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The Doctrine of Man: Introduction

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THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

INTRODUCTION

Some 10 centuries before Christ, a young shepherd lad near Jerusalem gazed into the starry sky and exclaimed, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psa. 8:3-4).

What indeed is man? Who is he? Where did he come from? Why is he here? Where is he going? These questions are among the \$64 billion ones in nature. Furthermore, the way in which a man answers these questions will determine his conduct of life. As the Bible declares: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7a).

Worldly materialism can be defined as that bloodless philosophy that knows the price of everything, but the value of nothing. What is the true worth of a human? Is there any reliable standard to determine the value of a man?

The following article appeared in the April 1977 issue of Reader's Digest.

Six-Million-Dollar Original

Tired of hearing that the human body is worth only about three dollars? And of the humbling and humiliating realization that a chicken or a salmon sells for more than you are worth? There's news to heal our bruised egos.

Yale University biophysicist Harold J. Morowitz says that the human body is actually worth \$6 million. And that price covers only the raw materials – hormones, proteins, enzymes, etc. The intricate work of fashioning the material into human cells might cost six thousand trillion dollars. And assembling these cells into a functioning human being would drain all the world's treasures. "Each human being is priceless" is the professor's understatement. (p. 144)

The scientist has thus placed a surprisingly high figure upon each human. After all, \$6 million is nothing to sneeze at. However, this huge price tag is less than nothing when compared to the worth God places upon each and everyone of his creatures. Here is the divine estimate: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).

What then are we worth to God? The simple but staggering truth is he gladly sacrificed his only and beloved Son to redeem us back to himself out of sin's slave market. This study briefly reviews the past, present, and future state of God's multi-trillion-dollar investment – man himself.

- I. The Origin of Man – There are (at least) three main theories concerning the origin of man.
- A. Atheistic evolution – This theory holds that man is the accidental and random product of a blind and non-personal series of chemical and biological events. Simply defined, evolution is that process by which all living organisms have developed from the simple to the more complex forms. This theory would have us believe that our world and all it contains came into being through evolving mud in time past. We are assured that if we but allow a little mud enough time it will, of and by itself, produce the music of a Beethoven, the paintings of a Raphael, the writings of a Shakespeare, and the teachings of a Christ.

Question: How long would it take one million monkeys typing away day and night on one million typewriters for just one monkey to accidentally type out the first 10 words in the Bible? (“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”)

Answer: Consider a rock that reached from the earth to the nearest star (some 26 trillion miles away). Once every million years a tiny bird flies to this massive rock and removes the smallest grain of sand from it. When four rocks this size have been completely carried away, then one of those monkeys will have accidentally typed out Genesis 1:1.

But this accomplishment would be absolutely nothing as compared to the probabilities that a living cell would by random processes be formed. Consider the following: Dr. Harold Morowitz of Yale estimated the theoretical limits for the smallest free-living thing that could duplicate itself. It would require 239 individual protein molecules. What are the chances that the first protein molecule would form all its amino acids into left-handed chains? (For some unknown reason, all life consists only of these left-handed protein molecule chains). Well, the minimal number of amino acids in a protein is 410. This then would be like flipping a coin 410 times and coming up with heads every time. The answer is one chance in 10,123 (the figure 1 followed by 123 zeros). But then even if this occurred in one protein, it would have to be repeated in at least 238 other proteins also. The chances are now one in 1,029,345 (one followed by 29,345 zeros). This would be about twenty 8 ½ x 11 pages of typed zeros. How big is this number? Consider the following: There are 1,018 seconds in 15 billion years. The universe contains 10,130 electrons.

Conclusion: It has been demonstrated time and again from a mathematical perspective the utter impossibility for life to have come about accidentally. But all this is curtly brushed aside by those closed-minded “scholars” who, according to Peter, are “willingly... ignorant” of the facts involved. Having thus dismissed the mathematical barrier, they compound their error attempting to demonstrate the evolution of the human race through various supposed subhuman-creature discoveries that are claimed to link ancient man to modern man. Here are but a few:

1. Neanderthal man – Found in Neander Valley, near Dusseldorf, Germany, in 1856 by Johann C. Fuhlrott. The find consisted of a skull and several bones. He was first portrayed as a semi-erect brutish subhuman. It is now believed these “creatures” were

real people who suffered severely from rickets, caused by a deficiency of vitamin D. This condition results in the softening of bones and consequent malformation.

It is now known that Neanderthal man was fully erect and in most details was indistinguishable from modern man, his cranial capacity even exceeding that of modern man. It is said that if he were dressed in a business suit, and were to walk down one of our city streets, he would be given no more attention than any other individual. Today he is classified *Homo Sapiens* – full human. (Duane T. Gish, *Evolution? The Fossils Say No*, p. 103)

2. Java man (*Pithecanthropus erectus*, “erect ape man”) – Found in Trinil, Java, in 1891, by Eugene Dubois, a Dutch physician. The “find” consisted of a single skull cap. One year later a thigh bone, along with two molar teeth, was discovered 50 feet from where the skullcap had been. Dubois estimated they all belonged together, and dated back half a million years. He did not reveal, however, until 31 years later, that he had also found two obviously human skulls at the same time and in the same level. Most evolutionists of the day were convinced of the validity of this 500,000-year-old creature. But prior to his death, Dubois sadly concluded his Java man was actually the remains of a large gibbon.
3. Piltdown man (*Eanthropus dawsoni*, “Dawn man”) – Found in Piltdown, England, in 1912, by Charles Dawson. The find was a skull part and a few teeth. Soon the consensus of the world’s greatest authorities was that here indeed was a genuine link in the evolution of man. It was dated to be from 500,000 to 750,000 years old. The praises of the Piltdown man were sung by Dr. Arthur Smith Woodward, eminent paleontologist at the British Museum, and Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn, paleontologist of the American Museum of Natural History. However, in 1950 the Piltdown bones were carefully examined by fluoride tests and discovered to be a colossal hoax. The “skull” had been stained with iron salts and the teeth filed down to give it the appearance of age. Thus, the world-famous Piltdown man was simply the doctored remains of a recent age.
4. Peking man – Found near Peking, China, in 1912 (and 1937) by Davidson Bolack. The find consisted of the fragments of 30 skulls and 147 teeth. This find disappeared in 1941 when it was moved from Peking by a U.S. Marine detachment to escape the oncoming Japanese invasion. It is now believed by some that this find was simply the remains of some large monkeys or baboons killed and eaten by workers in an ancient lime-burning quarry.
5. Nebraska man (“Western ape man”) – Found in western Nebraska in 1922 by Harold Cook. The find was exactly one tooth. It was immediately declared by Dr. H. F. Osborn of the American Museum to be the vaunted missing link. He placed it at the very bottom of the tree of man’s ancestry. Dr. William K. Gregory, curator of the American Museum of Natural History and professor of paleontology at Columbia University, called it “the million dollar tooth.” Sir Grafton Elliott Smith of the London Illustrated News assigned an imaginative artist to draw the ape man that once carried the tooth

around in his mouth some six thousand centuries ago. During the famous Scopes evolutionary trial in Dayton, Tennessee, William Jennings Bryan (Bible defender) was confronted and ridiculed for his ignorance concerning this tooth and other “facts” of evolution by H. H. Newman of the University of Chicago. In 1927, to the supreme embarrassment of many, the tooth was discovered to be that of an extinct pig.

6. East Africa ape (*Zinjanthropus*) – Found in 1959 in Olduvia, Tanzania, by Louis S. B. Leakey. Find consisted of a skull cap and a few bone fragments. This “discovery” was sensationalized through the National Geographic Magazine, which society had sponsored Leakey. His find was dated from two to four million years in age, thus making East Africa man by far the oldest “link” known at the time. However, prior to his death, Leakey indicated he felt his vaunted discovery was but a variety of *australopithecus* (Southern ape) found in 1924.
- B. The pre-Adamic, gap theory – Did something horrible take place between the first and second verse in the Bible? Many believe something terrible indeed occurred, and that something was the fall of Satan. The following arguments have been offered to support this.
 1. The phrase in Genesis 1:2, “without form and void” (Hebrew: *tohu wabohu*), appears elsewhere in Isaiah 34:11; 45:18; and Jeremiah 4:23 and speaks of judgment. However, in other passages it simply means space (see Job 26:7; Deut. 32:10; Job 6:18; 12:24; Psa. 107:40).
 2. The verb translated “was” in Gen. 1:2 (Hebrew: *hayetha*) should be translated “became.” Scriptural evidence, however, would deny this. The Hebrew verb *hayetha* is found 264 times in the Pentateuch, and of these, in 258 instances the word is correctly translated “was.” See, for example, Jonah 3:3.
 3. There is a difference between the verbs *bara* (“created,” Genesis 1:1) and *asah* (“made,” Genesis 1:7). But, to the contrary, these verbs are used synonymously. Note:
 - a. “And God created [*bara*] the great sea monsters” (1:21),
 - b. “And God made [*asah*] the beast of the earth” (1:25).
 - c. “Let us make (*asah*) man in our image” (1:26).
 - d. “So God created (*bara*) man in his own image” (1:27).
 4. Genesis 1:2 says “darkness was upon the face of the deep,” and darkness is a symbol of evil. This is not always the case, as seen in Psalm 104:20: “Thou makest darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.”

Although traces of this theory can be traced back in Christian writings as early as the fourth century A.D., it was not until the ministries of Dr. Thomas Chalmers, Scottish scholar, and George H. Pember (1876) that the theory really caught on. In 1917 C. I. Scofield included it in his notes and its popularity was assured. These last two dates are significant, for by 1880 Darwin’s theory of evolution, as propounded in his book *The Origin of Species* was universally accepted by the scientific world. This theory taught that the world was many millions of years old, as indicated by the vast fossil record and the claims of uniformitarian geology. The Christian theologian was then

confronted with a serious problem. How could all this be reconciled with Genesis 1? An answer was found – uncounted millions of years could be conveniently tucked into that bottomless hole that was thought to exist between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. Thus the gap theory may be viewed in part as an attempt by the Christian theologian to appease the non-Christian evolutionist.

In summary, the gap theory faces a real problem in the New Testament, for Paul states in Romans 5:12 and 8:20-22 that man's sin brought about death, even of animals. But the gap theory would have Adam walking on top of a gigantic fossilized animal graveyard. One may thus conclude that Genesis 1:1 is a summary statement for the first two chapters. In this verse God tells us what he originally did. In the remaining verses he then informs us how he did it.

The pre-Adamic, Gap theory is also known as the "Twin Adam theory." This theory attributes early human fossils to pre-Adamites in the first creation in Gen. 1:1, who were destroyed before the rest of the creation events in Gen. 1. The two Adams theory states that the first Adam of Gen. 1 was the old stone-age Adam, which has since been extinct, and the second Adam of Gen. 2 was the new stone-age Adam, who is the ancestor of mankind today. This theory suggests the rest of the Bible is concerned with the fall and salvation of the new stone-age Adam and his descendants. (Walter Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 389)

C. Theistic evolution – This view, as the name implies, says there is a God and that he used the method of evolution to bring about the universe and the world.

