the everlasting gospel" in its setting of present truth (2 Peter 1:12). Our theme song is found in the thrilling messages of heavenly angels, preaching through human instruments to all who live in this closing hour of time. John tells us, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

This first angel is followed by a second and a third, like three rockets blazing through the night in swift succession. Having heard the messages of these angels, John says, "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle."

These messages together, then, must constitute "this gospel of the kingdom," which our Saviour told His disciples "shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" to prepare the way for His second advent (Matt. 24:14). If so, it is just as important for us today to understand these messages, and to let them do their appointed work in our lives, as it was for the people of Noah's day to believe his warning of the coming flood, and to join him in the ark before the rain began to fall. Noah must have seemed very arrogant and positive to some of his hearers, just as we sound to some today. What mattered, however, was that Noah preached the truth, and that life and death hinged on the acceptance or rejection of that truth.

The first angel's message is the most general of the three, yet we understand it as having a very definite, twofold application to our own times. "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." What is so remarkable about the first part of this message is that it preaches a judgment already upon us—"the hour of his judgment is come."

The Seventh-day Adventist Movement began with this conviction of a judgment work already begun in heaven. This belief is based on the words of Daniel 8:14: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."" Time does not permit me to explain right here and now how these Bible students came to believe that this cleansing began in 1844. Suffice it to say that the sanctuary to be cleansed could only be the heavenly temple after which the tabernacle of Moses was patterned (see Rev. 11:19; Heb. 8:5; 9:23, 24).

We know of only one dark blot in all the courts of heaven that could possibly need such cleansing. This is the sad record, inscribed on the books of heaven, that tells of the sins of men. We understand this heavenly cleansing through its foreshadowing in the annual Day of Atonement in the Old Testament sanctuary service (see Lev. 16; 23:28, 29). We believe that this work of judgment, continuing from 1844 to the close of probation, is God's great "inventory" of His people. By this means, the
angels who accompany Christ at His second coming can know that all whom they call from their graves at that time are fit subjects for God's heavenly kingdom. And while the books of heaven are being cleansed from all record of the sins of the saints who have lived before us, a great reformatory message is cleansing the lives of God's people who are living on the earth during this judgment hour. "Fear God," then, "and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come!"

This angel message goes on to call men back to the worship of the Creator. "And worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." This has been the great cry of all the holy prophets since the world began. Never, however, was it needed more than today. We cannot truly worship the Creator without accepting His own story of His work. To believe the pseudoscientific theory of evolution, we must believe that mankind started at the bottom of the ladder, both intellectually and spiritually. To believe the divine record of creation as found in the opening words of the Bible story, we must believe that man started at the top, perfect in every way, and fell to his present low estate only through deliberate disobedience to the revealed will of His Creator. There could not possibly be any believers in evolution among the ranks of sincere Seventh-day Adventists.

But this call to worship the Creator means yet more! It means that we will remember His creatorship through remembering to keep holy the day He set aside by His own example as an everlasting memorial of that great event. "Wherefore," He declares, "the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Ex. 31:16, 17). He says too, "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them" (Eze. 20:12). We take these significant words as applying to the true spiritual Israel of all ages, and surely there is nothing Jewish either about the creation, or about the sanctified life to which our Creator calls us in this world of sin!

We keep this Sabbath of the Lord, not from any vain dream of saving ourselves by our works, but because God Himself made it an integral part of His moral law. We keep it because "the sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27; see Gen 2:3) before man ever sinned. We keep it because it will be kept by all saints in the earth made new, when sin and sinners have been banished forever (see Isa. 66:22, 23). In so far as we keep it holy at all, we do so not in our own strength at all, but by the power of the Holy Spirit and a regenerate heart, "that the righteousness of the law," as Paul so fitly says, "might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4).

Since the fourth commandment commemorates God's rest at the close of His work of creation, we do not see how any first-day rest could ever fulfill the purpose for which that commandment was given (see Ex. 20:11). This is the day, above all others, on which we are to "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

The first angel has spoken, and now the second angel proclaims with mighty voice a message of equal importance for those who dwell in the last days. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," he cries, "that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Rev. 14:8). This is the Babylon whose character and whose final destiny are so
vividly described in Revelation 17 and 18. This is the great city from which a mighty “voice from heaven” is calling out His people. “Come out of her, my people,” He cries, “that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

For many spiritual reasons, all Seventh-day Adventists believe that “Babylon” represents the fallen church. This is that “falling away” prophesied by Paul, in which “that man of sin” would be revealed, “the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thess. 2:3, 4).

The great leaders of the Protestant Reformation all knew well how to identify this sinister power.

But Babylon today is more than one church organization. Babylon includes in her seductive embrace all who will do her bidding. “Know ye not,” asks Paul, “that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?” (Rom. 6:16). Is it any wonder, then, that Jesus, in warning His disciples of the perils that would face them in the last days, said, “Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32)? The call to flee from fallen Babylon is an inseparable part of “this gospel of the kingdom”!

And now a third mighty angel commands our attention with his warning voice: “If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whatsoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:9-12).

The mark of the beast will be placed upon all but the very elect of God. This will happen in the last great crisis of human history before the coming of Christ. If it is true that the signs of Christ’s coming are being fulfilled, or have already been fulfilled around us, then surely the time has come for Christians to study and to understand this striking prophecy. Adventists understand this beast power to represent civil authority under the domination of corrupt Christianity. It is Satan’s supreme effort to destroy true Christianity, and he uses those who name the name of Christ as his chief agents, just as nineteen hundred years ago he worked through the Jews.

From the closing words of the third angel’s message it is plain that the mark of the beast must be some law of man directly contrary to one of the commandments of God. Only those who have “the patience of the saints” will dare to resist, under penalty of death. This civil law will be inspired by professed Christians, by the harlot woman of Revelation 17, who rides on the back of the beast. Now, we know of only one ordinance of man, directly contrary to our understanding of the moral law of God, that professing Christians today are trying to enforce through the civil law. This is the observance of Sunday. Adventists believe that the day is coming when, in some real or fancied emergency, the traditional Christian rest day will be enforced so ruthlessly, perhaps through a compulsory six-day work week, that Sabbathkeepers will be quite unable to find a place in the economic system. In that day the issue of discipleship will be made as crystal clear as in the days of the ancient Caesars. By this test all mankind will be sifted, and only those who will “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth” will be found ready in the day of Christ’s glorious coming. “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

These ringing words that close the third angel’s message make that proclamation far more than a mere negative warning. They herald forth the principles on which all Christian victory depends—righteousness by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. While we Adventists do not always grasp this as clearly as we ought, it is the very heart of our gospel to the world. “Nothing but the blood of Jesus” can prepare us to stand in the trials that are before us. Only when we realize our utter helplessness

Flattery, like cologne, should be inhaled deeply and enjoyed, but never swallowed.
—Chicago Tribune.
apart from Christ will He fill us by His mighty Spirit with the power to keep His commandments faithfully under extreme temptation. There is no gift of the Holy Ghost more essential than the gift by which we are made overcomers. “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7).

The Destiny of Man

The teaching of Seventh-day Adventists regarding the future destiny of man is inseparably related to the second coming of Christ. In the Scriptures we find death to be only a sleep until the resurrection day. Without the hope of this resurrection, as Paul says, “we are of all men most miserable” (1 Cor. 15:19). If Christ is not coming again to raise the dead from their dusty graves, “then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (verse 18). Immortality is not conferred at the moment of death, but, as Paul further says, upon them “that are Christ’s at his coming” (verse 23). The blessed dead who “die in the Lord” do simply “rest from their labours” until this glorious awakening (Rev. 14:13). And why? We are plainly told: “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:40). While there have already been special resurrections and translations, according to the Scripture (see Heb. 11:5; 2 Kings 2:11; Matt. 17:3; 27:52, 53; Jude 9), it is said plainly of those who are dead that they “know not anything” (Eccl. 9:5), their thoughts having perished (see Ps. 146:4). Thus we understand the New Testament designation of “sleep” (John 11:11-13) to mean a very literal unconsciousness.

We believe that in like manner it is God’s merciful plan “to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Peter 2:9). The only way we know of to make a literal history out of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is to make it contradict an abundance of Scripture, including the plain words of Jesus Himself. In His own positive teaching to His disciples He shows the actual separation be-

between the righteous and the wicked as not taking place until the time “when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him” (Matt. 25:31). Then, and not until then, shall He “set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (verse 33).

We believe it is important to understand the truth about the millennium, in order to avoid the false prophets and false christs who would keep us from being found ready in the day of Christ’s return. Since “blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection,” it is plain that the resurrection of the saints at the coming of Christ begins the thousand years spoken of in Revelation 20. It also seems very plain to us from John 14:1-3 that the thousand-year reign of the saints is in heaven, and not on earth. If Christ has gone there to prepare a place for us, we believe He will take us there when He returns to receive us unto Himself.

This earth, during that period, we believe will be left desolate and uninhabited, except by Satan and his angels (see Jer. 4:28-28; 25:33). At the end of this time comes “the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29), or the second resurrection, of those who were not “Christ’s at his coming.” The New Jerusalem having at this time come down from heaven to earth (see Rev. 21:2), the numberless hosts of the wicked now surround it with intent to destroy. It is now that the final punishment of the ungodly takes place. “And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Rev. 20:9).

The final punishment of the wicked is a hotly debated subject. Seventh-day Adventists have derived their teaching on this point from their sincere effort to let the Bible be its own interpreter. We find the Scriptures very plain that the fires of the last days are on the earth, and that, “the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). The fruit of the lake of fire is ashes, with the final extinction of all who are thrown into it. To Satan it is said, “And never shalt thou be any more” (Eze 28:19). Of the wicked we read, “Thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be” (Ps. 37:10). “The enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; . . . into smoke shall they consume away” (Ps. 37:20).

“I shall allow no man to belittle my soul by making me hate him.”—Booker T. Washington.

(Continued on page 44)
The Atonement the Heart of Our Message

LE ROY EDWIN FROOM
General Conference Field Secretary

Atoning Grace, the Theme of All Themes

THE WONDEROUS provision of atonement—complete, vicarious, expiatory, propitiatory atonement; yes, ransoming, reconciling, restoring atonement, accomplished by Jesus Christ for all who will accept its provisions—is the most sublime and moving theme that can be contemplated by the mind of man. It has a height, a depth, a breadth, and a length that is beyond human comprehension. Throughout all eternity the redeemed will ponder and wonder at its vastness, and will never be able to exhaust the marvels of God’s atoning love and grace.

The amazing provision of atonement is complete, perfect, and final. It is without defect. No unknown contingency in the sin problem can arise that was not foreseen and provided for. Nothing further can be needed or desired, by way of complete remedy for sin. God’s plan has been, and will continue to be, a perfect provision to meet and vanquish the great intruder—sin. Atoning grace is the best news and the greatest news that can be heralded by the lips of men or angels. It is “good news” indeed. It is, moreover, news that appeals to the highest hopes and aspiring instincts of needy man. It satisfies every holy desire and fulfills every spiritual aspiration of the human heart.

More than that, the atonement will appeal to the highest intellects on earth—when presented in its awesome beauty and majesty—if there is a latent spark of holy desire that can be nurtured into a flame of faith and acceptance. It affords the basis of our most successful approach and final appeal to men. It will come sharply to the forefront in the climax of our witness to the world. Only as we present Christ in His love and majesty can we reach the neglected classes. More than that, only thus can we touch the universal chord of every human heart of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, and bridge the gap between God and man; only thus can we restore the lost harmony between the soul and its Maker.

The atoning cross, we are repeatedly admonished, is to be the underlying theme for every effective sermon, every decisive Bible study, and every successful personal appeal. It is to constitute the overtone of every representative statement, spoken or printed, of the Advent faith. It is the inner heart of Adventism—the basis of our belief, the motive of our service, the substance of our Christian experience, the theme of all effective witness. It is the irresistible magnet that will draw all men unto Christ, and that will melt the hardest hearts, even those that are chilled or congealed by sin.

Call it the cross, the atonement, or the divine provision for man’s complete salvation; it nevertheless remains the neglected emphasis, the missing note in all too many of our presentations. Its absence, or its hazy mention, is an inadvertent cause of our weakness of appeal and the underlying reason for our meagerness of fruitage for God. The Lord is waiting, the world is waiting, and “My people” (He calls them) scattered throughout the churches of Christendom, are waiting for this emphasis to become the throbbing heart of our witness to the world. We are told that it is to undergird the presentation of every doctrine. It is to be the inner spring of every activity that flows out of the heart for God.

The emphasis and accurate presentation of Christ’s atonement, we are admonished, should be the keynote of our ministerial councils, the theme of personal study, the heart of personal experience. All of our doctrines should be surcharged with it, and illuminated by it. If we will but give ourselves over to it, it will make us flames of fire for God—spiritual firebrands in a cold, dark, and destitute world—and will set other souls afire for Him. It will lighten the earth with the glory of God. It will reach the honest of heart everywhere. Yes, it will finish the work of God, and prepare a people to meet Him in righteousness and peace. That is atoning grace—the theme of all themes, the provision of all provisions, the fullness of Christ’s redemption in action.
Limited Concept, by Some, of Atoning Work

Some, in our early days, had a constricted concept of the atonement. Such largely failed to connect the atonement with the cross. They considered the transaction of Calvary only a propitiatory sacrifice, and virtually limited the atonement to the priestly function in the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement, whether typical or antitypical.

This misconception evidently sprang from the faulty procedure of interpreting the antitypical gospel reality by the figural pattern of the earthly type, rather than the reverse procedure. Actually this latter procedure is the only proper and safe method of determining basic doctrinal truth. It is generally recognized that no cardinal doctrine should ever be based primarily upon, or interpreted chiefly by, a parable, type, or figure, but only upon the expressed, unfigurative declarations of Scripture. And this is particularly true of the anticipatory types and figures of the Old Testament. Some failed to understand this.

Without a clear concept of the full deity of Christ and His eternal pre-existence—and without a clear understanding of His fulfillment, in the antitype, both of the role of substitutionary, atoning victim on earth, and of the role of subsequent ministering priest in heaven—some of our forefathers unfortunately limited the work of atonement to the special services of the Day of Atonement. And thus they restricted Christ’s antitypical functions to high priestly events in the heavenly sanctuary since 1844. This was tragic.

They were at first unmindful of the primary fact that the complete, comprehensive, atoning sacrifice on Calvary was the actual, full, and final provision of atonement made 1900 years ago. But with this basic truth goes this inseparable corollary: that Christ, our heavenly High Priest, has since been ministering its provisions, benefits, and effects to the beneficiaries of His grace—the subjects of His intercession. And this intercession continued all through the intervening years prior to 1844, at which time He entered upon the second and final or judgment phase of His twofold ministry. But in addition to judging, He still is ministering the benefits of His atoning sacrifice made on Golgotha, and pleading His shed blood for sinners throughout this final judgment phase of His priestly ministry, which will terminate at the close of human probation and the cessation of His mediatorial ministry for man.

The Emphasis Under the Loud Cry

We have been anxious faithfully to give the message due the world during this great hour of God’s judgment, and to set forth the inexorable standard of the judgment that men must face. But in this anxiety we have all too often failed to stress that the supreme issue in the judgment phase of our High Priest’s ministry is man’s personal relation to the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ; and to His high priestly ministration of the benefits and provisions of that complete, expiatory, substitutionary, atoning sacrifice on Calvary. This personal relationship is man’s sole hope; and this tremendous fact must be declared to all mankind.

We must grasp the truth that men are not condemned primarily because they have broken the law of God, but because they do not avail themselves of the saving provision of the death of Christ in our stead. It cannot be overemphasized that, in the ultimate, men are judged by their relation to the substitutionary atonement provided in Christ. And this atonement in the great antitype, is the Saviour’s perfect, sinless, substitution of Himself for us, on the cross. In this atonement He exhausted the utmost demands of the violated law of God by dying in our stead, once-for-all, and potentially for all mankind—from Adam onward.

Under this amazing provision, Jesus Christ offers His righteousness in exchange for our sins, and His everlasting life and immortality in place of our forfeiture of life through disobedience. He proffers His perfect obedience instead of our pollution, and new covenant joy instead of old covenant constraints. He tenders His victory to replace our defeats; enabling grace instead of our futile strivings; overflowing obedience in place of our infractions; success to supersede our failures; triumph over temptation instead of our falling under its onslaughts; ultimate glorification instead of destruction at His second advent; and a prepared place in the Father’s mansions instead of exclusion from the Father’s kingdom.

This is the basic issue. This we are to recognize and declare. This is the divine
provision we are to experience and then to proclaim. That is why, instead of preaching law, law, law, we are admonished to preach Christ, Christ, Christ—Christ in the law, Christ in the Sabbath, and Christ in every other theme from Genesis to Revelation. Christ alone can save. So we are to preach positively, not negatively. We are to preach the enabling Christ, the Christ who exhausted the penalties of the law, and thus established the law; the Christ who provided escape from the inexorable penalty for its violation; and who, by instilling a love of the Father’s will, makes His precepts a delight, and obedience thereto the natural impulse of the heart.

It is not a new message that is called for, simply a new emphasis. That is the obvious intent and content of Christ-centered preaching. It is not some watered-down, compromised, messageless generality. It is an intensified, vivified emphasis of present truth as it is in Jesus. It is this that will give our proclamation magnetic drawing power and compelling attraction—because Christ Jesus becomes the great central magnet, pulling upon the hearts of men to a degree surpassing any emphasis of the past. It will take just such an emphasis to finish the work of God on earth. Putting Christ at the center will result in an appeal to the minds as well as the hearts of men, because of the sublime logic of it all, and the divine philosophy of the atonement—not only in its universal provision but also by its personal application and acceptance. It will appeal to high and low alike.

Salvation, as a living relationship to a living Christ, transcends mere intellectual assent to a body of teaching. And that new relationship and emphasis constitutes the power, the provision, and the presentation that is destined to move the world. It is this that will bring mankind face to face with its final decision as to what it will do with the full provisions of the atonement—Christ the complete and perfect offering, Christ the ministering, mediating Priest, and now the inerrant Judge, who is soon to finish His redemptive ministry for the world.

That is the heart of our message. That is the essential meaning of the call of God which began to be sounded in 1888—but which was retarded.

Such a concept does not minimize or obscure our distinctive message. It enlarges, strengthens, and gives it supreme point, purpose, and appeal. Instead of diluting its distinctiveness, it accentuates and intensifies its deeper meaning, and gives it a compelling significance that we may never before have sensed or utilized.

Such an exaltation of and emphasis on Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, according to His promise, will lighten the earth with His glory. And then His imparted righteousness will ripen and perfect our characters for eternity.

Such an emphasis on Christ’s all-sufficiency will swell into a loud cry that will penetrate earth’s remotest bounds, and will reach hearts and ears that have been soundproofed by sin. Thousands will be moved to respond in a day, as the work of God moves to its triumphant close on earth.

Such a setting forth of Christ as our atoning sacrifice and ministering Priest—whose entrance upon that heavenly ministry was signaled by the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, in the early rain—will make possible the outpouring of the more abundant latter rain, as this heavenly agency finishes the work of the gospel through transformed lives throughout the earth. And then, after the ministry of the benefits of the atonement ceases at probation’s close, will come the prophesied harvest of the world, at the appearing of the blessed Reaper in the clouds of heaven. Then the redemptive work of God will be finished on earth for all time.

What a wonderful vista! What an amazing provision is stressed by the Spirit of prophecy! What a heaven-born emphasis—the wonderful, matchless, all-sufficient, all-efficient, all-encompassing, all-prevailing Christ, as atoning Sacrifice, ministering Priest, inerrant Judge, and coming King.

A DISAGREEABLE EXPERIENCE

A certain evangelist asked a baker if he was a member of the church, to which he replied, “I used to be a member, but since one of the members deceived me, I do not want anything more to do with the church.”

“I had the same experience with a baker,” said the evangelist. “He sold me stale bread, and since then I have lost confidence in all bakers.”

The baker, immediately on the defensive, answered that everyone should not be judged because one is not doing right. Then as the evangelist looked at him with a questioning smile, the baker realized that the evangelist had only borrowed his own reasoning.—Fóïna Evangelica, São Paulo, Brazil.
Changing Attitudes Toward Adventism

During recent months articles concerning Seventh-day Adventists have appeared in a number of leading journals, both religious and secular. This was not by plan or design of the denomination, yet we are unable to escape the conviction that in this there must be a divine purpose. Seventh-day Adventists have for years been mentioned with favor by national and religious leaders for their welfare work, especially in times of national disaster. And the contribution of some of our men in the noncombatant branches of the military services, particularly the medical corps, has called forth high praise. This has naturally brought joy to the church. Yet, because of certain features of our belief which have too often been misunderstood and at times misstated by others, some well-meaning Christians have commonly classified us with the non-Christian cults.

It has been a source of deep regret that certain Christian groups, largely through a lack of full information, have classed us with those who do not believe the very fundamentals of the gospel. It is very possible that we ourselves share in the responsibility of this misunderstanding, because of our failure to state clearly what we believe on these fundamental issues and our failure to place chief emphasis where it really belongs. Not can we deny that at times certain expressions conveying the ideas of individuals rather than those of the body of believers have appeared in print and added to the misunderstanding. Believing in the fullest freedom of the conscience within certain reasonable bounds, we have never required our preachers and writers to state their convictions in any precise form. Moreover, we have never developed a comprehensive systematic theology within the framework of our doctrines. In fact, many have felt a degree of satisfaction that as Adventists we have no creed. And that is still true. We still have no precise creed as such, for the Bible and the Bible only is the platform of our faith.

It is not too strange, therefore, that certain difficulties have arisen because of the way our teachings have at times been expressed. A sentence or even a word may convey an entirely different meaning to different people. This has been especially impressed upon us during recent months. We have been made aware that the utmost care needs to be exercised in setting forth certain features of our faith, because it is easy for us to use language when stressing the necessity of obedience, et cetera, that could convey the idea that we overemphasize the saving value of works.

The particular doctrines that have been most misunderstood, however, deal with our exalted Lord, His atoning sacrifice, His priestly ministry, and the part played by the antitype of the scapegoat in the final disposition of sin. These have been major points of attack, and because of certain mistaken concepts Adventism had come to be regarded by many as out of harmony with fundamental Christianity.

Seventh-day Adventists do recognize that the heart of the gospel is Christ, His deity, His sinless nature, His all-sufficient atoning sacrifice on the cross, His heavenly ministry, and His gift of righteousness by which any and all who accept of His great salvation are delivered from sin. Nothing is dearer to Adventist Christians than the truth that salvation is wholly by grace “without the deeds of the law.” True, we teach the importance of keeping the commandments of God, but this is not in order to be saved but rather because we are saved through His grace. To us, obedience is the result of salvation, not the ground for salvation.

The underlying issue between evangelical Christianity and Adventism has not been our attitude to the commandments of God as such, for in truth the creeds and catechisms of all the leading Protestant denominations declare plainly that the standard of true Christian living is expressed in the Decalogue spoken by God at Sinai. Over and over again outstanding preachers in the Protestant denominations have emphasized the importance of living a life in
Your staff here at the Ministerial Association headquarters sends best wishes to you all. May the new year bring each of you an enrichment in the things of God and the assurance that the Spirit of the Mighty God who came in a tiny bundle of human flesh nineteen centuries ago will be to you in the coming days the Prince of Peace.

And now for a little suggestion: The florists tell us to "say it with flowers," and what joy and healing these silent messengers have brought. But some of us have found that to say it with books is even better, because the silent message in print stays on to shed its perfume of rich thoughts and happy illustrations. We thank God for our own books; our publishing houses have done the cause a very great service in providing such a wealth of inspiring literature.

But there is a particular book that comes from the pen of a veteran Christian writer, Dr. E. W. Boreham. It is entitled My Christmas Book. Few men in recent years have written so many books, and as the publishers have said, every production from his pen is unique. But this one is even more unusual; it is a happy blending of winnowed wisdom and spiritual ecstasy, touched here and there with humor. The chapter on "Roaring Camp" alone is worth the price of the book.

This is not a sales promotion but a little suggestion to answer the age-old question, What can I give for Christmas? This is a volume that some had suggested might be included in our reading course, but it was felt that its message was too particularized. But it is the right kind of message for this season of the year. It is a Zondervan publication, 79 pages, $1.35.

harmony with these eternal precepts. Dr. Billy Graham's forthright pronouncements on this subject in recent years are substantially the same as were expressed by Moody, Spurgeon, Wesley, and others.

It is true that Seventh-day Adventists have taught the seventh day as the true Sabbath of the Lord. Yet the real issue between Adventists and other Christian bodies has not been so much concerning which day of the week we keep, as our reason for keeping it—and back of that our concept of Christ as our atoning Sacrifice, mediating Priest, and sovereign Lord.