In essence it attempts to harmonize Moses and Darwin, suggesting we look to the first for the who and why of all things, and to the second concerning the how and when of all things. It has been observed, however, that a theistic evolutionist is a man attempting to ride two horses that are going in opposite directions. There are two basic variations of theistic evolution:

1. The original, classical view

- a. The philosophy involved – This says, in effect, God selected, originated, employed, and created the processes of naturalistic evolution to bring into being the world of plants, animals, and man. Actually, according to this view the only direct intervention by God was in arranging the pre-life chemical circumstances that would, in and by themselves, produce the first living organism.
- b. The problems involved
 - (1) Genesis states that life began on dry ground, while evolution says it began on the surface of some ancient sea (Gen. 1:11-12).
 - (2) Genesis declares that birds existed before insects, while evolution reverses this order (Gen. 1:20, 24).

- (3) Genesis states that birds and fishes were created at the same time, but evolution says fishes evolved hundreds of millions of years before birds developed (Gen. 1:21).
- (4) Genesis stresses (10 times) that the entities created were to reproduce “after their kinds,” while evolution postulates the slow ascent of all organisms from a common ancestor.
- (5) Genesis says that Adam was made from the dust of the ground into the image of God, while evolution claims Adam descended from a sub-apes creature – “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”
- (6) Genesis records woman’s coming from man’s side, while evolution teaches both man and woman developed simultaneously – “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (Gen. 2:21-22).
- (7) Genesis tells us that man was originally a vegetarian, while evolution teaches he was probably a head-hunting cannibal (Gen. 1:29).

2. The recent, revised view

- a. The philosophy involved – This position is known both as progressive creationism and threshold evolution. Charles Ryrie explains:

But many who fall into the general category of theistic evolutionists perceive God as being involved not only at the beginning of the process but at various points along the way. God stepped in to create at the major states of life throughout geologic history (e.g., the vertebrates, the birds, the mammals, and man). But He also permitted and used naturalistic evolution processes throughout the long periods of geologic time. This view is known as progressive creationism or threshold evolution and often is linked with the day-age view of Genesis 1. (*Basic Theology*, p. 172)

Pattie P. T. Pun, an advocate of this view writes:

Progressive creationists are willing to reinterpret the Scriptures if this is necessitated by the findings of modern science. Therefore in light of the overwhelming evidence supporting the antiquity of the earth, they accept the traditional day-age theory of the creation account in Genesis. This view revolves around the usage of “day” as depiction of a period of time rather than a twenty-four hour solar day. (Walter Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 389)

- b. The problems involved – Henry Morris observes:

Among evangelicals, a popular semantic variant of theistic evolution is a system called progressive creationism. There are many Christian intellectuals who feel it inexpedient to adopt a full-blown evolutionary position, and so they allow for a number of acts of special creation interspersed at various points throughout the long evolutionary process. That is, they suggest that perhaps God supernaturally created the first protozoan, then later possibly the different phyla, and eventually the first man and woman. Depending on the particular writer, there may have been few or many acts of special creation inserted by God at strategic states in evolutionary history, but the overall process was still evolution. In progressive creationism, the same system of evolutionary geological ages and the same mechanisms of evolution (whatever they may be) are accepted as those used by the theistic evolutionist, or even by the atheistic evolutionist. The only differences are these occasional interjections of creation. This system allows its proponents to say that they believe in “special creation” instead of evolution, without experiencing the intellectual opprobrium (defined as a cause of shame or disgrace) attached to belief in “six-day creationism” or “flood geology.”

Such a semantic game, however, is rightly repudiated by most scientists, who consider it unworthy of the scientific world view, as a mere “god-of-the-gaps” device. That is, wherever there currently seems to be a significant gap in the fossil record or in the mechanism of evolutionary progress, then this might have been a point, they would say, where God stepped in to create something. As the gaps are filled in, however, by further paleontological collections or genetic manipulations, then God’s role becomes progressively smaller and evolution’s role progressively greater. Thus progressive creation eventually yields to progressive evolution. In the final analysis, it is almost impossible, either scientifically or Biblically, to distinguish between progressive creation and theistic evolution,

In fact, if one were forced to choose between only these two alternatives, theistic evolution would surely be the better choice. Not only would it be more acceptable to the scientific establishment, but it would also be less dishonoring to God. That is, the theistic evolutionist at least gives God credit for being able to design and energize the entire evolutionary process right from the beginning. The progressive creationist, however, visualizes a bumbling sort of god, one who has to come down at intervals to redirect the evolutionary process whenever it veers off target, or to reenergize the process whenever it plays out. Furthermore, the same objections we have already lodged against theistic evolution can also be lodged against progressive creation. Nothing whatever is gained – except semantic dissimulation – by advocating progressive creation instead of theistic evolution. (*The Biblical Basis For Modern Science*, p. 114)

D. Special creation – This is the view that man is a direct product from the hand of God and that the statements in Genesis 1 and 2 are to be taken at face value in a literal and normal way. In addition to this, a number of Bible students see in these first two chapters a clear case for believing in a special 24-hour, 6-day creation week. This, it is believed, can be seen:

1. As indicated by the Hebrew language – If the days were really long periods of time, the Hebrew word *olam* (meaning a long, indefinite time) would doubtless have been used, rather than the Hebrew word *yom* (which means day).

“The use of a numerical adjective with the word day in Genesis 1 limits it to a normal day... in historical narratives the numerical adjective always limits the word to a 24-hour period (cf. Numbers 7 for a remarkable parallel)” (Dr. John C. Whitcomb, Jr., *Creation According to God’s Word*, p. 4).

Departmental professors of Oriental language in nine leading universities were once asked the following question by a research scholar: “Do you consider that the Hebrew word *yom* (day) as used in Genesis 1 accompanied by a numeral should properly be translated as (a) a day, as commonly understood, (b) an age, or (c) either a day or an age without preference?”

The nine universities polled were: Oxford, Cambridge, London, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Toronto, McGill, and Manitoba. Of these, seven universities responded that it should be translated as a day as commonly understood.

2. As indicated by the genealogies found in Genesis 5:11 – If evolution is correct and man is really a million years old, then we would be forced to allow a 50,000 year gap between each name in these two chapters. Furthermore, if life itself is nearly one billion years old, then each day in Genesis 1 would have to stand for approximately 125 million years.
3. As indicated by Moses at Mount Sinai – “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work... for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exod. 20:8-9, 11). (See also Exod. 31:16-17.)
4. As indicated by David – “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Psa. 33:6-7, 9).
5. As indicated by Luke – In his genealogy, Luke traces Jesus’ biological line back from Mary to the first man. His last three names were Enos, Seth, and Adam. Luke writes: “Enos, who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God” (Luke 3:38). (See also Gen. 4:25; 5:6.) In other words, Luke leads us to believe Adam came directly from God, as Seth came directly from Adam (and Eve), thus indicating special creation.

6. As indicated by Jesus – The Savior evidently accepted in a literal way the early chapters of Genesis, “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female” (Matt. 19:4). “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?” (John 3:12). “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:46-47).
7. As indicated by Paul – “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.... For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God” (1 Cor. 11:8-9, 12). “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Tim. 2:13-14).

In addition to these verses, there are two all-important theological passages where Paul contrasts the first Adam with the last Adam (Christ).

- a. In Rom. 5:12-21 – The contrast is between condemnation (as introduced by the first Adam) with that of justification (as brought about by the last Adam),
- b. In 1 Cor. 15:22, 45-47 – The contrast is between the mortal, fleshly body of the first Adam (given to all his seed) with the immortal, spiritual body of the last Adam (to be given to all his seed).

In light of all this, it can be seen these references and analogies concerning the two Adams are both historically wrong and theologically worthless if special creation is denied.

8. As indicated by Benjamin Warfield – Benjamin Warfield was one of the greatest orthodox theologians of modern time. Although Warfield admitted the possibility of man existing for over 100,000 years, he personally believed man’s creation date to be no earlier than 5,000 to 10,000 B.C. (*Biblical and Theological Studies*, p. 248).
9. As indicated by Edward Young – Edward Young was an outstanding Hebrew scholar. In one of his journals, he stated: “The six days are to be understood in a chronological sense, that is, one day following another in succession. This fact is emphasized in that the days are designated one, two, three, etc.” (Edward Young, *Westminster Theological Journal*, May 1963, p. 169).
10. As indicated by the *Interpreter’s Bible*—

There can be no question but that by “day” the author means just what we mean – the time required for one revolution of the earth on its axis. Had he meant an aeon he would have certainly, in view of his fondness for numbers, have stated the number of millenniums each period embraces. (Vol. I, p. 417)

Even though the *Interpreter’s Bible* (a very liberal work) would doubtless consider the first 11 chapters of Genesis as pure myth, it nevertheless holds that the Genesis writer believed in a literal six-day creation account.

One of the most respected scholars of the twentieth century is Dr. Mortimer J. Adler, co-editor of the monumental 54-volume set *Great Books of the Western World*. In one of his many books, *Great Ideas from the Great Books*, Adler answers a question asked him concerning the difference between men and animals.

Dear Dr. Adler,

Is there any basic difference between man and animals, or is man an animal like all the others? Some people say that man is the only creature that can think and learn. But I don't regard this as a real distinction, since biologists and psychologists have demonstrated that animals can construct things and solve problems. I have known some very intelligent dogs and some very thoughtless human beings. What is the essential difference between man and the animals?

A.M.P.

Dear A.M.P.,

Until comparatively recent times, few philosophers doubted that man was essentially different from all other animals. In the great tradition of Western thought, from Plato right down to the 19th century, it was almost universally held that man and man alone is a rational animal. This philosophical view of man's distinctive nature accords with the Biblical view that man and man alone is created in the image of God – a person, not a thing.

Since the time of Darwin, the opposite view has come to prevail, not only among scientists but among the educated classes generally. The Darwinian theory of man's origin, as you know, is that man and that anthropoid apes have descended from a common ancestral form; and along with this view of man's evolutionary origin goes the view that man and the higher mammals differ only in degree. Thus, for example, instead of regarding man alone as rational, the evolutionists find the same kind of intelligence in man and other animals. Man simply has more of it.

You say in your letter that you think the traditional arguments for man's distinctive nature are weak, because animals as well as men can reason, because animals as well as men can make things, etc. Let me answer your question by defending the traditional point of view about man as a very special creature.

The strongest evidence that men have certain powers which no other animals possess in any degree whatsoever consists in the things which men can do but which other animals cannot do at all. One such indication is man's power of making things.

I know that bees make hives, birds make nests, and beavers make dams. But such productions are entirely instinctive on their part. A given species of bird makes its nests in the same way generation after generation. This shows that the nest is a product of instinct not of art, which involves reason and free will. In making houses, bridges, or any other of their artifacts, men invent and select. They are truly artists, as animals are not.

In addition, only men build machines which are themselves productive. Other animals may use rough tools, but no other animal makes a die press which stamps out an indefinite number of a product when the raw materials are fed into it. This is another indication of man's special power as a maker of things.

You say that other animals can reason. In my opinion it is more correct to say that other animals can solve problems when they are confronted by the biological urgency of finding a way of getting what they need. All so-called "thinking" by animals is on this level. But no animal ever sits down to think, the way a philosopher or a mathematician does when he has no biologically urgent need to do so.