The apostle Paul declared plainly that compliance with any requirement—whether it be the observance of a day of worship, ministering to the needy, or tithe paying—and the acts involved in compliance can never in any way add to what our Lord has so gloriously accomplished for us by His life and His death. Moreover, any thought of gaining merit by such observances actually cancels salvation, for any service which springs from such a premise is "not reckoned of grace, but of debt." It is "to him that worketh not, but believeth" that faith is "counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:4, 5). But on the other hand if one, having accepted the full and free salvation which is ours in Christ and recognizing his absolute oneness with his Lord through grace, seeks to honor Him by living a life wholly consecrated to God, and then as evidence of his re-creation in Christ observes the Sabbath, that is something entirely different.

It is to be regretted that some of our members have stated their beliefs in language that has conveyed the impression that while they are justified by grace, they are now trying to gain sanctification through their good works and strict adherence to the Decalogue. It is this inadvertence of emphasis by certain individuals that has led some to regard Adventists as not truly orthodox.

Furthermore, our concept of our Lord's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary has been a matter of serious question, for certain Christians have maintained that our teaching implies that Christ is actually making another atonement in heaven in addition to what He accomplished on the cross. If we really did believe that, then we could rightly be censured, for such teaching would rob our Lord of His full and final victory at Calvary.

Adventists, on the contrary, trust implicitly in the finished, all-sufficient, once-for-all atonement made on the cross. But we recognize that our ascended Lord as our great High Priest is now applying the benefits of His atonement to the believer, and
is making effectual in the lives of His people that which He made available to us in His marvelous atoning sacrifice on the cross. Having risen from the dead, He now, from the Father's throne, sends forth His Spirit into our hearts, not only as the Comforter but as the One who is pledged to guide His people “into all truth” (John 16:13).

When certain Christian leaders discovered recently that we believe absolutely in the sovereign deity of our Lord, in His pre-existence with the Father, in the absolute sinlessness of His nature during His incarnation on earth, in His all-sufficient atoning sacrifice upon the cross, and in salvation by grace and grace alone, then the basis of the misunderstandings which for a century have been a barrier between other Christian bodies and Adventists was removed. This has called forth our deepest gratitude to God. And it has heartened us to know that our fellow Christians of other groups are coming to understand us for what we are. Thus the concept of Adventism has been clarified with many. But, we repeat, the real change of attitude on the part of these good friends in Christ came when they recognized that we stand firmly with all true Christians on the great fundamentals of the Christian faith. Those who have been closest to these leaders of evangelical thought have rejoiced in the privilege of gathering around the Word of God and together plumbing its depths on these great subjects.

But during these long months of prayerful study and clarification of concepts, something else has also brought joy to our hearts. We have been led to a new appreciation of the value of the representative writings of Ellen G. White, for the clear truth on these cardinal points of faith and doctrine has long been on record in those writings which are in full harmony with the precious Word of God. Impressive statements from her pen, often little known or recognized, now speak with new force. Too often we have not either fully understood or at least have not truly appreciated the wonderful setting forth of truth by this gifted writer on these points of faith. From about 1888 until 1915, when at the age of 87 she laid down her pen and passed to her rest, these great truths concerning our Eternal Lord, His nature, and His mighty salvation became the great absorbing theme of her life.

Over a period of a year or more, some fifty or sixty important questions concerning our faith have come to the General Conference. These were sent in by a group of Christian theologians who desire to know exactly what Adventists believe. These were asked in sincerity with the request that our answers be amply supported by Scripture and history.

These answers, covering all the main features of our faith, are expressed entirely within the framework of our statement of “Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists” that appears in the Yearbook and the Church Manual. No attempt whatsoever has been made to add to, take from, or change our doctrines, but only to explain “those things which are most surely believed among us.” These answers represent the thinking of a large circle of our preachers, teachers, and administrators, not only in North America, but in many other lands.

It is thought to publish these questions and answers shortly, together with an abundance of supporting evidence from the Spirit of prophecy writings. This new volume will be well documented, so that our Christian friends of all denominational groups will be able to ascertain the features of our faith that have made this Advent Movement what it is, and have made us a peculiar people.

This is a great hour for the church of God in all the earth. Prophecy convinces us that we are down at the very end of human history. Soon our blessed Lord will return in power and great glory. Yet before He comes the whole world will be illuminated with the light of the gospel. The truth of God’s Word will flash forth with a radiance that will compel the leaders of earth as well as the multitudes in every land to know that God is both the Creator of heaven and earth and the all-sufficient Redeemer and Saviour of lost mankind.

The great controversy between truth and error will then reach its climax. Men will then take their stand either on the side of Christ and His truth or on the side of antichrist and his deceptions. At that time every man will stand or fall according to his basic relationship to Jesus Christ. To have a part in the ministry of preparing the multitudes for the last great crisis of the ages is indeed a sobering privilege demanding humility of heart and the empowering of the Spirit of God for consecrated living and dedicated service.

R. A. A.

December, 1956
I. Centrality of the Atoning Cross

1. Atoning Sacrifice Is Central Truth.—The sacrifice of Christ as atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster.—Gospel Workers, p. 315.

2. Cross Is Immortal Central Pillar.—It [the cross] is the central pillar on which hangs the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which is for those who accept that cross. Under and around the cross of Christ, that immortal pillar, sin shall never revive, nor error obtain control. Life, love, joy, and peace all hang upon the cross.—Letter 124, 1900.

3. Atoning Sacrifice—Central and Foundational.—The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption,—the Son of God uplifted on the cross. This is to be the foundation of every discourse given by our ministers.—Gospel Workers, p. 315.

4. Cross of Christ to Move the World.—The cross of Calvary challenges, and will finally vanquish every earthly and hellish power. In the cross all influence centers, and from it all influence goes forth. It is the great center of attraction; for on it Christ gave up His life for the human race. This sacrifice was offered for the purpose of restoring man to his original perfection; yea, more. It was offered to give him an entire transformation of character, making him more than a conqueror. . . .

If the cross does not find an influence in its favor, it creates an influence. Through generation succeeding generation, the truth for this time is revealed as present truth. Christ on the cross was the medium whereby mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. This is the means that is to move the world.—Manuscript 56, 1899.

5. Power Measured by Relation to Cross.—There is one great central truth to be kept ever before the mind in the searching of the Scriptures—Christ and Him crucified. Every other truth is invested with influence and power corresponding to its relation to this theme. It is only in the light of the cross that we can discern the exalted character of the law of God. The soul palsied by sin can be endowed with life only through the work wrought out upon the cross by the Author of our salvation.—Manuscript 31, 1890.

6. Christ Was Gospel Hanging on Cross.—Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. . . . This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer. If we can awaken an interest in men’s minds that will cause them to fix their eyes on Christ, we may step aside, and ask them only to continue to fix their eyes upon the Lamb of God.—Manuscript 49, 1898.

7. Show Necessity for Atonement.—Gather up the strongest affirmative statements regarding the atonement made by Christ for the sins of the world. Show the necessity for this atonement.—Evangelism, p. 187.

8. Cross Placed in Center of World.—The fact that the companions of Christ in His crucifixion were placed the one on His right hand and the other on His left is a significant one; His cross is placed in the very center of the world.—Manuscript 52, 1897.

9. Law and Gospel Meet in Cross.—Christ and Him crucified, is the message God would have His servants sound through the length and breadth of the world. The law and the gospel will then be presented as a perfect whole.
II. Complete Atonement Made on Cross

1. Atonement Completed on Cross.—He [Christ] planted the cross between heaven and earth, and when the Father beheld the sacrifice of His Son, He bowed before it in recognition of its perfection. "It is enough," He said. "The Atonement is complete."—The Review and Herald, Sept. 24, 1901.

2. Perfect Atonement Made on Cross.—Type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb slain for the sins of the world. Our great High Priest has made the only sacrifice that is of any value in our salvation. When He offered Himself on the cross, a perfect atonement was made for the sins of the people. We are now standing in the outer court, waiting and looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—The Signs of the Times, June 28, 1899.

3. Perfect Atonement Followed by Mediation.—Our great High Priest completed the sacrificial offering of Himself when He suffered without the gate. Then a perfect atonement was made for the sins of the people. Jesus is our Advocate, our High Priest, our Intercessor. Our present position therefore is like that of the Israelites, standing in the outer court, waiting and looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—Manuscript 128, 1897.

4. Father's Satisfaction in Complete Atonement.—The time had come for the universe of heaven to accept their King. Angels, cherubim and seraphim, would now stand in view of the cross. . . . The Father accepts the Son. No language could convey the rejoicing of heaven or God's expression of satisfaction and delight in His only begotten Son as He saw the completion of the atonement.—The Signs of the Times, Aug. 16, 1899.

5. Father Glorified by Son's Death and Mediation.—The Father demonstrates His infinite love for Christ, who paid our ransom with His blood, by receiving and welcoming Christ's friends as His friends. He is satisfied with the atonement made. He is glorified by the incarnation, the life, death, and mediation of His Son.—Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 364.

6. Heaven's Seal Affixed to Atonement.—The Father gave all honor to the Son, seating Him at His right hand, far above all principalities and power. He expressed His great joy and delight in receiving the Crucified One and crowning Him with glory and honor. And all the favors He has shown to His Son in His acceptance of the great atonement are shown to His people. . . . God loves them as He loves
His Son. . . . The seal of heaven has been affixed to Christ's atonement. His sacrifice is in every way satisfactory.—The Signs of the Times, Aug. 16, 1899.

7. Christ's Sacrifice Sufficient and Wholly Efficacious.—The sacrifice of Christ is sufficient; He made a whole, efficacious offering to God; the human effort without the merit of Christ, is worthless.—The Review and Herald, Aug. 19, 1890 (March 24, 1896).

8. Sacrifice Complete: Restoration Complete.—As the sacrifice in our behalf was complete, so our restoration from the defilement of sin is to be complete.—The Ministry of Healing, p. 451.

9. Completeness of Offering Beyond Conception.—His death on the cross of Calvary was the climax of His humiliation. His work as a redeemer is beyond finite conception. Only those who have died to self, whose lives are hid with Christ in God, can have any conception of the completeness of the offering made to save the fallen race.—Letter 196, 1901.

III. Incarnation Prerequisite to Atoning Sacrifice

1. Incarnation Necessary Before Becoming Ransom.—Christ has purchased the world by making a ransom for it, by taking human nature. He was not only the offering, but He Himself was the Offerer. He clothed His divinity with humanity, and voluntarily took upon Him human nature, making it possible to offer Himself as a ransom.—Manuscript 92, 1899.

2. Only Eternal Son Could Ransom Man.—Not one of the angels could have become surety for the human race: their life is God's; they could not surrender it. The angels all wear the yoke of obedience. They are the appointed messengers of Him who is the commander of all heaven. But Christ is equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. He could pay the ransom for man's freedom. He is the eternal, self-existing Son, on whom no yoke had come; and when God asked, Whom shall I send? He could reply, Here am I, send me. He could pledge Himself to become man's surety; for He could say that which the highest angel could not say, —I have power over My own life, power to lay it down, and . . . power to take it again.—The Youth's Instructor, June 21, 1900.

3. Only Christ's Life Sufficient to Rescue.—Man could not atone for man. His sinful, fallen condition would constitute him an imperfect offering, an atoning sacrifice of less value than Adam before his fall. God made man perfect and upright, and after his transgression there could be no sacrifice acceptable to God for him, unless the offering made should in value be superior to man as he was in his state of perfection and innocency.

The divine Son of God was the only sacrifice of sufficient value to fully satisfy the claims of God's perfect law. The angels were sinless, but of less value than the law of God. They were amenable to law. They were messengers to do the will of Christ, and before him to bow. They were created beings, and probationers. Upon Christ no requirements were laid. He had power to lay down his life, and to take it again. No obligation was laid upon him to undertake the work of atonement. It was a voluntary sacrifice that he made. His life was of sufficient value to rescue man from his fallen condition.—The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 2 (1877 ed.), pp. 9, 10.

IV. Spotless Christ Was Perfect Offering

1. Pure and Spotless One Became Sin Bearer.—Christ could not have done this work had He not been personally spotless. Only One who was Himself perfection could be at once the sin bearer and the sin pardon. He stands before the congregation of His redeemed as their sin-burdened, sin-stained surety, but it is their sins He is bearing. All through His life of humiliation and suffering, from the time that He was born an infant in Bethlehem till He hung on the cross of Calvary, and cried in a voice that shook the universe, "It is finished," the Saviour was pure and spotless.—Manuscript 165, 1899.

2. Death Valueless Without His Sinlessness.—Christ was without sin, else His life in human flesh and His death on the cross would have been of no more value in procuring grace for the sinner than the death of any other man. While He took upon Him humanity, it was a life taken into union with Deity. He could lay down His life as priest and also victim. He possessed in Himself power to lay it down and take it up again. He offered Himself without spot to God.—Manuscript 92, 1899.

3. Merits of Spotless Son Available Through Cross.—When He uttered the cry "It is finished," Christ knew that the battle was won. As a moral conqueror, He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? Not a son, not a daughter of Adam, but could now lay hold on the merits of the spotless Son of God, and say, Christ has died for me. He is my Saviour.—Manuscript 111, 1897.

4. Kinsman—Redeemer.—As the sinbearer, and priest and representative of man before God, He [Christ] entered into the life of hu-
manity, bearing our flesh and blood. The life is in the living, vital current of blood, which blood was given for the life of the world. Christ made a full atonement, giving His life as a ransom for us. He was born without a taint of sin, but came into the world in like manner as the human family. He did not have a mere semblance of a body, but He took human nature, participating in the life of humanity. According to the law Christ Himself gave, the forfeited inheritance was ransomed by the nearest of kin. Jesus Christ laid off His royal robe, His kingly crown, and clothed His divinity with humanity, in order to become a substitute and surety for humanity, that dying in humanity He might by His death destroy him who had the power of death. He could not have done this as God, but by coming as man Christ could die. By death He overcame death. The death of Christ bore to the death him who had the power of death, and opened the gates of the tomb for all who receive Him as their personal Saviour.—Letter 97, 1898.

V. Guilt and Punishment Transferred to Substitute

1. Sins Imputed to Divine Surety.—In dying upon the cross, He transferred the guilt from the person of the transgressor to that of the divine Substitute, through faith in Him as his personal Redeemer. The sins of a guilty world, which in figure are represented as “red as crimson,” were imputed to the divine Surety.—Manuscript 84a, 1897.

2. Sinless Son Treated as Transgressor.—The holy Son of God has no sins or griefs of His own to bear: He was bearing the griefs of others; for on Him was laid the iniquity of us all. Through divine sympathy He connects Himself with man, and as the representative of the race He submits to be treated as a transgressor. He looks into the abyss of woe opened for us by our sins, and proposes to bridge the gulf of man’s separation from God.—Bible Echo and Signs of the Times, Aug. 1, 1892.

3. Weight of World’s Guilt Rested on Christ.—He was overwhelmed with horror at the fearful work that sin had wrought. His burden of guilt, because of man’s transgression of the Father’s law, was so great that human nature was inadequate to bear it. The sufferings of martyrs can bear no comparison with the agony of Christ. The divine presence was with them in their sufferings; but the Father’s face was hidden from His dear Son.—Ibid.

4. Retributive Justice Upon Man’s Substitute.—In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ suffered in man’s stead. and the human nature of the Son of God staggered under the terrible horror of the guilt of sin... The power that inflicted retributive justice upon man’s substitute and surety, was the power that sustained and upheld the suffering One under the tremendous weight of wrath that would have fallen upon a sinful world. Christ was suffering the death that was pronounced upon the transgressors of God’s law.—Manuscript 85, 1895.

5. Christ Sustained by Joy of Ransoming.—What sustained the Son of God in His betrayal and trial? He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. He caught a view of the expanse of eternity and saw the happiness of those who through His humiliation should receive pardon and everlasting life. He was wounded for their transgressions, bruised for their iniquities. The chastisement of their peace was upon Him, and with His stripes they were healed. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.—Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 43, 44.

VI. Christ Both Sacrificial Offering and Officiating Priest

1. Infinite Sufficiency of Offerer and Offering.—The infinite sufficiency of Christ is demonstrated by His bearing the sins of the whole world. He occupies the double position of offerer and of offering, of priest and of victim. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. “The prince of this world cometh,” He declares, “and findeth nothing in Me.” He was a Lamb without blemish, and without spot.—Letter 192, 1906.

2. Christ Both Sacrifice and Officiating Priest.—As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of a common priest, so Christ emptied Himself, and took the form of a servant, and offered the sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim.—The Southern Watchman, Aug. 6, 1903.

VII. Cross the Sole Means of Atonement

1. Cross Is Means of Man’s Atonement.—The cross must occupy the central place because it is the means of man’s atonement and because of the influence it exerts on every part of the divine government.—Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 236.

2. Atonement Heaven-ordained Remedy for Sin.—The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned: it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the heaven-ordained means by which the righteous-
ness of Christ may be not only upon us, but in our hearts and characters.—Letter 406, 1906.

3. MUST SUFFER PUBLIC DEATH ON CROSS.—Without shedding of blood there is no remission for sin. He must suffer the agony of a public death on the cross, that witness of it might be borne without the shadow of a doubt.—Manuscript 101, 1897.

4. NO PARDON FOR SIN WITHOUT ATONEMENT.—Adam listened to the words of the tempter, and yielding to his insinuations, fell into sin. Why was not the death penalty at once enforced in his case?—Because a ransom was found. God's only begotten Son volunteered to take the sin of man upon Himself, and to make an atonement for the fallen race. There could have been no pardon for sin had this atonement not been made. Had God pardoned Adam's sin without an atonement, sin would have been immortalized, and would have been perpetuated with a boldness that would have been without restraint.—The Review and Herald, April 28, 1901.

5. GOD'S MEANS OF WINNING MEN BACK.—In the counsels of heaven the cross was ordained as the means of atonement. This was to be God's means of winning men to Him. Christ came to this earth to show that in humanity He could keep the holy law of God.—Manuscript 165, 1899.


VIII. Atoning Provisions Embrace Mankind

1. HUMAN RACE EMBRACED IN ATONEMENT PROVISION.—Christ's atonement includes the whole human family. No one, high or low, rich or poor, free or bond, has been left out of the plan of redemption.—Letter 106, 1900.

2. NOT SIMPLY FOR JEWS BUT ALL MANKIND.—Christ suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, for Calvary was outside the city walls. This was to show that He died, not for the Hebrews alone, but for all mankind. He proclaims to a fallen world that He is their Redeemer, and urges them to accept the salvation He offers.—The Watchman, Sept. 4, 1906.

3. PAID PENALTY FOR ALL WROGNOERS.—As the high priest sprinkled the warm blood upon the mercy-seat while the fragrant cloud of incense ascended before God, so, while we confess our sins and plead the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, our prayers are to ascend to heaven, fragrant with the merits of our Saviour's character. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we are to remember that there is One who can take away sin, and who is willing and anxious to save the sinner. With His own blood He paid the penalty for all wrong-doers.—The Review and Herald, Sept. 29, 1896.

4. ATONEMENT AMPLE TO PROVIDE LIFE FOR ALL.—Jesus refused [after the resurrection] to receive the homage of His people until He had the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father. He ascended to the heavenly courts, and from God Himself heard the assurance that His atonement for the sins of men had been ample, that through His blood all might gain eternal life.—The Desire of Ages, p. 790.

5. CHRIST’S BLOOD ATONES FOR WORLD’S SIN.—The sins of the people were transferred in figure to the officiating priest, who was a mediator for the people. The priest could not himself become an offering for sin, and make an atonement with his life, for he was also a sinner. Therefore, instead of suffering death himself, he killed a lamb without blemish: the penalty of sin was transferred to the innocent beast, which thus became his immediate substitute, and typified the perfect offering of Jesus Christ. Through the blood of this victim, man looked forward by faith to the blood of Christ which would atone for the sins of the world.—The Signs of the Times, March 14, 1878.

IX. Manifold Results of the Atonement

1. ATONEMENT BROKE DOWN INTERCEPTIVE BARRIERS.—The atonement of Christ sealed forever the everlasting covenant of grace. It was the fulfilling of every condition upon which God suspended the free communication of grace to the human family. Every barrier was then broken down which intercepted the freest fulness of the exercise of grace, mercy, peace and love to the most guilty of Adam's race.—Manuscript 92, 1899.

2. CONTRITE RECEIVE PARDON FULL AND FREE.—In our behalf He died on the cross of Calvary. He has paid the price. Justice is satisfied. Those who believe in Christ, those who realize that they are sinners, and that as sinners they must confess their sins, will receive pardon full and free.—Letter 52, 1906.

3. REESTABLISHES COMMUNION SEVERED BY SIN.—By transgression man was severed from God, the communion between them was broken, but Jesus Christ died upon the cross of Calvary, bearing in His body the sins of the whole world; and the gulf between heaven and earth was bridged by that cross. Christ leads men to the gulf, and points to the bridge by which it is spanned, saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself. and take up his cross
daily, and follow me." God gives us a probation in which we may prove whether or not we will be loyal to Him.—Manuscript 21, 1895.

4. ATONING SACRIFICE BRINGS PEACE, COMFORT, HOPE.—The atoning sacrifice seen through faith brings peace and comfort and hope to the trembling soul weighed down beneath the sense of guilt. The law of God is the detector of sin, and as the sinner is drawn to the dying Christ, he sees the grievous character of sin, and repents and lays hold on the remedy, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.—The Review and Herald, Sept. 2, 1890.

5. OUTCASTS BECOME SONS AND HEIRS.—Thus, through the crucifixion of Christ, human beings are reconciled to God. Christ adopts the outcasts, and they become His special care, members of the family of God, because they have accepted His Son as their Saviour. To them is given power to become the sons of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. They gain an intelligent knowledge of what Christ is to them and of the blessings they may receive as members of the Lord's family. And in His infinite condescension God is pleased to stand to them in the relation of Father.—Letter 255, 1904.

6. CLAIMS REDEEMED AS PURCHASED POSSESSION.—The world does not acknowledge that, at an infinite cost, Christ has purchased the human race. They do not acknowledge that by creation and by redemption He holds a just claim to every human being. But as the Redeemer of the fallen race, He has been given the deed of possession, which entitles Him to claim them as His property.—Letter 136, 1902.

7. RANSOM ASSURES ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS.—Christ pledged Himself to become his substitute and surety, giving man a second trial. When man transgressed even the smallest precept of Jehovah, it was disobedience just the same as though the test were larger. But how is the grace, mercy, and love provided! The divinity of Christ undertook to bear the sins of the transgressor. This ransom is on solid ground; this pledged peace is for the heart that receives Jesus Christ. And in receiving Him by faith we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.—Manuscript 114, 1897.

8. CROSS THREW OPEN GATES OF PARADISE.—Christ received His death wound, which was the trophy of His victory, and the victory of all who believe in Him. These wounds annihilated the power of Satan over every loyal, believing subject in Jesus Christ. By the suffering and death of Christ, human intelligences, fallen because of the sin of Adam, are through their acceptance of Christ and faith in Him, elevated to become heirs of immortality and an eternal weight of glory. The gates of the heavenly Paradise are thrown open to the inhabitants of this fallen world. Through faith in the righteousness of Christ, rebels against the law of God may lay hold upon the Infinite, and become partakers of everlasting life.—Letter 103, 1894.

9. BELIEVERS WILL INHABIT HEAVENLY HOME.—"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." This is the crisis of the world. If I become the propitiation for the world, it will be lighted up. The defaced image of God will be reproduced and restored, and a family of believing saints will finally inhabit the heavenly home. This is the result of the crucifixion of Christ and the restoration of the world.—Manuscript 33, 1897.

10. RANSOMER BECOMES ALL-POWERFUL HELPER.—Our ransom has been paid by our Saviour. No one need be enslaved by Satan. Christ stands before us as our divine example, our all powerful Helper. We have been bought with a price that it is impossible to compute. Who can measure the goodness and mercy of redeeming love?—Manuscript 76, 1903.

11. FAVORS TO SON GIVEN TO PEOPLE.—God testified to the great work of atonement in reconciling the world to Himself, by giving Christ's followers a true understanding of the kingdom which He was establishing upon the earth, the foundation of which His own hand had laid.

The Father gave all honor to His Son, seating Him at His right hand, far above all principalities and power. He expressed His great joy and delight in receiving the Crucified One, and crowning Him with glory and honor. And all the favors He has shown to His Son in His acceptance of the great atonement are shown to His people. Those who have united their interests in love with Christ are accepted in the Beloved. They suffer with Christ, and His glorification is of great interest to them, because they are accepted in Him. God loves them as He loves His Son.—The Signs of the Times, Aug. 16, 1899.

X. Righteousness Provided Through Atonement

1. IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH ATONING SACRIFICE.—It was evident to him that the law did not abate one jot of its justice, but through the atoning sacrifice, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, the repentant sinner stands justified before the law.

Christ bore the penalty that would have fallen
upon the transgressor; and through faith the helpless, hopeless sinner becomes a partaker of the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust. Christ imputes His perfection and righteousness to the believing sinner when he does not continue in sin, but turns from transgression to obedience of the commandments.—The Review and Herald, May 23, 1899.