The fact that human thinking is discursive and involves language is another indication that it is quite different from animal problem-solving. Animals, of course, do make sounds and communicate their emotions or impulses to one another. But no animal communicates thought; no animal ever utters a sentence which asserts something to be true or false. Only a rational animal can do that.

I could go on and give you many other items of evidence that man has certain powers which no other animal possesses in the least degree. But I shall content myself with one more fact.

Man is the only animal with an historical development. Other animals may change in their biological constitution over the course of hundreds of thousands of generations; but such changes result entirely from changes in the germ plasm, which is the only thing that is transmitted from one generation to another. Men transmit ideas and institutions, a whole tradition of culture, from one generation to another, and it is this which accounts for the history of the human race.

In my opinion the empirical evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of the view that men are essentially different in kind from the brutes. Like the brutes, they, too, are animals. But unlike them, men are rational. This, of course, if true, would require us to reject Darwin's theory of man's evolutionary origin. But theories after all must be made to fit the facts, not facts theories. (pp. 173-175)

II. The Nature of Man – In dealing with man's nature, we will ask, and attempt to answer, six basic questions.

A. How is man made in the image and likeness of God? "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every

creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:26-27).

How are we to understand these words? Throughout the history of the Christian church various theories have been propounded.

1. That this likeness means God possesses a physical body similar to man – It is amazing (indeed, shocking) to discover the number of people holding this totally unscriptural and bizarre theory. The Mormon cult of course has taught this since its inception. Josh McDowell writes:

The Mormon doctrine of God is contradictory to what the Bible teaches, The Mormons believe in many gods and teach that God himself was once a man. Moreover, Mormon males have the possibility of attaining godhood. Joseph Smith made this clear in The King Follet Discourse: "I am going to inquire after God: for I want you all to know him and be familiar with him.... I will go back to the beginning before the world was, to show you what kind of a being God is.

"God was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens.... I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in a form like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form of a man.

"I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea and take away the veil so that you may see.

"It is the first principle of the gospel to know for certainty the character of God and to know that we may converse with him as one man with another, and that he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ did.

"Here then, is eternal life – to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you" (Joseph Smith, Jr., King Follet Discourses, pp. 8 – 10). (*Handbook of Today's Religions*, p. 69)

The Worldwide Church of God, initiated by Herbert W. Armstrong also advocates this same heresy. "The final destiny of man is to become God. You are setting out on a training to become creator – to become God! We shall then be God!" (Ibid., p. 117).

The New Age movement, of course, also holds this view. In essence it says the next great step in the evolutionary process of mankind will not be physical, but spiritual, that is, the realization that we are actually all divine, growing into little gods.

All this perhaps could be expected from the cults. However, it is truly shocking to hear this apostasy coming from those who profess to be in the evangelical camp. "Just as dogs have puppies and cats have kittens, so God has little gods....

Until we comprehend that we are little gods and we begin to act like little gods, we cannot manifest the kingdom of God!" (Earl Paulk, *Satan Unmasked*, p. 96).

"You don't have a God in you. You are one" (Kenneth Copeland, *The Force of Love*, tape message).

"I believe that in this divine Godhead there are three separate and distinct persons – each having His own personal spirit body, personal soul, and personal spirit" Jimmy Swaggart, *Questions and Answers*, p. 199).

2. That this likeness is a reference to the triunity of man – In other words, as God is triune in nature (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), he created man a triune creature consisting of spirit, soul, and body.
3. That this likeness is associated with man's self-consciousness and sense of morality – This theory states that man is created in the image of God in that his Creator gave him self-consciousness and a sense of morality as God himself possesses.
4. That this likeness is tied in with the Incarnation – This theory states that when God spoke these words he was thinking of the future incarnation of Christ, the God-man, and his present-day work in making the Christian like himself. We note the following verses:

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20-21). "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). At any rate, there seems to be an image of God in all men which cannot be lost, and an image which can be lost.

- a. The image that cannot be lost – "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man" (1 Cor. 11:7). "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God" (James 3:8-9).

In the following verse God institutes capital punishment and justifies it on the grounds that a murderer should die for taking the life of another creature made in the image of God. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Gen. 9:6).

The Bible therefore indicates that all unsaved men still display certain traces of the original image of God's creation. It has been suggested that fallen man resembles a beautiful European cathedral after it has been gutted by a Nazi bomb.

- b. The image that can be lost – "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9-10). "And that ye put

on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24).

Thus it would seem evident from these verses that there is a part of God’s image that was lost after Adam sinned and must now be restored by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. This lost image would thus seem to be the inability to know God and the desire to love and serve him.

B. What is the nature of man’s body? Paul Enns writes:

Views concerning the purpose of the body.

- (1) The body is the prison house of the soul. This was the view of the Greek philosophers who placed a great dichotomy between the body and soul. The soul was nonmaterial and good; the body was material and evil. In this view, therefore, the body was depreciated. However, it is unbiblical to place this kind of dichotomy between the material and nonmaterial. The Bible does not refer to the body as intrinsically evil. In fact, the Song of Solomon in its entirety focuses on the value of the human body and the bliss of married love and sexual expression. Divine revelation makes it clear that “man is... a unity – one being – and the material and immaterial can be separated only by physical death,”
- (2) The body is the only part of man that is important. This view is called hedonism and represents the opposite of the preceding view. Hedonists suggest a person should seek to please the body by doing what he enjoys doing. This philosophy is a denial of the soul. The testimony of Jesus Christ invalidates this view inasmuch as Christ spoke of the enormous value of the soul as distinct from the body (Matt. 10:28; 16:26). Other Scriptures also affirm the existence of the soul (2 Cor. 5:8; Eccles. 12:7).
- (3) The body is the partner of the soul. The body is the means of glorifying God since it is the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19). The body is not to be the master so that the believer caters to it in self-indulgence, nor is it to be an enemy that needs to be punished. The body is to be submitted to God (Rom. 12:1) in order that Christ may be glorified in that body (Phil. 1:20). Ultimately, the believer will be rewarded for deeds done in the body (2 Cor. 5:10). (*Moody Handbook of Theology*, p. 304)

C. Is man a dichotomous or trichotomous being? Is man a dichotomous (two-part) being, or is he a trichotomous (three-part) being? That is, does he consist of body and soul, or does he possess body, soul, and spirit?

1. The theory that man is a dichotomous being – This view offers the following two arguments to support dichotomy.
 - a. Material and nonmaterial – Man is a dichotomous being not just because of the plan of God, but because of the very nature of the universe, which only recognizes material and nonmaterial. In other words, man’s body belongs to the material and

his soul to the nonmaterial. What else is left? Therefore, as man's spirit is decidedly nonmaterial, it must be placed into the camp of the nonmaterial and thus becomes identical with that of the soul.

- b. Terms soul and spirit used interchangeable in the Bible – Often in the Bible the terms soul and spirit are used interchangeably. The Virgin Mary seems to do this very thing during her hymn of praise to God. “And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour” (Luke 1:46-47).

Advocates of this view would also compare the following verses claiming the interchangeable usage of soul and spirit in both cases. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11). “Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:20). “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5).

- 2. The theory that man is a trichotomous being – Basic evidences for trichotomy would include:
 - a. Both terms used interchangeably does not mean no distinction whatsoever. – The fact that some passages use both terms interchangeably does not mean there is no distinction whatsoever. For example, the phrases “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven” are on occasion used interchangeably, yet most Bible students would recognize a general and decided difference between them.
 - b. The New Testament carefully distinguishes between body and soul. – In at least two essential passages the New Testament carefully distinguishes between body and soul. “And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23). “for the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).
 - c. The Hebrew word *nephesh* translated “soul,” “beast,” and “creature.” – The Hebrew word *nephesh* is translated by the word “soul” 428 times in the Old Testament, but on two occasions it is rendered “beast” and in nine other passages we find the word “creature” being used. (Lev. 24:18, Gen. 2:7, Gen. 2:19). The point is simply this: The Bible on occasion pictures animals as possessing souls. Therefore, as man is different than animals, he must have something higher, and that higher thing is the spirit. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we read of an animal possessing a spirit.
 - d. The three levels of consciousness in all men. – Trichotomy is the best theory to explain the three levels of consciousness in all men, that of self-consciousness

(through the soul), world-consciousness (through the body) and God-consciousness (through the spirit).

These then are the arguments for dichotomy and trichotomy. What are we to believe? Hebrew scholar Dr. Merrill F. Unger has written the following concerning this question.

“The two terms are often used interchangeably . . . however, soul and spirit as synonymous terms are not always employed interchangeably. The soul is said to be lost, for example, but not the spirit. When no technical distinctions are set forth, the Bible is dichotomous, but otherwise it is trichotomous. Theologians have poured over these distinctions ceaselessly” (*Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, p. 1043)

D. Where and how does man receive his soul?

1. Pre-existence. All men have known other existences prior to this earthly life in Heaven or somewhere in time past and therefore receive their original soul from previous existence into their earthly bodies. This is known as the pre-existence theory, and needless to say, has absolutely no scriptural support whatsoever to back it up.

Leslie B. Flynn writes:

Pre-existentialism was held by Origen, the early Christian leader in Alexandria, to justify the wide disparity of conditions in which men enter the world. (*Lectures in Systematic Theology*, p. 164)

Needless to say, there is absolutely no scriptural evidence whatsoever to support the preexistence theory.

2. Creationism – According to this theory each human soul is an immediate and special creation by God and enters the developing body at an early stage, probably at conception. The following verses are offered to support creationism:

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Eccles. 12:7). “The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him” (Zech. 12:1).

“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” (Heb. 12:9).

However, there are several problems with creationism:

- a. It cannot account for the fact that children resemble their parents in intellectual and spiritual as well as in physical respects.

b. It cannot explain the universality of sin – If God creates each soul in heaven separately and sends it down into the developing body, then why are all men sinners? It is wrong, furthermore, to say the soul is thereupon corrupted by the body, for nowhere do the Scriptures teach that the source of sin in man stems from his body of flesh and blood and bones. Quite the contrary, for sin is said to come from man's stubborn and rebellious will, and his will is an aspect of his soul. In other words, does God create a sinful soul in the first place? If he does, he then becomes the author of sin. But if, instead, he creates a pure and innocent soul, then why and how and when does man become a sinner? Would not one of the more than 40 billion individuals who have lived, or are living on this earth, have decided to keep his pure soul unspotted and sinless?

3. Traducianism – Both body and soul are passed on through natural generations. This is called the traducian theory and is the view of most theologians (with notable exceptions, such as Charles Hodge). Passages that would tend to support this view are as follows:

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psa. 51:5). “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one” (Job 14:4). “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies” (Psa. 58:3). “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). “Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Eph. 2:3).

However, as in the case of the theory of creationism, a serious charge is likewise leveled at the traducian view. The problem is this: If the child receives his soul from his parents, then how did Jesus escape the sin-tainted nature of Mary and remain the pure and perfect Savior that he was? But it would seem this argument overlooks one basic but absolutely vital fact – the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ did not come into existence at Bethlehem through either the creation or traducian method. The indisputable scriptural fact is that as God he always existed. Thus, while he could pray, “A body hast thou prepared me” (Heb. 10:5), he also would pray later, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5).

E. What is the soul? The nature of man's soul is, like that of the doctrine of the Trinity, a mystery that simply cannot be grasped by mortal mind. Only a fool would attempt a dogmatic answer to this question. The following statements are therefore but suggestions and not absolute answers. In the opinion of this writer it would seem the Bible indicates not so much that I have a soul, but rather I am a soul. I have a body and I have a spirit, but the soul is me. If this be true (and again, who can be dogmatic here?), then the following proposed illustration would not seem to be inappropriate.

Let us consider Adam in the Garden of Eden. Prior to his fall, the first man could be likened to a driver guiding his beautiful new automobile down a smooth and scenic

super highway. As he drives along, his car is filled with lovely Christian music and inspiring scriptural messages coming from His Father's Broadcasting House nearby and is being picked up by his stereo unit. In this illustration, the driver (Adam) would be the soul of man, the car would be his body, and the radio his spirit. For a while everything goes well. Then the driver deliberately twists the car off the highway and smashes it into a tree.

Almost instantly three tragic events take place:

1. The three events initiated by the driver
 - a. The automobile – The automobile is badly damaged with a cracked block. While it will still run for awhile, it is evident that soon the entire mechanical system will break down completely.
 - b. The radio – The radio is hopelessly wrecked. No sound whatsoever can now come through its system.
 - c. The driver – The driver, although still alive, is under the condemnation of the righteous Judge for his foolish and wicked act. His punishment is twofold:
 - (1) To continue driving – The first punishment is to continue on down life's highway in a dying car with no soothing and comforting messages from the radio.
 - (2) To be eventually forced from the car – The second punishment is to be forced from the car after it stops completely and to be then confined to a lake of fire forever.
2. The three actions generated by the Holy Spirit – This, then, is the situation all unsaved men find themselves in today. But in keeping with this illustration, when the sinner turns to Christ for salvation, the Holy Spirit of God immediately effects three things:
 - a. His action concerning the car (body) – Although he does not fix up the old wrecked car, he does nevertheless promise eventually to transform the entire automobile. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:51-54).
 - b. His action concerning the radio (spirit) – The Holy Spirit immediately repairs the smashed radio, and soon the car is once again filled with the blessed sounds of God. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:12-14).

c. His action concerning the driver (soul) – The driver is assured that whereas he once was subjected to God's wrath, he now can enjoy his peace. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1).

He needs no longer fear hell, as heaven is now his future home. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3),

F. What are the basic characteristics of the soul? As one consults various theological works on the makeup of man, he soon discovers the discussion usually centers around four basic words. These are; Intellect, sensibility, conscience, and will. Here again let it be emphasized that no absolute and all-inclusive definition can be forthcoming but the following statements are offered as guidelines.

1. Intellect – Intellect is that aspect of the soul which tells man whether a given issue is right or wrong.
2. Sensibility – Sensibility is that aspect which tells man what he would like to do about the issue.
3. Conscience – Conscience is that aspect which tells man what he should do about the issue. The Bible lists several kinds of conscience:
 - a. An evil conscience – "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22).
 - b. A defiled conscience – "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:15).
 - c. A weak conscience – "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.... But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (1 Cor. 8:7, 12).
 - d. A good conscience – "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1; see also 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; Heb. 13:18; 1 Pet. 3:16, 21).
 - e. A pure conscience – "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (1 Tim. 3:9).
 - f. A seared conscience – "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:2).
4. Will – Will is the aspect that tells man what he shall do about the issue.

III. The Purpose for the Creation of Man – Why did God create man? Before giving the various reasons why he did, it should be strongly stated that God did not make man because he

was lonely. Long before he created angels or man, the Father was having blessed fellowship with his beloved Son.

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was,... Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:5, 24). “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him” (Prov. 8:22-30).

But why, then, did he create man?

A. Historically speaking, man was created to demonstrate and display the glory of God – “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.... When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour” (Psa. 8:1, 3-5). “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11).

B. Prophetically speaking, man was created to demonstrate and display the grace of God – “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:4-7).

IV. The Original Responsibilities and Restrictions of Man

A. His responsibilities

1. Man was to assume the headship over all nature – “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Gen. 1:26). “Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas” (Psa. 8:6-8).

The New Testament makes it clear that man was made to eventually assume headship over the entire universe. "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:5-8).

2. Man was to make his headquarters in Eden and especially to care for this beautiful garden paradise – "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15).
3. Man was to provide names for every living creatures – "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:19-20).
4. Man was to love and protect his wife.
 - a. Eve is removed from the side of Adam (Gen. 2:18, 21).
 - b. Eve is returned to the side of Adam (Gen. 2:22-24) – "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).
5. Man was to reproduce himself and populate the earth with his kind – "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28).
6. Man was to enjoy all the fruits of the various trees (except one) – "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat" (Gen. 2:16).
- B. His restrictions – Man was forbidden to partake of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17).

V. The Tragic Sin and Fall of Man

A. The temptation preceding the Fall

1. The tempter – "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (Gen. 3:1).
2. The tactics – "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11).
 - a. Satan begins by doubting the Word of God – "And he said unto the woman, yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen. 3:1b).

Note the woman's response: "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Gen. 3:2-3).

- b. Satan ends by denying the Word of God – "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4-5).

In these verses Eve commits two fatal mistakes. She adds to God's word (God did not say, "Neither shall ye touch it"), and then she takes from God's Word (she omitted the original command, "Thou shalt surely die").

- B. The transgression causing the Fall – "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6).

C. The trials following the Fall

1. The pain involved

- a. Shame – "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:7).
- b. Fear – "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8).
- c. Excuses – "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12-13).

2. The parties involved – At this point the righteous Judge sets up his court in Eden and indicts the following:

- a. The serpent
- b. Satan
- c. Adam and Eve
- d. Mother nature

3. The punishment involved

- a. Upon the serpent – "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (Gen. 3:14).

Isaiah indicates that this judgment will continue to be binding upon the serpent even during the Millennium: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (Isa. 65:25).

b. Upon Satan – In essence, Satan would suffer a crushing and fatal head wound (Gen. 3:15).

c. Upon Adam and Eve

(1) Corporately

(a) Physical death – This involves the separation of the soul from the body.

“And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died” (Gen. 5:5). “The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Psa. 90:10).

(b) Spiritual death – This involves the separation of the sinner from the Savior.

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

(2) Individually

(a) Adam, weary labor – “And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:17-19).

(b) Eve – “Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16). Paul Enns observes:

The woman would experience pain in childbirth. The pain (Heb. yizabon) in childbirth is similarly used of Adam’s toil (Gen. 3:17). Both would suffer in their respective roles. The desire of the woman would be toward her husband. This is a difficult phrase and may mean (a) sexual desire (Song of Sol. 7:10), (b) desire for security under her husband’s authority, or (c) desire to rule over her husband (cf. Gen. 4:7). A final aspect of the judgment upon the woman was that the husband would rule over her. (*Moody Handbook of Theology*, p. 309)

d. Upon nature itself – “Cursed is the ground for thy sake.... Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth” (Gen. 3:17-18). “The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its

own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time" (Rom. 8:19-22, NIV).

4. The promise involved – "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). At first glance this verse would merely seem to predict the natural hatred of man for snakes. But for centuries devout Bible students have seen a far more precious and profound truth underlying these words. For in this verse they claim to see no less than a thrilling prediction of the cross and the resurrection, of the Savior's great victory over Satan. Theologically, then, verse 15 may be translated as follows: "And there will be an intense hatred between Satan and Christ. Eventually Christ shall crush the head of Satan, while suffering a heel wound in the process."

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (Rom. 16:20).

- D. The theories explaining the Fall – Were the effects of Adam's fall merely confined to himself, or do they continue somehow to make themselves known in the lives of twentieth-century men?

1. The liberal position – This position holds that, as the entire story is simply a silly Hebrew legend, there can, of course, be absolutely no effect whatsoever.
2. The Pelagian position – Pelagius was a fifth-century British monk who taught that Adam's sin affected only himself, for God imputes to men only those sins which they personally and consciously perform. Pelagius said the only effect of Adam's sin on posterity was that of a bad example. The doctrine of Pelagianism was condemned by the council of Carthage in A.D. 418.
3. The Arminian position – Arminius (1560 – 1609) was a professor who lived and taught in Holland. This theory teaches that, while Adam's sin definitely weakened the will of his posterity to remain sinless, it did not, nevertheless, destroy the possibility.
4. The Augustinian position – Augustine was one of the greatest of the early church fathers. He taught that because of the unity of the human race in Adam, man's sin therefore is imputed to his posterity. Thus, corrupted nature begets corrupted nature. This final view is the only position which is amply supported by the Scriptures.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.... Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of

one shall many be made righteous” (Rom. 5:12, 18-19). “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).

At this point it should be said that in the New Testament the Apostle Paul often distinguishes between “sin” and “sins.” According to Paul:

Sin is the root of man’s problems and a reference to his corrupted nature which he received from Adam. Sins are the fruit of man’s problems and a reference to those actions resulting from his corrupted nature.

It is vital to understand this distinction, for God will not deal with man favorably concerning his sins until he allows him to treat his sin nature. Man sins (commits individual transgressions) because he is a sinner and therefore does not become a sinner because he sins. Thus modernism is content to treat the boils on the skin of mankind (his sins), but the real disease is in the bloodstream (his sin nature). Paul summarizes all this in a single verse, which should be literally translated: “For all have sinned [past tense in Adam], and are [present time, in daily experience] falling short of God’s glory” (Rom. 3:23).

From all this man therefore concludes that Adam’s individual transgression resulted in a sin nature for him, but with mankind it is the other way around – his sin nature results in individual transgressions.

VI. The Present-Day Condition of Man

A. The fallacies

1. Man is dirt and therefore cannot be saved – This is the view of the materialist and the communist. According to this position, the only real difference between a mushroom, a man, and a mountain is simply in the accidental arrangement of the atoms.
2. Man is divine, and therefore need not be saved – This is the view of liberalism. For example, according to this view, as Christian witnesses, our primary ministry to the poor, lost, helpless drunkard is to simply inform him that he is made in God’s image and carries the divine spark of divinity within him. He therefore need only to fan that small flame and begin living that victorious life God wants him to live.

B. The facts – In his first epistle to the church at Corinth, Paul places all living men into three spiritual categories:

1. The natural man – “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14).

The Bible describes all unsaved men (the natural man) as being spiritually depraved. As some confusion has centered itself around the scriptural doctrine of human depravity, let us examine the facts.

a. Negative aspects of depravity

- (1) Depravity does not mean that all unsaved men are as depraved as they can possibly become – Most American men, for example, do not run around murdering little children or robbing banks. But some do. Also, few housewives suddenly abandon their families and become professional harlots.

- (2) Depravity does not hold that a sinner has no sense of God, nor of good and evil – Often, to the shame of the Christian, unsaved men and women demonstrate a higher morality than shown by their professing neighbors and family members.
- (3) Depravity does not teach that an unsaved man cannot admire the noble, or even perform noble and heroic acts – Many battle accounts record the bravery of unsaved soldiers who pay the supreme sacrifice to save the lives of their endangered buddies. On other occasions unsaved firemen and policemen have laid down their lives to protect individuals they may not have even known.

b. Positive aspects of depravity

- (1) Depravity means that all sinners are capable of all wicked things – This means that a freedom-loving Winston Churchill still possessed within his nature all the potential cruelty of an Adolf Hitler.
- (2) Depravity teaches that no sinner has the power to please God.– In essence then, the doctrine of depravity says that man, without God, is not as bad as he can be, but rather as bad off as he can be.