2. CALVARY PROVIDES SANCTIFICATION OF GRACE.—The only One who could with hope approach God in humanity was the only begotten Son of God. That sinful, repentant human beings might be received by the Father, and clothed with the robe of righteousness, Christ came to the earth, and made an offering of such value that He redeemed the race. Through the sacrifice made on Calvary is offered to everyone the sanctification of grace.—Letter 67, 1902.

3. HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR OUR SINS.—It is only through faith in Christ that sinners may have the righteousness of Christ imputed unto them, and that they may be “made the righteousness of God in him.” Our sins were laid on Christ, punished in Christ, put away by Christ, in order that His righteousness might be imputed to us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Although sin was charged to His account on our behalf, yet He remained perfectly sinless.—The Signs of the Times, May 30, 1895.

4. CROSS PROVIDES FOR COMPLETE RIGHTEOUSNESS.—The Lord made a full and complete sacrifice upon the cross, the shameful cross, that men might be complete in the great and precious gift of His righteousness. We have God’s pledge that He will bind men closely to His great heart of infinite love in the bonds of the new covenant of grace. All who will give up their hope of paying for their salvation, or earning it, and will come to Jesus just as they are, unworthy, sinful, and fall upon His merits, holding in their plea the pledged word of His law to pardon the transgressor of His law, confessing their sins and seeking pardon, will find full and free salvation.—Letter 148, 1897.

XI. Redemptive Price Completely Paid on Calvary

1. RANSOM PRICE PAID ON CROSS.—The ransom paid by Christ—the atonement on the cross—is ever before them.—Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 190.

2. CHRIST PAID REDemption Price of Race.—On the cross of Calvary He paid the redemption price of the race. And thus He gained the right to rescue the captives from the grasp of the great deceiver, who by a lie framed against the government of God, caused the fall of man, and who thus forfeited all claim to be called a loyal subject of God’s kingdom.

Satan refused to let his captives go. He held them as his subjects because of their belief of his lie. He had thus become their jailor. But he had no right to demand that a price be paid for them; because he had not obtained possession of them by lawful conquest, but under false pretense.

God, being the creditor, had a right to make any provision for the redemption of human beings. Justice demanded that a certain price be paid. The Son of God was the only One who could pay this price. He volunteered to come to this earth and pass over the ground where Adam fell. He came as the redeemer of the lost race, to conquer the wily foe, and by His steadfast allegiance to right, to save all who should accept Him as their Saviour.—Letter 20, 1903.

3. VASTNESS OF REDEMPTIVE PROVISIONS.—Christ alone could bear the message of man’s deliverance. He came with a full and complete ransom. He came to bring life and immortality within the reach of the fallen race. As the Life-giver, He assumed our nature, that He might reveal the character of God, and stamp His image on all who would receive Him. He became man that through His infinite sacrifice God might receive the homage of the restored race. . . . The science of redemption is as high as heaven, and its value is infinite. This truth is so broad, so deep, so high, that beside it all the wisdom of earth’s wisest men sinks into insignificance. In comparison with the knowledge of God, all human knowledge is as chaff. And the way of salvation can be made known only by God.—Manuscript 69, 1897.

4. RANSOMER RESCUES FROM DEATH SENTENCE.—All that God and Christ could do has been done to save sinners. Transgression placed the whole world in jeopardy, under the death-sentence. But in heaven there was heard a voice saying, I have found a ransom. Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for fallen man. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Christ gave Himself as a ransom. He laid aside His kingly crown, and stepped down from His high command over all heaven, clothing His divinity with humanity that He might carry all the infirmities and bear all the temptations of humanity.—Letter 22, 1900.

(Continued next month)
An Eastern Shepherd

An Eastern shepherd led his sheep toward a river's brink,
But when they saw the stream ahead their hearts began to shrink;
And though the shepherd went across in view of all the sheep,
They did not dare to follow him and ford the waters deep.

And so he took a little lamb right from its mother's side;
He clasped it in his shelt'ring arm and with it crossed the tide.
The mother, missing what she loved, was eager now to gain
The distant shore, that she might find her precious lamb again.

When she had made her way across and thus the stream was passed,
The other sheep soon followed her till all had crossed at last.
She found the lamb which she had lost, within the shepherd's care;
And he had used her little one in leading many there.

Oh, mother, has your little lamb been carried from your side?
The Shepherd would make sure that you will in His love abide.
Thus when the storms of life are o'er and Jordan has been crossed,
You'll find upon the other shore the lamb which you have lost.

—Author Unknown.
The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts both mention certain taxation laws levied by Augustus Caesar, the Roman emperor in power at the time of the birth of our Lord. There are some problems, however, in connection with the dates of these decrees and the events related to them. The purpose of this article is to show how archeological discoveries might be used to explain some of these problems and substantiate the Biblical record.

The information given in Luke 2:1, 2 is summarized thus: (1) An imperial decree by Augustus Caesar to tax all the world was issued during the last few years of Herod the Great, sometime before 4 B.C. The emperor had previously inaugurated a series of enrollments in Egypt, but the enrollment in Luke’s account was for “all the world.” (2) During that period the governor of Syria was called Cyrenius, or Quirinius, according to a better Latin manuscript.

The problems involved are these: (1) No historical document outside this passage in Luke exists to indicate that such a decree was issued at that time. (2) During the reign of Herod the Great, Palestine was considered autonomous, and a decree by the Roman emperor would not affect it directly. (3) The Roman governor for Syria from 9 to 6 B.C. was Sentius Saturninus, and Cyrenius did not become governor of Syria until A.D. 6.

Because of these facts, critics have questioned the authenticity of Luke’s writings. Commentaries have been written with the assumption that Luke’s chronology is completely valueless, and some have gone even further, accusing Luke of fabricating the whole story to prove that Christ came out of Bethlehem. The fulfillment of such condition was believed to be the sign of the Messiah.

Herod’s Decree

The assumption that a taxation decree was not issued during the latter part of Herod’s reign because such a statement does not occur in secular historical writings, is producing the evidence of silence, which is weak and dangerous to apply. It is obvious that when certain facts are not mentioned in some sources it does not necessarily mean that they did not take place.

Recently and independently some scholars announced the discovery of papyri in Egypt that indicated that periodical tax enrollments were practiced in Egypt under the Roman Empire. The term in Greek for such a tax enrollment, or census of the people, as indicated by the Egyptian sources, was Apographai, which Luke had used. These periodical enrollments came every fourteen years. Some written documents still existing established these enrollments at each fourteen year interval from A.D. 76, 90, 104 to A.D. 230. Of course, the system of periodical enrollments began before A.D. 76. Josephus mentions an enrollment made by Augustus Caesar “in thirty-seventh year of Caesar’s victory over Antony at Actium” which date is equivalent to A.D. 6 (Antiquities xvii. 2. 1). There are
also clear indications that this system was taken over from the Egyptian system already referred to. Scholars seem to agree that it was Augustus Caesar who instituted tax enrollments in the Roman Empire.

Augustus Caesar received the tribunitial power on December 22, 23 B.C., and his imperial title was reckoned from that date. Some suggest that this year marked the beginning of the periodic enrollment system so well known during the next two centuries. However, an enrollment (Roman citizens only) took place as early as 28 B.C. In later times these enumerations of the empire were formed into a pattern that has been styled the "Fourteen-Years-Cycle." At the first initiation the period was not a precise number of years. That came into being later. William Mitchell Ramsay speaks of this "Fourteen-Years-Cycle" as beginning a short time prior to the birth of our Lord, or "somewhere between 8 and 5 B.C." Then he adds:

"On the system that obtained in Egypt, the year 9 B.C. would be the beginning of the second period; and the scanty evidence that exists about the general survey of the empire, shows that an enrollment according to the Cycle is not likely to have been made until the beginning of the second period. We find, then, that the year 8 B.C. was the one in which the first 'enrolment' would naturally begin to be made, if a Cycle was observed; for this enrolment was intended, as has been stated already, to include all children born in 9 B.C."—Ramsay, Was Christ Born at Bethlehem? (2d ed., Hodder and Stoughton, London), p. 154.

He further emphasizes that "8 B.C. was a marked year in the administration of the city of Rome. In that year, Augustus gave Rome a new municipal organisation, dividing it into regions and quarters."—Ibid., p. 158.

Beginning with A.D. 6, the year indicated by Josephus for an enrollment by Augustus Caesar, the fourteen-year cycle in unbroken sequence would occur on the following dates: A.D. 6, 20, 34, 48, 62, 76, 90, 104, 118, 132, 146, 160, 174, 188, 202, 216, 230.

Historians also record the fact that in A.D. 14 another accounting was made, but this, it seems, was of Roman citizens only (Ramsay, op. cit., p. 161). Certain Christian writers mention an enrollment in 9 B.C. Concerning this particular date 9-8 is frequently given. Some declare that Augustus Caesar might well have issued the decree in that year, but that it did not come into effect in Palestine until later. In any case, it seems that this was the first decree that would affect Greater Syria, including Palestine. Others declare that Palestine itself enjoyed a kind of semi-independence under Herod the Great, and that the decree would not affect Herod's territory until such time as Herod himself deemed it wise to bring it into effect.

The later relationship between Herod and Caesar is revealed by Josephus in Antiquities xvi. 9.3, where he records a complaint from an Arabian king to Caesar against Herod, and this caused Caesar to dispatch a message to Herod that whereas hitherto he had treated the Jewish king as a friend, he would henceforth treat him as a subject. This indicates that Augustus Caesar might have changed Herod's status near the end of his reign, and to establish his orders he might well have forced his taxation decree upon Palestine also.

If that be the case, Herod was not the man to accept this easily. It could well be that he visited Rome and made arrangements by which the effect of the decree was postponed in Palestine, on the ground that the Jews would revolt. Scholars such as Ramsay reason why, on those grounds, a request would not be granted. (See Ramsay, op cit., pp. 182, 183.) This would account for the delay in carrying out the taxation decree in Palestine until a few years after 9/8 B.C. Some put the date for the enforcement of this decree about 7/6 B.C., making the date of Christ's birth 6 B.C. Others prefer to take the year 5 B.C. for Christ's birth, which is the year before Herod's death. There is no clear evidence to indicate how long Herod succeeded in postponing the enforcement of the taxing of Palestine.

The problem of Cyrenius, the governor of Syria, is not actually so complicated as it might appear. After studying all the remaining records of Cyrenius, scholars now know that he was consul in 12 B.C., his governing of Syria began in A.D. 6, his prosecution of his former wife took place in A.D. 20, and his death in A.D. 21. But after his consulship he was assigned the task of commanding the Roman armies in Syria and conquering the Homonadenses. From all indications his job as army commander in Syria could not have been later than 5 to 3 B.C., and may have been earlier.

The duties of Cyrenius as army commander may entitle him to be called dux in Latin. The Greek equivalent for this is correctly given hegemon, as Luke has it. There is a case in Roman history in which the administration of the foreign orders of the empire was assigned to the military commander, and the civil and internal affairs to the local governor (Ramsay, op. cit., pp. 237-239). So, by this analogy, could it not be that Cyrenius, while acting as military commander in Syria just before Herod's...
death. was assigned the task of enforcing the tax decree in Palestine? This would make Luke accurate in every statement of his narrative. W. M. Ramsay believes that Luke attached the highest importance to this part of the narrative, and that he worked it out with peculiar care.

The information given in Acts 5:35-37 is this: (1) Gamaliel tells the Jewish Council to let the apostles alone. (2) During the taxation a certain Judas the Galilean rose up and perished with his followers. (3) Before the days of Judas the Galilean a certain Theudas rose up too, and was killed, and about four hundred of his followers were scattered. The date of Gamaliel’s speech is estimated around A.D. 36. Josephus mentions the rise of Judas the Galilean during the time of the taxation of A.D. 6. (Antiquities xviii. 1. 1, 6) and describes him much the same as does Luke’s narrative. He also mentions Theudas with nearly the same description as Luke, but he places him during the time of Fadus, the procurator of Judea, who was in office in A.D. 46 (Antiquities xx. 5. 1).

It is accepted by scholars that the taxation of Acts 5:37 is not the taxation at the birth of Christ, but a later one. So Josephus agrees with Luke concerning the chronology of Judas the Galilean, and the date A.D. 6 suits both narratives.

The big problem involved here is the time of Theudas. Luke puts him before Judas the Galilean, or before A.D. 6, whereas Josephus places him nearly ten years after Gamaliel’s speech. This doubles the problem because, according to Luke, Theudas is not only misplaced from his time by about half a century, but Gamaliel is made to speak about a person who rose ten years after his time. Some critics have used this argument, and directed severe attacks against Luke. They have accused him not only of misrepresenting historical facts but also of inventing narratives and attributing them to others.