The following Scriptures aptly describe the natural man: “But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you” (John 5:42). “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10-12). “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Rom. 7:18). “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:7-8). “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12).

2. The carnal man – “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

Here Paul sadly describes a Christian who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but who still allows himself to be controlled by the passions of the flesh. Paul calls him a baby, for he has never learned to grow.

3. The Spirit-controlled man – “But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man” (1 Cor. 2:15).

Thus, to summarize this section concerning the present-day condition of man, we may state that all men in the sight of God are (1) corpses – the natural man, (2) crybabies – the carnal man, or (3) conquerors – the Spirit-controlled man.

VII. The Destiny of Man – In the throes of despair, the suffering patriarch Job once cried out: “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not” (Job 14:1-2).

Later during the same dialogue Job would sigh and ask: “If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come” (Job 14:14).

Finally, in the nineteenth chapter of his book, Job reaffirms his own personal faith in God and the destiny of man. Job exclaims: “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25-26).

It has been said that the three most asked, anxious, and for the most part, unanswered, questions of mankind are as follows: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? Thus far in this study, questions one and two have been answered. This section will answer the third question.

A. False views concerning the destiny of man

1. Nirvana – This is an oriental Hindu philosophy (which at certain periods in history has wormed its way into Christian thought) that teaches that at death a man ceases all personal existence and is absorbed by some great life-giving principle in the universe. According to this thought, a man, while he lives, can be pictured as a small wave ripple, skimming the top of a mighty ocean. But when the wind stops (the moment of death), the wave is then received back into the ocean from whence it came, and forever loses its previous identity. Among the many biblical verses refuting Nirvana is Matthew 17:3: “And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him” (Matt. 17:3).

Here we see Moses (who had died 1,400 years earlier) and Elijah (who had departed over seven centuries back) both reappearing on the Mount of Transfiguration to Peter, James, and John. This, of course, proves that absence from this earth does not mean the termination of personality or personhood. (See also 1 Cor. 15:12-20, 42-49.)

2. Reincarnation – This is the belief in the transmigration or rebirth of the soul which has been fundamental to most religions and philosophies of India. As one sows in the present life, so one shall reap in the next, good deeds resulting in a good state of rebirth, bad deeds in a bad state of rebirth. Thus a man’s state of life is seen not as something fortuitous or meaningless, but as the working out, for good or ill, of the effects of a previous existence and the predetermining of a future state. This theory is totally without scriptural support.

A recent Newsweek poll, taken on December 21, 1988, showed that 24 percent of Americans believe in reincarnation.

3. Materialism – This is the atheistic belief that man, like a weasel in the woods, upon death, forever ceases to be and quietly rots into nothingness. This philosophy has been aptly described on an ancient tombstone that read: “I was not, I became not, I am not, I care not.”

To the contrary, the Scriptures teach both the saved and lost will eventually be raised and give an account of themselves to God himself.

- a. The unsaved – “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. 20:11-12).
- b. The saved – “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

4. Universalism

The general decline in belief in an everlasting hell has not only contributed to the increasing use of the word “hell” to describe conditions on earth (as in “the hell of Stalingrad” and “the hell of Dachau”) but has also been accompanied within the churches by the assumption that most, if not all, humanity will get to heaven. Universalism is the word normally used by theologians to describe the doctrine that ultimately and finally all humanity without exception will enter into the everlasting life. Another way of expressing it is to say that it is the doctrine that since no soul can have been created for final condemnation no soul can in the end be lost. Not all those who would call themselves (or be called by others) universalists necessarily suppose that there will be no hell (for there may be a “temporary” hell for some) or that the total number in heaven will be equivalent to the total number of human beings and angels originally created (for some angels and humans may be annihilated). What universalism does require is that finally from everlasting to everlasting there be no person left in hell or not included in the kingdom of heaven. (Peter Toon, *Heaven and Hell*, p. 183)

John Braun expands Peter Toon’s definition when he writes:

At rock bottom, the doctrine of universalism is a speculative philosophical system. Universalists do not begin with either the biblical material on the subject of eternal punishment or with the historic church’s interpretation of that data. Instead, they start with two philosophical assumptions born in their own imaginations.

The first is that God’s love is so perfectly good and perfectly sovereign that there is no way it could suffer the defeat of allowing one of His creatures to end up being eternally punished. That would mean, they contend, that there is something more powerful than the love of God. The second assumption has to do with the free will of man. Stripped of all the fancy philosophical language, it boils down to the argument that if man stands at a crossroads with only two opinions,

one leading to heaven and the other leading to eternal torment, he doesn't really have free will at all. He is forced to choose one or the other. How, they contend, under such pressure could free will truly be exercised? According to D. P. Walker, a contemporary writer whose book, *The Decline of Hell*, favors universalism, these two assumptions stretch all the way back to Origen:

"The whole of Origen's eschatology is based on two principles: first, the justice and goodness of an omnipotent Creator; secondly, the absolute free will of every rational being (man, animated star, angel, demon)." (*Whatever Happened to Hell?* p. 42)

Origen actually taught that even Satan himself would eventually be reconciled to God. In addition to his grievous error concerning universalism, Origen was also the father of Arianism, which denied the deity of Jesus Christ. His teaching on both issues was soundly condemned at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 543.

- a. The argument for universalism reviewed – The following Scripture passages are offered to support universalism: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20-21).

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom 5:18). "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor.15:22). "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Eph. 1:10). "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11).

- b. The argument for universalism refuted

- (1) First, Origen's hope for Satan's final salvation will definitely not be realized – In fact, to the contrary, he, along with the Antichrist and false prophet will suffer the judgment of eternal hell. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).
- (2) Second, we must realize that the Bible frequently uses the word all in a restricted sense, as pertaining to all in a certain category rather than all without exception – Examples are numerous.

Matthew tells us that "all Judea" went out to hear John the Baptist (3:5-6). Luke records that a decree went out that "a census be taken of all the inhabited earth"

(2:1). And the disciples of John the Baptist complained that “all men” were following Christ. In the passages written by Paul, it is clear that all who are in Adam die, whereas all who are in Christ shall be made alive. The all has limitations built into it by the context. (Erwin Lutzer, *Coming to Grips with Hell*, p. 14)

(3) Third, the passage in Philippians does not teach all will accept Christ as Savior, but rather that all will eventually acknowledge him as Sovereign – “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Rev. 5:13).

This “creature confession” of their creator includes the world of demons also. “And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God” (Mark 1:23-24).

5. Restorationism – This is the belief that in a future life all men will be given a second chance to make that choice for God they did not make during this life.

a. Reasons for this position – Restorationists use the following scriptures to “prove” their view: “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3-4). “For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe” (1 Tim. 4:10). “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison” (1 Pet. 3:18-19).

However, a quick glance at the context of the above verses show that all the “restored” here are those who have accepted Christ as Savior. The passage in 1 Peter has been the subject of some controversy, but whatever else, it does not teach restorationism. The verb “preached” in verse 19 in the original Greek does not refer to gospel preaching.

b. Rejection of this position – Restorationism is refuted by the following verses: “He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Prov. 29:1). “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:22-23). “And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matt. 12:32).

“And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence” (Luke 16:26). “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.... For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:11, 18-19).

If these verses teach anything, they strongly and sternly declare that at the moment of death there exists absolutely no chance for the salvation of an unsaved person. We may be tempted to argue with God concerning the why of the matter, but not the what of the matter.

6. Conditionalism – Erwin Lutzer writes:

Whereas universalism sought to take the “forever” out of hell, we now come to a theory that attempts to take the hell out of forever. Conditional immortality is more attractive to evangelicals than universalism. This teaching contends that all will not be saved, but neither will any be in conscious torment forever. God resurrects the wicked to judge them, then they are thrown into the fire and consumed. The righteous are granted eternal life while the unbelievers are granted eternal death. Hell is annihilation. (Ibid., p. 15)

This false doctrine will be dealt with in more detail under the discussion of annihilation. In a sense, conditionalism is even a greater heresy than that of universalism or restorationism, for it teaches that all human beings were originally created without immortal souls, which is clearly refuted by the Scriptures. “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2). Note here the souls of both saved and lost are said to be everlasting.

7. Annihilationism – This theory, espoused by the Jehovah’s Witnesses, along with various other groups, teaches that all the ungodly will someday literally be “uncreated,” or annihilated, by God. Harold Bryson observes:

Annihilationism takes several forms for its expression. One is that at death every unsaved person ceases to exist. Another form claims that annihilation does not come immediately. According to this variation, the unsaved remain in hell in a conscious state until the day of judgment. After judgment they cease to exist. This form of annihilationism allows time of the suffering of the full penalty of sins. (Harold Bryson, *Yes, Virginia, There Is a Hell*, p. 39)

Peter Toon quotes from a modern-day defender of annihilationism:

Already we have referred to this position, espoused this century by leading Anglican writers. Most recently Brian Hebblethwaite has written:

"If creatures can rebel against the divine ground of their being to such an extent as to render themselves absolutely unredeemable then there seems no point in God's keeping them in being for ever in such an unending state of deprivation. It is much more plausible to suppose that the language of damnation and everlasting loss is symbolic language, designed to bring out the awesome possibility that a man may by his actions and his attitudes forfeit his eternal destiny and render himself incapable of being drawn into the love and life of God. But if such a terrible possibility is fulfilled, it must mean that the lost one brings about his own annihilation and disappears from being rather than that he is raised for ever and held in a state of everlasting damnation. The sheer pointlessness of such a state being allowed to continue for ever shows clearly that conditional immortality is more religiously and morally plausible than everlasting punishment."

But he really does not want to believe in annihilation, for he continues:

"One would like to be able to hope that even the possibility of eternal loss in the sense of annihilation is never in fact realized. To suppose that there comes a time when the God of love, who went to the lengths of the Cross of Christ to win men's love in return, has to write off a created person as absolutely unredeemable is a hard supposition for a Christian to make."

In fact he wants to believe in a second chance after death in a process which is like a purgatory for all (baptized and unbaptized alike). He says:

"Once we free ourselves from the old idea that opportunities to repent and respond to God's love are restricted to a single lifespan on earth, we may be the readier to hope that God's patient, self-sacrificial love will in the end prevail over even the most recalcitrant sinner. In other words, the notion of conditional immortality makes greater sense in conjunction with the old idea of the finality of death." (*Heaven and Hell*, pp. 186-187)

Tragically, in recent times, two scholars from the evangelical camp have come down on the side of annihilation. These men are Clark Pinnock and Edward Fudge.

Erwin Lutzer writes concerning Pinnock:

Clark Pinnock of McMaster University in Toronto, Canada, asks how one can imagine for a moment that the God who gave His Son to die on the cross would "install a torture chamber somewhere in the new creation in order to subject those

who reject him in everlasting pain? He observes that it is difficult enough to defend Christianity in light of the problem of evil and suffering without having to explain hell too.

Pinnock believes that the fire of God consumes the lost. Thus God does not raise the wicked to torture them but rather to declare judgment on them and condemn them to extinction, which is the second death. Everlasting punishment, according to Pinnock, means God sentences the lost to final, definitive death. (*Coming to Grips with Hell*, p. 16)

An angry John Braun writes concerning Fudge:

A 1976 Christianity Today article, "Putting Hell in Its Place," provides a typical example of a careless, unchecked "soft line" on hell. Here author Edward Fudge dangerously hedges on the biblical teaching of the degree and extent of eternal punishment.

Admitting there is such a place and that the wicked go there, Fudge sets out with an obvious backhanded slap at great preachers such as Charles Haddon Spurgeon and Isaac Watts. The obvious implication, apparent even from the title of the article, is that these preachers – not hell's critics – removed hell from its proper place.

Then, dismissing these two giants of the past with the all-soothing evangelical shibboleth, "But enough of that; let us look to the Scriptures" (as if Spurgeon and Watts didn't preach the Scriptures!), he makes an incredibly shallow attempt to demonstrate why we should speak of the torments of hell as "aionic" or "new age" instead of "eternal" or "everlasting."

"In our common versions, this word [aionos, the Greek word for eternal] is usually translated 'everlasting' or 'eternal.' A better translation would probably be the transliteration 'aionic' or 'new age.' Aionos designates a quality of the Age to Come."

Suddenly, the word aionos no longer really can mean "everlasting" or "eternal." It's now a quality – whatever on earth, in heaven, or in hell that might be.

In the article, Fudge begins his conclusion with a discussion of this portion of Matthew 25:46, "Then these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous to eternal life." Fudge comments:

"Here is 'punishment' – punishment that expresses both wrath and justice, There stands life.' Both terms are rich in meaning for inhabitants of the Present Age. But both are here qualified by the same word 'aionic.' Both punishment and life are of a quality belonging to the Age to Come and may be described finally only by 'aionic.'"

Come on now! This arbitrary tampering with words has gone far enough. "Aionic" life is everlasting life, not some quality of unknown duration, and

“aionic” punishment may be described finally only by “everlasting.”...Where the New Testament Scriptures are dealt with, the word refers to an endless period of time, not a quality. Tell me now, who would be excited about having “aionic” life and who would be scared of “aionic” punishment?

Who on earth knows what “aionic” means? Talk about taking the stinger out of hell! Furthermore, there is no way Fudge’s shoddy attempt at a linguistic treatment of a handful of Bible verses holds up – as if no Bible expert but him in the last two thousand years caught the “error” of using the term “eternal” instead of “new age” or “aionic!”

The article’s insipid conclusion is shocking, not only that Fudge would write it, but that Christianity Today would print it. Wrote Fudge:

“Hell is one New Testament picture portraying the fate of the unsaved. But, as we have seen, it is not the only one: it is not even the primary one, Nor is it the definitive one [*italics mine*].”

What a far cry this lukewarm stance is from that of the founders of the evangelical movement. (*Whatever Happened to Hell?* pp. 96 – 97)

Those believing in annihilationism attempt to under gird their claims by quoting certain Scripture verses in the Psalms: “For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth” (Psa. 37:9). “The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy” (Psa. 145:20).

However, it should be observed that the same Hebrew word *karath* translated “cut off” in Psalm 37:9 is also used in reference to the crucifixion of the Messiah as prophesied in Daniel 9:26. Christ was certainly not annihilated at Calvary. In Psalm 145:20 the identical Hebrew word here rendered “destroy” is found describing the punishment of both Egypt (Exod. 10:7) and Israel (Hosea 13:9), neither of which nation has yet to suffer annihilation.

Concerning the New Testament, annihilationists attempt to show that whenever the words eternal or everlasting are linked to words of action, it refers to the result of the action, not to the action itself. For example, the phrase “eternal judgment” does not mean that the judgment itself will go on eternally, though there will be consequences that will. “Eternal redemption” does not mean that the act of Christ goes on forever, though the consequences do.

Erwin Lutzer, however, quickly refutes this claim:

Unfortunately, that interpretation will not survive careful analysis. Robert A. Morey in his book *Death and the Afterlife* points out that the word destroyed as used in the Bible does not mean “to annihilate.” The Greek word *apollumi* is used in passages such as Matthew 9:17; Luke 15:4; and John 6:12, 17. In none of those instances does it mean “to pass out of existence.” Morey writes, “There isn’t a single instance in the New Testament where *apollumi* means annihilation in the

strict sense of the word.” Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon defines it as “to be delivered up to eternal misery.” (*Coming to Grips with Hell*, p. 18)

8. Soul sleep – This says both the departed saved and unsaved sleep in their graves, awaiting the final resurrection.

a. This position reviewed – The following verses are offered to support soul sleep.

“These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.... Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead” (John 11:11, 14). “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:59-60), “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20). “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him” (1 Thess. 4:14).

b. This position refuted – Here it should be noted that while soul sleep is not nearly as heretical as the previous seven positions we have thus mentioned, it is, nevertheless, a false view. The context of the above verses describe the body as sleeping, not the soul. Note the wording relating to an event that occurred after the death of Christ: “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose” (Matt. 27:52).

Key verses refuting soul sleep and reaffirming soul consciousness after death are as follows: “And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him” (Matt. 17:3). “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matt. 22:32). “We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” (2 Cor. 5:8, NIV). “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Phil. 1:23).

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled” (Rev. 6:9-11).

9. Purgatory – This is the belief of Roman Catholics that all those who die at peace with the church but are not perfect must undergo penal and purifying sufferings. However, this is only for those who die in venial (lesser) sin, for all dying in mortal sin are forever condemned to hell. Roman doctrine teaches that a person’s stay in purgatory may be shortened by the gifts or services rendered by living people in behalf of the beloved dead one through the Roman Catholic church.

a. This position reviewed – The doctrine of purgatory is based upon two main sources, neither of which is scriptural.

(1) A church council decree – In 1563 the Roman Catholic Council of Trent approved the Decree Concerning Purgatory. It reads:

Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit, has, from the Sacred Writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught, in sacred Councils, and very recently in this ecumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar – the holy Synod enjoins on bishops that they diligently endeavor that the sound doctrine concerning Purgatory, transmitted by the holy Fathers and sacred Councils, be believed, maintained, taught, and everywhere proclaimed by the faithful of Christ.

(2) A reference from 2 Maccabees, a noncanonical book – Following his victory over an enemy in battle, Jewish hero Judas received an offering of some 12,000 pieces of silver and sent it to Jerusalem “for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead (soldiers who had fallen in battle),” concluding, “It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins” (2 Mace. 12:43, 46).

b. This position refuted

(1) The Scriptures teach a repenting sinner is saved by faith in the grace of God alone, apart from any good works, including suffering in purgatory. (See Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5.)

(2) The Scriptures teach Christ’s work on the cross was sufficient to save all sinners. (See Heb. 9:11-14, 24-28; 10:12, 16-17.)

10. Limbo – This is another aspect of Roman Catholic theology that teaches that all unbaptized children and the mentally incompetent, upon death, proceed to a permanent place of “natural happiness,” but not heaven. Jesus himself refuted this view on at least two occasions:

“At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:1-3). “But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:14).

B. Scriptural considerations concerning the destiny of man

1. Before the cross – Where was the abode of the dead prior to Calvary? It is held by a number of Bible students that before Jesus died, the souls of all men descended into an abode located somewhere in the earth known as hades in the New Testament and Sheol in the Old Testament. Originally, there were two sections of hades, one for the

saved and one for the lost. The saved section is sometimes called paradise, and is at other times referred to as "Abraham's bosom." "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried" (Luke 16:22).

There is no name given for the unsaved section apart from the general designation of hades. In Luke 16:19-31 the Savior relates the account of a poor believer who died and went to the saved part of hades and of a rich unbeliever who died and went to the unsaved section.

A number of extremely interesting conclusions may be derived from this historical account as related by Christ.

- a. The activities of angels in carrying believers to their reward
- b. The possibilities of an intermediate, preresurrection body for the lost as well as the saved
- c. The irony of an occupant in hell desiring to become a soul winner
- d. The nature of the rich man's request to send Lazarus to testify to his five lost brothers, reasoning that "if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent"

This pathetic request was of course denied, simply because it would not have worked. The fact of the matter is that Christ did actually raise a man with the same name as Lazarus a few months later. What were the results of this? Did it cause the unbelieving Jews to come to the Savior? Hardly. In fact, just the opposite occurred, for the wicked Pharisees not only decided to kill Jesus for his action (John 11:53), but actually planned (if necessary) to murder the resurrected Lazarus also (John 12:10-11). "Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death" (John 11:53). "But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus" (John 12:10-11).

However, many believe that all this changed after Christ had made full payment for the believer's sins on Calvary. The Scofield Bible suggests that during the time of his death and resurrection our Lord descended into hades, depopulated paradise, and led a spiritual triumphal entry into the heavenlies with all the saved up to that time. The following is offered as proof of this: 'Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)' (Eph. 4:8-10).

In his book *Revelation* the late Dr. Donald Barnhouse writes: "When He ascended on High He emptied Hell of Paradise and took it straight to the presence of God. Captivity was taken captive.... From that moment onward there was to be no separation whatsoever for those who believe in Christ. The gates of Hell would never more prevail against any believer" (*Revelation*, p. 380).

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

2. After the cross – The state of the unsaved dead remained (and remains) unchanged after the cross. They remain in hades awaiting the final Great White Throne Judgment.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

This means the lost rich man is still in hades, there having since been joined by Judas, Herod, Nero, Hitler, etc., and will remain there until after the Millennium and the resurrection of the unjust. “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Rev. 20:5).

But a glorious change has occurred concerning the state of those who fall asleep in Jesus. Note the following Scriptures: “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.... And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:55, 59-60).

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.... For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Phil. 1:21, 23).

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8).

Thus, according to these verses, both Stephen and Paul, along with all other departed believers, are now in the heavenlies with Christ. In the Scriptures Paul refers to this place as “the third heaven.” (See 2 Cor. 12:1-4.)

- VIII. The Final Place for Unsaved Man: Hell – “But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.” (Luke 12:5). “And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:47-48).

- A. The denial of hell – Of all the many doctrines in the Bible, undoubtedly the very first that the unbeliever will deny and the weak believer will question is the doctrine of hell. Satan has successfully accomplished this coveted goal through the following three methods:

1. Rationalism – “There is no God, and therefore there can be no hell.” This rationalism often disguises itself in the garb of “science.” Harold Bryson writes:

Other people deny the existence of hell on the basis of modern thinking. Some assume that many scientific discoveries of the 20th century render belief in a future life impossible. Using scientific study of the dissolution of the chemical elements of the body, they deny any possibility of a bodily resurrection. Also, the theory of organic evolution tries to demonstrate man's common origin with lower life forms. Evolution destroys the basis for believing that man has a higher destiny than any other creature. Some naively insist that the penetration of space leaves no place for the biblical teachings on heaven and hell. It has been assumed that if man finds no evidence of heaven in space then there is likewise no hell located in the opposite direction. (*Yes, Virginia, There Is a Hell*, p. 12)

Charles Darwin rejected the doctrine of hell: "Disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete. I can hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for, if so, the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe – and this would include my father, brother, and almost all my best friends – will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine" (*Ibid.*, p. 164).