Bible scholars who have studied this topic have faced a real problem. The question could be asked in this way: Why is the misplacement of Theudas attributed to Luke and not to Josephus, who wrote later than Luke? Luke, having lived nearer to the time of the event mentioned, would not be so likely to make a mistake as Josephus, who lived later. In the meantime, scholars have never accepted all the narratives of Josephus as being absolutely accurate. He wrote many things that later on were proved incorrect by archeological discoveries. So if one is to be accused of inaccuracy, Josephus would most likely be the one.

On the other hand, if, judging by the details of the narrative about Theudas in Josephus, it seems hard to attribute a mistake to him in this particular story, Biblical scholars think that Theudas of Luke was a different person from the Theudas of Josephus. Theudas was a common Jewish name, and anyone would concede the possibility of a different Theudas having lived before A.D. 6. If so, the Luke narrative might well have been speaking of him. Scholars offer this suggestion as a plausible solution, but it is difficult to present any evidence to support this idea. Ramsay himself puts it this way: “The result is, at present, disappointing. We have to leave the difficulty unsolved. We must hope for the discovery of further evidence.”—Was Christ Born at Bethlehem? p. 259.

The problem did not stop at that point, however, for archeological discoveries may yet shed some light upon the backgrounds of this story. Very recently the Christian world has been happy to welcome the Dead Sea scrolls, discovered in the latter part of 1947. Since these discoveries have attracted the attention of all, little enthusiasm has been given to the non-Biblical finds. From these scrolls it has been learned that a Jewish community had lived north of the Dead Sea in the caves of the Valley of Qumran. Living in that region as a religious sect, they preserved the Biblical scrolls mentioned here. But they had their own writings and their own organization. They had a book for themselves called the Manual of Discipline, which explains their way of life. A careful study of this Qumran Jewish sect shows that they reveal numerous points of similarity to the Essenes mentioned by Josephus (Antiquities xviii. 1. 5). They had a leader called “the Teacher of Righteousness,” who seems to have organized them as a group. Differences of opinion with regard to the death of this “Teacher of Righteousness” exist among scholars, but many have dated the rise of this Jewish sect between 100 B.C. and 40 B.C. The time of Alexander Janneaus, however, seems well attested.

Unfortunately, the name of this leader is not disclosed, but from his title, “the Teacher of Righteousness,” he must have made himself somebody, just as Luke described Theudas (Acts 5:36). He is said to have been persecuted and swallowed up shortly after the organization of the community. This puts him earlier than Judas the Galilean, whom Luke mentions.

His followers, numbering about four to six hundred according to estimates, were scattered, and some of them went to Damascus. This seems to fit exactly into the narrative of Luke about Theudas (Acts 5:36).

(Continued on page 45)
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Old Testament Usage of the Hebrew Word Sur, "Rock"

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The first instance of the use of this word in the Old Testament is in Exodus 17:6, where it occurs twice. The "rock" in this instance was the one upon which God said He would take His stand, and which Moses should strike. The result of this was the flow of water from that rock.

The situation here was a very dramatic one. Under God's guidance the people had arrived at Rephidim, which was to be the locale of a trial for them, followed by a miraculous manifestation of divine mercy. The region in which the Israelites found themselves was waterless. The realization of this must have brought great consternation to the hearts of all. The pangs of thirst are an intolerable torture, especially in desert country. When the last drop of water had been consumed, the people must have been near panic. Moses, finding himself in great straits, did the only sensible thing—he took his problem to God. The Lord exhibited great mercy with no manifestation of annoyance toward His people who had doubted Him: "He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers" (Ps. 78:15, 16).

Inasmuch as no mass of rock of itself can supply a flow of drinking water for anyone, the apostle Paul explains this miracle by the statement that the children of Israel "were drinking [imperfect tense] out of a spiritual rock that was following along [present participle]; and that rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4, literal translation). The Rock that really gave the water was the Lord, "the mighty One [literally, "Rock," שָׁרָא of Israel" (Isa. 30:29).

The words of Paul make an interesting comparison with the words of Christ in John 7:37, 38. It was on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, a day of solemn assembly and Sabbath rest. Jesus, who usually sat while teaching, on this occasion stood up. The circumstances were probably in connection with the libation that was made each morning of the sacred week with water from the pool of Siloam. The priest, in company with the people, went to the pool of Siloam, from which he filled a golden pitcher with water. This was brought into the court of the Temple with tremendous rejoicing by the people. The priest ascended the altar of burnt offering; the people cried out for him to pour out the libation. This he did as the people sang the words of Isaiah 12:3, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." This was a reminder of the giving of water in the desert from the rock, which was emblematic of Christ. This action of Jesus was nothing new. He was accustomed to using festivals as occasions to show their realization in His own person. For example: He is the true Temple (John 2), the fulfillment of the brazen serpent (ch. 3), the true bread (ch. 6), the true rock (ch. 7) from which flow the waters of life. To the thirsty one Jesus is the rock that is the source of living waters, the antitype of the rock at Meribah.

From the time of this first usage of שָׁרָא, "rock," in Exodus 17:6, the word is given as a character name of Jehovah:

"He is the Rock" (Deut. 32:4).
"God... the Rock of his salvation" (verse 15).
"The Rock that begat thee... God" (verse 18).
"Their Rock... the Lord" (verse 30).
"Our Rock" (verse 31).
“The God of my rock” (2 Sam. 22:3).
“Who is a rock, save our God?” (verse 32).
“The God of the rock of my salvation” (verse 47).
“The Rock of Israel” (2 Sam. 23:3).
“The Lord is my rock”; “my God, my strength”—sur, “rock” (Ps. 18:2; Hebrew Bible, verse 3).
“Who is a rock save our God?” (Ps. 18:31; Heb., verse 32).
“Blessed be my rock” (Ps. 18:46; Heb., verse 47).
“O Lord, my strength [sur, “rock”], and my redeemer” (Ps. 19:14; Heb., verse 15).
“O Lord my rock” (Ps. 28:1).
“He only is my rock”; “the rock of my strength” (Ps. 62:2, 6, 7; Heb., verses 3, 7, 8).
“God is the strength [sur, “rock”] of my heart” (Ps. 73:20).
“God was their rock” (Ps. 78:55).
See also Ps. 81:16 (Heb., verse 17); 89:26 (Heb., verse 27); 94:22; 95:1; 144:1 (strength, sur, “rock”).
“The God of thy salvation . . . the rock of thy strength” (Isa. 17:10).
“In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength” (sur, “rock,” literally, “In the Lord Jehovah [is] the Rock of ages” [Isa. 26:4]).
Furthermore, this word is so exclusively used to describe God in His saving relation to men as their refuge, strength, and salvation, that it is never given in the Old Testament in this sense to describe a man. In harmony with this fact, we find the word sur embodied in compound names of the leaders of Israel, extolling God: Eliur, “my God is a Rock”; Zurishaddai, “the Almighty is my Rock”; Pedahur, “redeemed by the Rock” (Num. 1:5, 6, 10).

The following points are thus established:
1. Sur, “rock,” is used as a symbol of the Lord to set forth His personal relation to men in the economy of the plan of salvation.
2. Because of this fact, it is never so used to describe a man’s position or his relation to other men.
3. Therefore, in Jewish thinking, the Rock (sur) referred particularly to the Lord as Saviour; it could not refer to a man in any such capacity.

The Translation of Sur, “Rock,” in the Septuagint

The Greek translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew was presumably done at Alexandria, Egypt, in the third century before Christ, and is known as the Septuagint (LXX). In Alexandria, the Greek language had become the medium of the written and spoken communication of the cosmopolitan inhabitants. The dialect used and designated as the Alexandrian dialect is the one into which the Old Testament was translated by Jewish scholars.

The authors carried and used the Septuagint as their textbook. Both Jews and Christians regarded it as inspired. Modern critics hold varying views of it. In any case, it is of the...
greatest value to the Bible student because it sets forth the religious usage of Greek words used in translating Hebrew words in the time of Christ and the apostles; this, in turn, gives us great help in understanding the Greek of the New Testament. It has been rightly called "a sort of dictionary in which every N.T. word and phrase ought to be looked out, in order that its usage in Judeo-Greek might be ascertained. . . . It may thus be regarded as a linguistic bridge spanning the gulf which separated Moses from Christ."—R. B. GIRDLESTONE, Synonyms of the Old Testament, pp. 10, 11. So we turn to the Septuagint to see how σὺρ, "rock," is translated, as this will give us the Jewish understanding of Greek in the time of Christ and the apostles in respect to this Hebrew Old Testament word:

Isa. 17:6, "... on the rock [πέτρα] ... and thou shalt smite the rock [πέτρα]." The apostle Paul in his explanation in 1 Corinthians 10:4, making the application to Christ, uses the same Greek word πέτρα as is given here in the LXX.

Deut. 32:4, "God [Θεός], his works are true." Here the Jewish scholars translated "rock" (sur) by Θεός, the Greek word for "God."

Deut. 32:15, "God . . . and departed from God his Saviour [Θεου σῶτερ αὐτου]." The Hebrew words for "Rock of his salvation" are translated in Greek by "God, his Saviour."

Deut. 32:18, "God that begot thee"—sur, "Rock," translated by Θεός in the LXX.

Deut. 32:31, "Not as our God"—sur, translated by Θεός.

1 Sam. 2:2, "There is none righteous as our God"—sur, translated by Θεός.

2 Sam. 22:2, "O Lord, my Rock"—sur, translated by the Greek feminine noun πέτρα, "rock."

2 Sam. 22:32, "Who will be a Creator except our God?"—sur, translated by κτιστής in the LXX.

2 Sam. 22:47, "Blessed be my guardian [sur] ... my strong keeper [sur]." In both instances sur is translated by φυλάξ, referring to God.

2 Sam. 23:3, "The God of Israel says, A watchman out of Israel spoke"—sur, translated in the LXX by φυλάξ.

Ps. 18:2, "My God is my helper"—sur, translated by βοήθος.

Ps. 18:31, "Who is a God except our God?"—sur, translated by Θεός.

Ps. 18:46, "Blessed be my God"—sur, translated by Θεός.

Ps. 19:14, "O Lord, my helper—sur, translated by βοήθος.

Ps. 28:1, "My God"—sur, translated by Θεός.

Ps. 31:2, "Be thou to me for a protecting God"—sur, translated by Θεός.

Ps. 62:2, 6, 7, "God"—sur, in each verse translated by Θεός.

Ps. 73:26, "God is the strength of my heart"—sur, here translated "strength" in English, is actually omitted by the Greek version.

Ps. 78:35, "God was their helper"—sur, translated by βοήθος.

Ps. 81:16, "Rock"—sur, translated by πέτρα.

Ps. 89:26, "Helper of my salvation"—sur, translated by αντιλέπτωρ, "helper," "protector."

Ps. 94:22, "My God the helper of my hope"—sur, translated by βοήθος.

Ps. 95:1, "To God our Saviour"—sur, translated by Θεός.

 Isa. 26:4, "The great, the eternal God"—sur, translated by Θεός, though, as noted above, the King James Version translation is "everlasting strength," literally, "the Rock of ages."

 Isa. 30:29, "The God of Israel"—sur, translated in the LXX by Θεός.

Thus we find that sur, "rock," which is used as a character name only of the Lord in the Old Testament, is translated in the LXX by the Greek words Θεός, "God"; κτιστής, "Creator"; φυλάξ, "guardian," "watchman"; βοήθος, "helper"; αντιλέπτορ, "protector"; and πέτρα, "rock," the feminine noun. Furthermore, this word is never translated by πέτρας, the Grecized masculine form that may be applied to a man. In each case the reference is to the Divine Person; in no case is the reference to a man. That is to say, the Jewish translators of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek could think of the Rock as referring only to the Lord; and when they translated it by the Greek word for "rock," they used the feminine noun πέτρα, and not the masculine πέτρας. Therefore the Rock, πέτρα, the feminine noun used in the Septuagint as a translation of sur, in Jewish thinking can only be a character name of God, as is sur in the Hebrew Old Testament.

Application to Matthew 16:18

"Moreover, I also say to thee that thou art Peter [Πέτρος], and upon this rock [πέτρα] I shall build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not overpower her" (Matt. 16:18, literal translation).