The English agnostic clergyman John A. T. Robinson, bishop of Woolwich, writes: "There are still a few who would like to bring back hell, as some want to bring back... hanging. They are usually the same types who wish to purge Britain of... sex and violence" (*But That I Can't Believe*, p. 69).

A Newsweek article on the after life says: "Today, hell is theology's H-word, a subject too trite for serious scholarship. When well-known church historian Martin Marty prepared a Harvard lecture on the disappearance of hell, he consulted the indices of several scholarly journals, including one dating back to 1889, and failed to find a single entry" (*Newsweek*, 27 March 1989, 54).

Marty thus concluded: "Hell disappeared. And no one noticed!"

2. Ridicule – "There may be a God, but it is silly to speculate about multitudes of disembodied spirits frying in some literal lake of fire somewhere." One of America's most famous atheists was Robert G. Ingersoll, who ridiculed the idea of hell whenever and wherever he could. When asked to coin a slogan to help promote a cigar that bore his name, he quipped, "Smoke in this world, and not in the one to come!" Ingersoll loved the writings of the great poet Robert Burns. He often stated that one page of Burns had more literary merit than an entire book by Moses. Upon Ingersoll's death, some wag suggested that an appropriate epitaph for his tombstone would be to simply print the name of his favorite author: "Robert Burns!"

On the subject of hell, Ingersoll said: "The idea of hell was born of revenge and brutality on the one side, and cowardice on the other.... I have no respect for any man who preaches it.... I dislike this doctrine, I hate it, I despise it, I defy this doctrine!"

The famous news editor Horace Greeley is said to have refused to make a contribution to a religious group who solicited funds to be used in "keeping people

out of hell.” His reason was that, in his opinion, there were not nearly enough people going to hell at that present time.

3. Religion – “There is a God, but he is a God of love and therefore would not and could not send anyone to hell.” This, of course, is the position of liberalism. Recent theologians such as Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Paul Tillich, and others either denied or downplayed the doctrine of hell. The cults have at least one common ground, and that is, there is no hell.
 - a. The Christian Science church defines hell as error of mortal mind.
 - b. The Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that the wicked will simply be annihilated.
 - c. The Mormons believe in hell, but not as an endless existence – They teach that life after death involves three levels: celestial, terrestrial, and telestial. The celestial level includes Mormons in an intermediate state, who will eventually become gods. The terrestrial level includes Christians and other persons who rejected the Mormon message. The telestial level is reserved for those currently in hell who await a final resurrection. Mormons teach that these will ultimately be saved and not suffer punishment forever.
 - d. The Seventh-Day Adventists claim that God will someday blot out all sin and sinners and establish a clean universe again.

The late Bishop James Pike wrote:

A Heaven of infinite bliss and a Hell of infinite torment is an impossible contradiction. The kind of people who would qualify for Heaven would not be in bliss knowing that there were a lot of people in suffering with no chance whatever for change – the have-nots, the underprivileged. Those suitable for Heaven would want to go to Hell to be alongside them in their needs. Jesus, as shown by the reports of his ministry on earth, would be there alongside them too. God in his Heaven would find himself lonely and might well join everybody there – or change the whole scheme. (William C. Oursler, *Protestant Power and the Coming Revolution*, p. 173)

Regardless of the doubts and denials of men, the Bible dogmatically declares the existence and reality of hell. Here the devout believer would agree with the Apostle Paul: “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4a).

B. The church’s belief in hell – John Hunt has observed:

If there be any doctrine ever taught in the name of Christianity which can claim to be really catholic, it is the doctrine of never-ending punishment. This has been believed by the majority of Christians in all ages, in all Churches, and, with very insignificant exceptions, in all sects. Fathers, Schoolmen, and Reformers, zealous Roman Catholics

and ardent Protestants, have agreed that this is an undeniable portion of the Catholic faith. (*Contemporary Review*, April 1878)

John Braun's helpful book *Whatever Happened to Hell?* documents for us the almost universal belief in the doctrine of eternal Hell as testified by the most important and influential church fathers. Note their statements:

1. Ignatius of Antioch, a pupil of John the apostle (A.D. 35 – 107) – When describing the kind of man who corrupts families, Ignatius warns: "Such a man becomes filthy and will go to the unquenchable fire" (p. 105).
2. Polycarp, another disciple of John the apostle (69 – 155) – When threatened by the Roman proconsul to burn him with fire if he refused to renounce Christ, Polycarp replied: 'You threaten fire which burns for an hour and is soon quenched; for you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and eternal punishment received for the wicked' (p. 106).
3. Justin Martyr (100 – 165) – "We say that the souls of the wicked, being united to the same bodies, shall be consigned over to eternal torment" (p. 106).
4. Irenaeus (130 – 202) – "Thus also the punishment of those who do not believe the Word of God is not merely temporal, but is... eternal... these shall be damned Forever" (p. 107).
5. Tertullian (160 – 220) – "The profane and all who are not true worshippers of God... shall be consigned to the punishment of everlasting fire" (p. 107).
6. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (200 – 258) – "An ever burning Gehenna will burn up the condemned, and a punishment devouring with living flames; nor will there be any time whence they may have either rest or end to their torments. The pain of punishment will be without the fruit of penitence; weeping will be useless, and prayers ineffectual. Too late they will believe in eternal punishment who do not believe in eternal life" (p. 108).
7. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (296-372) – "Therefore the divine word does not allow them (sinners) to have peace... for there is no hope... the last fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, awaits those who disregarded divine light" (p. 108).
8. John Chrysostom (347&07) – "Neither will any severity of torment destroy the soul, nor will the body be able, in that time, to be consumed by burning" (p. 110).

It will be noted that all the above lived during the first few centuries of church history. At least two of them (Ignatius and Polycarp) were personally instructed by a leading apostle of Christ, who himself authored five New Testament epistles (John).

All this is extremely important and should not be overlooked. Apparently the early church fathers were totally unaware that the scriptural words forever, eternal, and everlasting do not really mean what they imply, as advocated by recent "enlightened" evangelicals. The fact remains – the original Christians believed in an eternal hell. Note Martin Luther's testimony: "Moreover, this article [eternal punishment] has been unanimously believed and held from the beginning of the Christian church to the

present hour, as may be shown from the books and writings of the fathers, both in Greek and Latin languages; which testimony of the entire holy Christian Church ought to be sufficient for us" (p. 104).

C. The vocabulary of hell – Four key words must be considered if one desires to understand the concept of hell. These are: Sheol, Hades, Tartarus, and Gehenna.

1. Sheol – Sheol is a Hebrew word, found 65 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. It is translated "hell" 31 times, "grave" 31 times, and "pit" 3 times.

Two locations and meanings may be in view by these 65 references, with the scriptural context determining the particular location.

a. The dwelling place of the dead human body (the grave) – There are (at least) four Old Testament instances where Sheol means simply the grave.

- (1) Jacob's sorrow over the (assumed) death of his beloved son Joseph – "And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him" (Gen. 37:35).
- (2) Job's desire to end his suffering by way of death – "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!" (Job 14:13).
- (3) David's prophecy concerning the resurrection of Christ from the grave – "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psa. 16:10).
- (4) The psalmist's fear of death – "For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength" (Psa. 88:3-4).

b. The dwelling place of the departed human spirit (consisting of two separate compartments)

(1) Saved human spirits

- (a) The place where Samuel came from to meet Saul (1 Sam. 28:14)
- (b) The place where David expected to meet his dead infant son (2 Sam. 12:21-23)

(2) Lost human spirits

- (a) Those Israelites who rebel against God – "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains" (Deut. 32:22).
- (b) Those Gentiles who rebel against God – "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9:17).

2. Hades – In essence, hades may be looked upon as the counterpart Greek New Testament word for the Hebrew Old Testament word Sheol. The word hades is translated by the word "hell" ten times in the New Testament, and on one occasion is rendered "grave" (1 Cor. 15:55).

a. Three of the hell references have the grave in mind (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:27, 31).

- b. Seven of the hell references have punishment in mind (Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14).
3. Tartarus – This word is used but once in the New Testament, and is translated by the word “hell.” “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4). In light of this passage it is not unreasonable to suggest Tartarus may be the underground prison house for a special group of fallen angels already in chains awaiting final judgment. Both Luke and Jude seem to indicate this. “And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep” (Luke 8:31). “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). The sin causing the early imprisonment of these particular fallen angels may have been associated with the events in Genesis 6. (See also 1 Peter 3:18-20.)
4. Gehenna – We have already seen that, following the Tribulation, all the unsaved dead will be resurrected from Hades in the heart of the earth to appear before the Great White Throne judgment. (This is clearly stated in Revelation 20:11-15, see above.) They will then be cast into Gehenna hell forever. Gehenna is a New Testament word with an Old Testament background. It is found 12 times in the Greek New Testament, 11 of those instances coming from the mouth of the Savior himself (Matt. 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 25:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6). On each occasion it is translated by the word “hell.” A brief etymology of the word Gehenna will be helpful here.
- In the Old Testament, a wicked Israelite king named Ahaz forsook the worship of Jehovah and followed the devil-god Molech. In his insane and immoral attempt to please Molech, the king actually sacrificed his own children in the fires as burnt offerings to his abominable idol. (See 2 Chron. 28:1-4; 2 Kings 23:10.)
- This all took place in a deep and narrow valley to the south of Jerusalem called the Valley of Hinnom. It was called by this name because of its owners, the sons of Hinnom.
- This terrible practice was stopped under the reign of godly King Josiah, but the Valley of Hinnom continued to be used as the dumping ground for the garbage and filth of the city of Jerusalem.
- Jeremiah the prophet also writes about both the Valley of Hinnom and Tophet: “And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away” (Jer. 7:31-33).

Walter Price writes:

Tophet was probably the point south of Jerusalem where three valleys met. The Tyropoeon Valley which runs through the old city and down by the Western Wall of the temple mount, intersects here with the Valley of Hinnom. The Valley of the son of Hinnom sweeps around the western side of the city and turns east below the Ophel to meet the Valley of Kidron. All three of these valleys converge at the spot where ancient Israel offered sacrifices to the Ammonite god Molech (2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6). Here also the field of Akeldama is located (Matt. 27:7-8; Acts 1:18-19). The Talmud places the mouth of Hell in this place. The Arabs also call this lower end of the Hinnom Valley where it meets Kidron, at Topheth, the Valley of Hell, In Jesus' day the city garbage dump was located there. The fighting between Jews and Romans ended here in A.D. 70. As many as 600,000 bodies of dead Jews, slain in the defense of Jerusalem against the Romans, were carried out through the Dung Gate to be buried in Tophet. (*The Coming Antichrist*, pp. 202 – 203)

As one therefore combines both Old Testament and New Testament meanings, he has described for him a place of filth and sorrow, of smoke and pain, of fire and death. This, then, is the word the Holy Spirit chose to employ in describing the final destiny for the unsaved. With all these things in mind, one is forced to the sobering conclusion that Gehenna hell is God's final dumping and burning place for all unsaved men and apostate angels.

- D. The location of hell – The Bible definitely indicates that hades is somewhere down in the heart of the earth. "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation" (Num. 16:32-33).

It teaches, however, the following about Gehenna: "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 8:12). "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 22:13). "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30). "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever" (2 Pet. 2:17). "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13).