In the preceding verses Peter had just made the tremendous statement in respect to Christ, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," thus publicly testifying of His divinity, His godhead. Now Jesus in turn makes a statement that acknowledges Peter, for the apostle's statement emphasizes that he was controlled by the Holy Spirit when he revealed the truth of the Messiahship and Sonship of Christ. Then
Jesus goes on to imply that the name “Peter” (Greek Petros, masculine noun), suggests a metaphorical character name for the truth revealed to the apostle, namely, the “rock,” petra, feminine noun, as metaphorically used in the Old Testament of the Lord. So Jesus said, “Thou art Peter [masculine], and upon this rock [feminine] will I build my church.” Nothing could be more logical and natural, for Jesus and the apostles were fully aware of the usage of sur in the Hebrew Old Testament as a character name of Deity; they were equally acquainted with the fact that sur is never translated by Petros, a man’s name, in the Greek version, but by petra, the feminine noun used in a figure of speech of Jehovah as Lord. With their Jewish background of Old Testament usage, they simply could not make any other application. This is greatly stressed by tauta te petra, “this very rock,” all three words being feminine gender in contradistinction to Petros, masculine. The church of God rests upon the petra, the rock symbolizing the deity and sonship of Jesus Christ, a truth that hell cannot overpower, and not upon Petros, a Grecized masculine form applicable only to men, and never applied to Divinity.

**Further Witness of the New Testament on Petra**

In Matthew 7:24 the Lord speaks of the wise man who “built his house upon a rock [literally, “on the rock”]** (tên petran, feminine noun). The experiences that the man encountered did not harm his house, “for it had been founded on the rock” (tên petran; v. 25, literal translation of last part). The Lord describes this person as phronimos, “practically wise, sensible, prudent.” It is from the root phrén, “mind,” and so refers to a person who thinks before he begins to act.

It is evident from this incident that the Lord desires all men to be practically sensible. And the wisdom of what this sensible person did is evident from the fact that nothing of the fierce storms of life in any way harmed the man’s building, because it was built upon “the rock.” In both uses of this Greek word petra, here in verses 21 and 25, the Greek has the definite article, “the rock.” This is also true of Luke 6:48. The article should not have been omitted in the King James Version.

Matthew 7:25 speaks of very severe storm conditions that swept over the man’s building, “but it did not fall.” What the apostle really says is that it remained firmly established, solidly set on its rock foundation. All the credit for this must be attributed to the rock; it is the

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rock that proved to be the salvation of the house. Psalm 18:2 and Isaiah 28:16 are a wonderful corroboration of this experience. "The Rock (petra) can refer to none other than the Divine Person, not to any man, which requires "Petros," the Grecized masculine form.

The apostle Paul adds his testimony: "As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. 9:33). This stone is Christ; it is laid in Zion; it is confirmed in Isaiah 8:14; 28:16, which Paul here quotes. The stone is described as "a stone of stumbling." This stone, which caused the Jewish nation to become terribly upset and at which they stumbled, is none other than Christ. Lack of faith on the part of Israel caused the nation to stumble, to fail to acknowledge Him.

The apostle further describes this stone as a rock mass (petra), that is a cause of entrapment. The word translated "offence" (A.V.) is skandalon, properly "the bait-stick of a trap or snare." It is the trigger of the trap, which, when sprung, closes the trap on the victim. It is, then, a figure of destruction. As Jesus said, the rock mass, if it fall on a person, "it will grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:44). The verb translated "to grind to powder" is likmao, "to winnow the chaff from the grain," metaphorically "to crush, to destroy utterly." It comes from likmas, "a winnowing fan."

The Stone of stumbling, the Rock of offense, the Stone at which men stumble and fall to their eternal damnation, all convey the truth that the rejection of Christ brings eternal loss. To others He is the Rock of salvation, the Rock of Ages, the Chief Cornerstone that binds together the entire structure of the unified church body.

The final New Testament witness is Peter: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded" (1 Peter 2:4-8).

"To whom coming," Peter says, using the present participle. The reason is that Christ is always ready to receive His child, and the Christian lives in a state of continual approach and surrender to His Lord. This Stone was rejected by the Jewish nation, but it is most precious to God.

"Ye also," as living stones, are being built up, the apostle continues. The building that is built of living stones, spiritual-minded men, is "a spiritual house." This is a tremendous contrast with the material house of the theocratic church. The chief cornerstone of this spiritual house is Jesus Christ. Upon this foundation stone the church rests. Peter does not suggest that he himself is the foundation stone upon which the church rests.

This foundation stone is precious to the believer, but a cause of destruction to those who stumble at the word. We have spoken of the passages in Isaiah and Romans 9:33, with the related reference to the foundation stone being a cause of stumbling, entrapment, destruction. Jesus with the gospel of the cross was that, to a nation. He is again a cause of stumbling to those who would set the church upon Peter, instead of upon Christ. The "rock" is petra (never Petros), a figure of the Lord in the Old Testament and in the New. Peter was careful never to lay claim to being the petra upon which the church is founded. The "living stone" (1 Peter 2:4) that is rejected by men is the Rock that has the quality to impart life to other stones that go into the building. The word "living" is a favorite one used of the Divine Persons (Matt. 16:16; John 4:10, 11; Rev. 1:18; 7:17. Compare the idea of "corner stone" in Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16). This same term "lively stones" (1 Peter 2:5) the apostle now applies to all believers; for each one is living in virtue of his union with the living Rock of Ages, who is also the "living bread" that imparts eternal life to him who partakes (John 6:51, 57; 14:19).
The Deaconess and Her Work

BESS NINAJ
Bible Instructor, Washington Sanitarium

THE earliest reference to deaconesses is taken from Romans 16:1, 2 which speaks to Phebe, a "servant" of the church at Cenchrea. Paul also speaks of "women which laboured with me in the gospel" in Philippians 4:3. They were apparently selected as carefully as were the deacons.

Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary has this to say about deaconesses:

1) Early church. One of an order of women, supposed by many to have been appointed . . . to minister to the poor and sick . . .
2) A member of . . . [a] body organized for systematic trained service in Christian and charitable ministry.

Harper's Bible Dictionary defines them as: "People of character and common sense" "who attended to Church charities."

Other denominations also have women workers who are titled "deaconesses." They are of two types: the lay deaconess and the paid, professional deaconess. The professional deaconess is prepared for her work in college or at a seminary. This training prepares her to assist the pastor in various duties such as office work, home visiting, Bible study, and fund raising. The Methodists have a Deaconess Hospital in Boston, which was established to prepare deaconesses to help in medical work.

The Seventh-day Adventist deaconess is a lay member of the church. Like the deacon, she is appointed by the church nominating committee to serve for a one-year period. In larger churches a head deaconess is usually selected first. Then she is consulted for suggestions about other women to serve with her.

The Church Manual states that deaconesses are not ordained as deacons and that this is based on the fact that the Bible does not mention ordination of deaconesses.

The local Bible instructor and the pastor's wife are often included among the deaconesses. They need not necessarily serve as head deaconess, but both should be supporting pillars to every function of the church. They should be actively interested and cooperative in the working program of the church.

The head deaconess is also a member of the church board. She is the one who delegates duties to the other deaconesses.

Duties of the Deaconess

The most familiar duties of the deaconess include:

1. The Communion service.
   1. Baking the bread.
   2. Purchasing the wine.
   3. Keeping the table linens clean and ready for use.
   4. Preparing the table on Communion Sabbath.
      a. Covering the table.
      b. Pouring the wine.
      c. Placing the bread on the plates.
      d. Covering the set-up table.
   5. Uncovering the table. Some churches appoint two deaconesses to sit near the front of the church. At the appointed time they remove and fold the tablecloth. Then, at the end of the service, it is their duty to replace the table cover.
   6. Caring for the dishes and linen after the service.
   7. Disposing of the unused bread and wine.

The Church Manual suggests that the Communion service be announced the Sabbath before it is held. At that service the deacons and deaconesses should notice the names of absent members. During that week all of these members should be visited and notified of the service, and invited to attend.

II. Ordinance of humility.
   1. Having an adequate number of basins and towels in readiness.
   2. Serving at the set-up table.

December, 1956
3. Speaking to visitors and checking on all those present to find any who are alone; then inviting them to participate and arranging for someone to take part with them.

III. Baptism.
1. Having available and usable the necessary articles, such as baptismal robes, caps, towels, and sheets.
2. Assisting women candidates at the baptism as necessary.
3. Caring for the articles that have been used.

IV. Care of the sick and the poor.
This may involve financial assistance, personal help with children in the home, assistance with household duties, or making arrangements for any or all of these.

V. Greeting visitors at church services.
The Church Manual suggests that to the deaconesses may be delegated the work of greeting visitors as they arrive at church. Perhaps an old custom could be revived of inviting visitors to Sabbath dinner, especially servicemen who are stationed far from home.

VI. Visiting church members.
The deaconesses and deacons assist the pastor in his work of calling on the members of the church. It is suggested in the Manual that these visits be made at least once every three months, but preferably each month.

These distinctive duties have evolved with the growth of the denomination. Some of them are recognized and are carried out quite uniformly by the churches. Some of them are consistently neglected or unrecognized.

Personal Work
If we read the account of the appointment of deacons as given in The Acts of the Apostles, we find that we are overlooking one of the major reasons for the existence of deacons. On page 90 we read:
The fact that these brethren had been ordained for the special work of looking after the needs of the poor, did not exclude them from teaching the faith. On the contrary, they were fully qualified to instruct others in the truth, and they engaged in the work with great earnestness and success. (Italics supplied.)

An outstanding example of zeal and fervor in "teaching the faith" is that of Stephen, who was martyred for preaching the gospel.
The pastor can find in this group of church officers a source of assistance in his local program of evangelism. What are some of the possibilities or ways in which deacons and deaconesses may help to spread the gospel?

1. They may carry on faithfully a home-visitation program in their own neighborhood.

Church members are to do evangelistic work in the homes of their neighbors who have not yet received full evidence of the truth for this time.—Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 33.

By lending or selling books, by distributing papers, and by holding Bible readings, our lay members could do much in their own neighborhoods.—Ibid., p. 35. (Italics supplied.)

Lend your neighbors some of our smaller books. If their interest is awakened, take some of the larger books. Show them Christ's Object Lessons. Tell them his history, and ask them if they do not want a copy. If they already have it, ask them if they do not want... other books of a similar nature. If possible, secure an opportunity to teach them the truth.—Ibid. (Italics supplied.)

Visit your neighbors and show an interest in the salvation of their souls.—Ibid., p. 38. (Italics supplied.)

2. Home visitation can also be carried on in the neighborhood of the church. As interested people are found. Bible studies may be given in the home. If the deacon or deaconess does not feel able to give the studies he can direct the interest to the pastor or to those who are able to give Bible studies. The Roman Catholic Church is apparently carrying on a home visitation program. for priests are calling on homes in the locality of their churches to become acquainted with the people, who are encouraged to call on them in case of any need.

3. Another potential evangelistic means is the conducting of a Sunday school at the church. Children of the neighborhood, as well as others, may be invited. The wealth of interesting material now available would fascinate and inspire the many children who are receiving no religious knowledge.

4. Deaconesses could also conduct Vacation Bible Schools during the summer season. Sabbath school and Pathfinder methods and materials can be used for this.

5. Still another possibility is a hospital visitation program. We have had MV singing bands visit hospitals, but it is also possible to plan a visitation program. Appropriate literature may be distributed. This would not have to be entirely denominational literature, although we have a variety of leaflets and booklets that could be used for this purpose.

6. Visiting and helping the family that has had a bereavement is another duty that can be assumed by the deaconesses. In large churches especially this may be overlooked. If there is a death in the neighborhood of the church a deacon or deaconess could call to comfort and to give help. This may lead to an opportunity for Bible studies on the state of the dead and
related subjects. Comforting literature may be mailed or taken to the family.

In order for the deacons and deaconesses to carry on an active missionary program there must be not only an awareness of the needs and possibilities but also a preparation. Perhaps we are overlooking the following counsel:

The best help that ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing, but planning work for them. Give each one something to do for others. Help all to see that as receivers of the grace of Christ they are under obligation to work for Him. And let all be taught how to work. Especially should those who are newly come to the faith be educated to become laborers together with God.—*Ibid.*, p. 82.

Properly conducted, the camp meeting is a school where pastors, elders, and deacons can learn to do more perfect work for the Master.—*Ibid*.

On such occasions as our annual camp meetings we must never lose sight of the opportunities afforded for teaching the believers how to do practical missionary work in the place where they may live. In many instances it would be well to set apart certain men to carry the burden of different lines of educational work at these meetings. Let some help the people to learn how to give Bible readings and to conduct cottage meetings. Let others bear the burden of teaching the people how to practice the principles of health and temperance, and how to give treatments to the sick. Still others may labor in the interests of our periodical and book work.—*Ibid*, pp. 82, 83.

We need to understand in regard to the division of labor and how each part of the work is to be carried forward. Each one should understand the part he is to act, that there may be harmony of plan and of labor in the combined work of all.—*Ibid*, pp. 81, 82.

He [God] requires that order and system be observed in the conduct of church affairs to-day, no less than in the days of old. He desires His work to be carried forward with thoroughness and exactness, so that He may place upon it the seal of His approval. Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality cooperating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 96.

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**News and Announcements**

**Contribution to the Religious World**

—*Christianity Today*

A new contribution to the religious world is the journal, *Christianity Today*, just off the press. It is published in Washington, D.C., and is edited by Dr. Carl P. H. Henry, for years professor of Christian philosophy at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He is on leave from his post in order to undertake this particular work.

During the month of October the first issue has been sent out to 200,000 Christian leaders. J. Marcellus Kik, well-known Dutch Reform minister, is associate editor, and Dr. L. Nelson Bell, North Carolina surgeon, for many years contributing to church periodicals, is executive editor. Larry Ward, former managing editor of *Christian Life*, is the managing editor, and George Burnham, well-known in the daily newspaper field, is the news editor. The chairman of the board of directors is Dr. J. Ockenga, minister of the famed Parks Street church in Boston. Besides, the magazine has a staff of fifty contributing editors.

The objective of this new journal is to present in a positive and constructive way the basic points of evangelical Christianity. The editor, with whom we are well acquainted, assures us it will be neither reactionary nor static and will be undergirded by Christian love and empowered, they trust, by the Holy Spirit.

Ministry readers will be interested to know that the aim of this magazine is to meet the need of evangelical thought on the high plane of such well-known journals of the more liberal school as *Christian Century*.

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Young, Jeanne B.—Mother to Son, Supposing (poem)—April.
Youngberg, John, M. and Mrs.—Warning the Great Port—Jan.

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To Ordained and Licensed Ministers

Social Security coverage recently made available by Congress to ministers of churches does not automatically apply. To be covered a minister must sign a waiver certificate, which is Form No. 2031, and send it to the District Office of the Internal Revenue Service nearest his place of residence.

Those who were ordained or licensed ministers during the year 1955 cannot now secure coverage beginning with the year 1955, but have until April 15, 1957 to sign the waiver certificate electing social security coverage starting with the year 1956. After this date, the time is forever passed for these ministers to elect to have their earnings from the ministry under social security coverage.

Ordained and licensed ministers of the church who are American citizens residing outside of the United States on April 15, 1957, have an automatic extension of the time to June 15, 1957.

Ministers are urged to give this matter their careful consideration. It is entirely possible that many of those who make the irrevocable decision to reject coverage will regret their election in years to come.

For information, necessary forms, etc., contact the nearest Social Security District office. Ministers residing outside of the United States may secure information from their American consular office, their division treasurer, or direct from the General Conference Treasury Department.

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Why I Am a Seventh-day Adventist

(Continued from page 11)

We let the Bible, rather than the dictionary, define the scriptural use of the words “everlasting,” “eternal, ” and “for ever and ever.” We find that Sodom and Gomorrah suffered “the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7). Yet their end was “ashes,” and their fate is set forth as “an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly” (2 Peter 2:6). The angels who rebelled with Lucifer and were cast out of heaven are “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6).

It is evident that the Greek root aion, from which these words are taken, represents an indefinite age of time, which may or may not come to an end. In some instances it is definitely terminated, as by the arrival of the final judgment day, and by the burning up of all there was to burn of Sodom and Gomorrah. All the human logic in the world cannot counterbalance the simple fact that these words are so used in some instances in the Scriptures.

Organization of the Church

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Bible teaches the principle of church organization, and that this is necessary for carrying out Christ’s commission to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. I do not know how any organization could operate with more efficiency and less tyranny than does the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe that ancient Israel was a definite type of the church in the last days, and Israel was highly organized under divine direction.

We believe that the Bible principle of the tithe is directly carried over into the New Testament church. Paul makes it clear that as those who waited on the altar in the temple lived “of the things of the temple,” “even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:13, 14). Therefore since “the things of the temple” included all of the tithe (Num. 18:21), we take Paul’s “even so” to mean that all of the tithe today is sacred to the support of the gospel ministry. And since the tithe was to be brought into the “storehouse” and distributed from there to the Levites, even so all our tithe goes into the conference treasury, and is distributed from there on an equitable basis for the support of all gospel workers under its jurisdiction. This principle is not only scriptural but has proved highly successful.

And, finally, we believe that the gifts of the Spirit enumerated by Paul are intended to continue in operation “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). Of these the one most definitely associated by Inspiration with the Lord’s work in the last days is the gift of prophecy, the Spirit of prophecy. We read, “And the dragon [Satan] was wroth with the woman [the true church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17). In Revelation 19:10 this testimony is identified as “the spirit of prophecy.”

To any professed prophet, however, we would apply the scriptural tests by which a prophet is to be judged, including that of Isaiah 8:20, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

We believe that one individual in the Advent Movement has so far met this test, namely, Mrs. Ellen G. White. She did not claim, however, nor do we, that her writings were given as an addition to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, or in any way to supersede them. She counted her gift a “lesser light,” given to guide God’s people into a more thorough study and acceptance of the Scriptures, and to apply Bible principles to the complexities of modern life.

I believe I have stated all or most of the distinctive doctrines of Seventh-day Adventists. Let me emphasize again, however, that righteousness by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the heart of our gospel. We both teach and emphasize salvation by grace and not by works. We believe, however, that this grace is extended to all men sufficiently to make it possible for each to choose between light and darkness, life and death. And we believe that this freedom of choice continues after we have been grafted onto the vine of Christ’s family. “Be not high-minded, but fear. . . Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” is Christ’s warning to the Christian in Romans 11:20, 22.
We have considered the more strictly doctrinal aspects of Seventh-day Adventist teaching. The third great reason I have chosen to cast my lot with these people is that I believe they are raising the same standards of discipleship that Christ raised in calling the twelve. If we are too strict in our standards, as many people think, then I believe these same people would find Christ Himself too strict.

Those worldly practices that are unquestionably destructive of body and soul, every person should expect to lay aside before he joins the church. It is understood that faithful Adventist Christians do not drink, use tobacco or narcotics, engage in social dancing, attend theatrical amusements, indulge in card playing, et cetera.

All Christian standards, we believe, sum up in the divine principle that the body is the temple of God. This means that there is a definite relationship between religion and healthful living. True temperance, we believe, is to abstain entirely from that which is harmful, and to use moderately what is good. We believe that God Himself, in giving men permission to eat flesh, set aside certain creatures as unfit for human consumption (see Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14). This distinction was recognized by Noah (see Gen. 7:2), and we find it also recognized in a prophecy dealing with God's final judgments upon "all flesh" (Isa. 66:16, 17). The lesson Peter learned from his strange vision before meeting Cornelius was not that the unclean animals had now become clean, but "that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28).

Finally, I am an Adventist because I love the truth. It is through love of the truth that I have been led into this fold and this work. If any man can show me from the Scriptures that this people is not God's people, that their message is not God's message, and that their manner of life is not patterned after and inspired by the Lord Jesus Christ, I mean to be willing to change my ways and walk in the greater light.

**The Taxing Decrees of Luke**
(Continued from page 28)

Again, while Josephus was relating the story of Judas the Galilean, and his sect, he put him after the organization of the sect of the Essenes, who are said to have been organized by this "Teacher of Righteousness." Now it can easily be seen that Gamaliel is quoted in Acts 5:36, 37 as describing two Jewish sect leaders who rose and were destroyed, one of them being Judas the Galilean and the other Theudas, who lived some time before him. Josephus agrees with this narrative about Judas and mentions that the Essenes were organized before the Judas sect.

The new Dead Sea scrolls indicate that the "Teacher of Righteousness" was the organizer of this sect in the Valley of Qumran, and produce decidedly striking similarities between him and Theudas. If their identification as one person cannot be fully established, the story of the Qumran sect, however, indicates that during the period just before the birth of our Lord, groups of minor Jewish sects arose against the corruptions of their time, and their leaders were persecuted by the authorities. So if Theudas himself could not be identified with the "Teacher of Righteousness," he could well have been one such leader.

Thus, the story of Theudas in the book of Acts need not now offer a serious problem to Biblical students. This background increases the evidence for the trustworthiness of Luke as a historian, and establishes his accuracy in every detail.

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The Real Pastor
(Continued from page 48)

The most revealing of all our Lord’s parables are those that emphasize the tragic truth that one can be in the church and yet not in the kingdom of God. Not only so, but we can even hold high office in the organization and yet be a stranger to that fellowship which is the very heart of His kingdom. The Pharisee who went to the Temple to pray was living a self-centered life—so satisfied with things in general that he felt no need to commune with God, So he “prayed with himself.” He was not even in the kingdom, although he had doubled his goals. The publican, in contrasting humility, simply asked for mercy. But he “went down to his house justified.”

The implications of this story are devastating, and yet they can apply to any or all of us as workers. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink or organization or finance or attainment, but “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Building up that fellowship is the work of the spiritual pastor. And how desperately we need such builders. Our greatest need is for true shepherd-evangelists.

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ONE PURPOSE. Not long ago I attended a unique quadrennial session and ministerial institute. Many of the ministers and colporteurs in attendance had spent some time during the last few years behind prison bars because of their faith. Many times their lives had been in danger as they faced angry mobs. But through these trials they had seen how God works miracles. They had seen the sick healed, and sinners changed into saints. One worker said, "The Lord knows when we are weary from our work and in need of rest, and He gives us time to rest in the prison so that we can go back to our work again with renewed spiritual strength and physical vigor to hasten the finishing of the task given us."

At the quadrennial session all problems were freely discussed in an atmosphere of trust in God and in a spirit of mutual confidence and sincerity. It was heart warming to mingle with such deeply spiritual, consecrated workers. It seemed that in these workers the carnal nature had truly been crucified, with the revelation of Christ evident in their countenance, their words, their actions. They revealed a spirit of true humility, showing love for God and their fellow men, and a real desire to prepare for more efficient service.

They were not asking, "Will they give me city work with all the conveniences of life?" or even, "Are there educational facilities for our small children?" There was no spirit of nationalism or race prejudice. Faultfinding and criticism were entirely absent. There was not even a hint of striving for position. No one felt that he should be conference president. No one felt hurt because he was not appointed to be a committee member. No one felt grieved because his many years of faithful service were not taken into account. No complaints were made about salaries. And none of the older workers showed any feelings of animosity because younger men were elected to positions of trust.

I was deeply touched as I listened to the testimonies of these consecrated ministers and colporteurs on the last night of the session. Here are a few of them:

"I surrender my whole life to Christ."
"I want to be spent in the work of soul winning."
"I ask the Lord to remove all selfishness and pride from my heart, to enable me to wholeheartedly win souls for Christ."
"I only want to be a faithful soldier in the army of Christ."
"I consider myself unworthy of the high honor of being a worker in the cause of God."
"I marvel that God can give to me a humble part among so many workers for Him."
"The greatest privilege is to labor in direct soul winning."

That complete surrender, that spirit of unity, a purpose like that of these men, will hasten the day for which we wait and hope—the glorious appearance of our beloved Saviour to take us home.

Yes, the Advent ministry represents the finest and noblest group of men and women that can be found anywhere. They love ardently the Lord and the promise of His appearing. They are willing to be spent for the soon finishing of the great task. And by the grace of God they are loving and lovable Christians, an example to the flock. Are you, dear fellow minister, a part of that noble group who live unselfishly and always for one purpose—to glorify God in the assigned work and in the life?

W. S.

THE REAL PASTOR. Not everyone can be a successful pastor. Efficiency, business and organizational ability, important as they are—these are not the all-important qualities of a true shepherd. He needs, above all, spiritual power, human sympathy, and godly tact. This last quality has been defined this way:

"Tact is love."
"Tact is loving your neighbor as yourself."
"Tact is the golden rule."
"Tact is being very sensitive—for the other person."
"Tact is constantly asking, 'How would I react if this were said to me?'"
"Tact is being on the side of the people."
"Tact is listening."
"Tact is making another feel that his problems are important to you."
"Tact is never shocked."
"Tact is carefulness."
"Tact is humility."
"Tact is love."

Jesus was the essence of tact, sympathy, and selfless love. Of Him the prophet said: "He shall not be loud and noisy, he shall not shout in public; he shall not crush a broken reed, nor quench a wick that dimly burns" (Isa. 42:2, 3, Moffatt*). He was the ideal pastor, the true shepherd, who knew how to give His life for the sheep. He saw men and women, not as they actually were, but as they might be through the power of redeeming grace. That lifted His thinking above party interest or political maneuvers. If any favoritism was in place it was reserved for the one who needed it most. Someone has said, "Arbitrariness of mind treats the duke and the ditch-digger alike—both as the duke, though with Jesus slightly in favor of the ditcher."

(Continued on page 46)