From these five verses it becomes immediately clear that Gehenna hell is located away from this earth, a place of outer darkness, to be found, perhaps, in some remote spot near the edge of God's universe. If one thus distinguishes between hades hell and Gehenna hell, he will understand the words of John in describing the final resurrection of the wicked dead and their judgment. John writes: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev. 20:14).

By this John meant that both death (which claimed the bodies of all dead unbelievers) and hell (that is, hades hell, which had held the spirits of all unsaved men) gave up their possessions, thus resulting in the joined bodies and spirits of all the unsaved being cast into Gehenna hell.

E. The nature and characteristics of hell – What will Gehenna really be like? Consider: Hell is:

1. A place of unquenchable fire – “Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matt. 3:12). “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:41-42). “And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched” (Mark 9:43).

Opposing positions have been taken concerning whether the fire here is literal fire. It has been suggested that the fire is not real fire but something far worse. However, the Greek language would indicate otherwise. The same Greek word for fire (pur) used in Matthew 13:42 is also found in Matthew 17:15 and Luke 17:29. “And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:42). “Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water” (Matt. 17:15). “But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:29).

2. A place of memory and remorse – In Luke 16:19-31 the unsaved rich man experienced memory and remorse over his lost condition in hades. Surely these experiences will not be lessened in Gehenna.
 - a. Like David, those in hell will always be able to say – “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me” (Psa. 51:3).
 - b. Unlike David, they will never be able to say – “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psa. 32:1).

The poet John Greenleaf Whittier has written: “For of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: ‘It might have been.’”

3. A place of thirst – Again in the Luke 16 account we read: “And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame” (Luke 16:24).

It would seem difficult indeed to accept this account literally unless the fire in hell is literal. But what of Lazarus’s finger and the rich man’s tongue? Can this be interpreted literally?

It has been speculated, on the basis of this passage and also the one in 2 Corinthians 5, that temporary bodies of some sort are given to both unsaved and saved until the final resurrection of all.

4. A place of misery and pain – “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 whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (Rev. 14:10-11).
5. A place of frustration and anger – “And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:42). “And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 24:51).
6. A place of separation – Often the unsaved man jokes about hell in the following manner: “Well, if I do go to hell, I won’t be lonely; all my friends will be there too.” But quite the opposite is true. In at least four separate passages Gehenna hell is called “the second death.”

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Rev. 2:11). “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:6, 15). “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

As we have already noted, “death” in the Bible refers to separation. Thus hell is literally the second death, for the sinner will be forever separated from God, and, inasmuch as Gehenna is a place of darkness, this separation will doubtless isolate him from the companionship of unsaved friends as well.

Thus, the worst thing about hell is closely connected to the best thing about heaven, and that is, the first is a place where Jesus Christ will be conspicuously absent while the second location is a place where he will be conspicuously present.

7. A place of undiluted divine wrath – Man has already experienced some of God’s wrath on this earth, but not in its pure state. After the flood there has been the rainbow, for up to this point God has always heard and answered the prophet Habakkuk’s prayer: “O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy” (Hab. 3:2).

But no more! All living unsaved men should carefully ponder over the following frightful words: “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” (Rev. 14:10).

8. A place originally prepared for Satan and his hosts – Perhaps the saddest fact about hell is that unsaved man goes there as an uninvited guest, so to speak. Note Jesus' words: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

How tragic, therefore, that the sinner will refuse heaven, the place prepared for all repenting men, only to eventually descend into hell, a place originally not created for him. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).

Note: In Gethsemane on three occasions our Lord prayed, "Thy will be done." In a very real sense those four simple words determine heaven or hell for each human being. To explain:

- a. If the sinner rejects Christ, then the Father says to him, "Thy will be done," resulting in hell.
 - b. If the sinner accepts Christ, then he himself says to the Father, "Thy will be done," resulting in heaven.
9. A place created for all eternity – The Greek word for "everlasting" is *aionios*, and it is found 71 times in the New Testament. Sixty-four of these instances are in reference to God, such as his eternal power, spirit, kingdom, covenant, etc. The remaining seven instances are directly related to the duration of hell. In other words, hell will continue as long as God's works continue, which is forever. Many passages bring this truth out.

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2). "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46). "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

How long is eternity? Imagine the sun (which is well over a million times the size of our earth) being made of solid granite rock. Also imagine a little bird from our planet flying to this incredibly huge rock once each thousand years and removing from it a tiny grain of sand. When the last particle has been carried away, the first moment of eternity would have scarcely begun.

What Christian has not thrilled with the singing of the last stanza of John Newton's great hymn, "Amazing Grace." Note its words: 'When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.'

But let me reverse this and apply it to those in hell: "When they've been there ten thousand years, fire hotter than the sun, they've no less days to curse and rave, than when they first begun!" Sobering thought indeed!

Without doubt the most difficult truth to accept, even for Christians, is the duration of hell. One might understand a 65-year old sinner going to Hell for 65 years, or 650, or 6,500, or even 65 million years. But why the endless ages? How can a just God

rightfully punish forever those sins that were committed in a brief period of time on earth?

A full answer to this exists only in the mind of God. However, hell does vividly demonstrate the heinousness of sin and the holiness of God. Thus, sins against God's eternal holiness can only be punished by God's eternal justice.

F. The degrees of punishment in hell – The Scriptures clearly teach there is neither injustice or partiality with God. Note: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds.... For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:6, 11).

It naturally follows therefore that the degrees of suffering in hell (as is also the case concerning the rewards in heaven) will vary greatly, being in direct relationship to the sinner's life here on earth. A number of Scriptures bear this out:

1. Christ's words concerning some unbelieving cities – "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matt. 11:20-24).
 2. Christ's words concerning the unfaithful servant – "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:47-48).
 3. Christ's words concerning the dishonest scribes – "Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples, Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation" (Luke 20:45-47).
 4. Christ's words concerning the Jewish leaders involved in his crucifixion – "Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin" (John 19:10-11).
 5. Paul's words concerning the unbeliever's relationship to the Law of God – "All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law" (Rom. 2:12, NIV).
- G. The occupants of hell – Who shall be someday confined to Gehenna forever?

1. Satan – “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen” (Rom. 16:20). “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).
2. The Antichrist – “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thess. 2:8).
3. The false prophet – “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20).
4. Fallen angels – “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4).

According to Paul, the believer will take part in the passing of judgment upon fallen angels. “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Cor. 6:3).

5. Judas Iscariot – The betrayer of Jesus Christ is singled out here in particular because there are those (notably the late beloved Kenneth S. Wuest of the Moody Bible Institute faculty) who believe Judas will be consigned to a special place in Gehenna on the basis of Peter’s words concerning him in the Upper Room just prior to Pentecost: “That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place” (Acts 1:25).
6. All unsaved people – In Rev. 21:8 John classifies all sinners into eight general categories: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8). These categories are:

- a. The fearful – At first glance it might seem strange to find the fearful at the top of this divine “rogues of Gehenna” listing, but many obviously will wind up in hell because they fear the cost of claiming the Savior’s name.

“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe” (Prov. 29:25). “These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue” (John 9:22). “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:42-43).

- b. The unbelieving – Literally, these are the disbelieving. No man ever goes to hell because he can’t believe, but rather because he won’t believe. There is no such thing as an honest agnostic. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he

that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).

- c. The abominable – Literally, this refers to those defiled with abominations. “These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren” (Prov. 6:16-19).
- d. Murderers – This refers not only to a human-killer, but also to a human-hater as well. ‘Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:15).
- e. Whoremongers – This describes those guilty of sexual sins. “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph. 5:5). “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4).

For some reason not fully revealed in the Scriptures, God especially hates the sin of sexual immorality, perhaps considering it, with the exception of pride and self-will, the most offensive transgression of all.

This sin invoked the death penalty upon those guilty of it in the Old Testament (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24). It was for this sin God wiped out the ancient city of Sodom (Gen. 13:13; 18:20-21; 19:24). Sexual perversion probably led to the destruction of the Canaanite society by Joshua at the command of God (Compare Deut. 20:17-18; Josh. 6:21 with 1 Kings 14:24). Finally, in the New Testament Paul links this sin to the ultimate degradation of the human race. In fact, it is the only recorded sin prompting God to “give up” on those nations and cultures practicing it.

“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done” (Rom, 1:24-28, NIV).

- f. Sorcerers – The Greek word is pharmakos, which refers to an encounter with drugs, In a general sense the word also covers those who commune with Satan through fortunetellers, mediums, and astrology.

“Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts” (Rev. 9:21). “And the light of a candle shall shine no

more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived" (Rev. 18:23).

g. Idolaters – Those who worship something or someone else in place of the true God are described as idolaters. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:22-23).

h. Liars – "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Rev. 2:2). "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22).

It is sobering to contemplate that all the above passages concern religious liars!

H. The possible present-day existence of Gehenna hell – We know, according to Jesus, that heaven is still being prepared. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

But what about hell? There are several scriptural and scientific facts that would strongly indicate that Gehenna hell is right now in existence. Consider Jesus' words: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost writes:

The word "prepared" literally is "having been prepared," suggesting that the lake of fire is already in existence and awaiting its occupants. It is the thesis of C. T. Schwarze, then of New York University, that such a place as a lake of fire is known to science today. He writes: "The word lake must connote a body of matter having liquid form. Therefore, if Scripture is truth, this eternal fire must be in liquid form.

"... The very simple proof of the portions of Scripture we have been discussing lies in the existence of the singular phenomena of the skies known as midget or white dwarf stars!... A midget star is one which, because of some things which have happened to it (not quite clear at this time), should be roughly 5,000 or more times as big as it really is! Applying this idea for illustration to such a planet as the earth, you must conceive the earth as having shrunk to such an extent that its diameter would be about 400 miles... instead of being 8,000 miles in diameter as it really is.

“This enormous density... has a great deal to do with our subject. Most people know the sun, our nearest star, is rather hot.... There is general agreement that the temperature at or near the center of stars is between 25 million and 30 million degrees Fahrenheit!...At such temperatures, much can happen, like the bursting of atoms, which helps to explain the phenomenon of the white dwarf.

“...A temperature of 30 million degrees Fahrenheit could explode atoms.... It would cause the atoms to lose their electrons, even though the attraction between nucleus and electrons is an octillion times the attraction of gravity. The separated parts could then be better packed in, particularly under such great pressure.... With the constant activity of X rays, atom walls could not be reformed; therefore enormous densities, such as are found in the midgets, can be attained. Now, please note, at such high temperatures all matter would be in the form of gas;... in a white dwarf the pressure is so great that gasses become compressed to the consistency of a liquid, although they may still respond to the characteristics of a gas.

“...Before such a star would cool off and gradually become dark it would have to expand to normal proportions. That is, it would have to get to be more than 5,000 times its present size. Here is the difficulty. Such expansion would cause enormous heat which, in turn, would absolutely keep the star compressed, so that, insofar as astronomers and physicists know, the midget stars can never cool off!... The white dwarf, to all intents, can never burn out.” (*Things to Come*, pp. 559 – 560)

Thus wrote Dr. Schwarze. Pentecost then concludes:

May I summarize to show that the Bible, God’s Word, is scientifically accurate? We find, first, an eternal fire which cannot burn out. Being of a liquid consistency it is, secondly, a lake of fire, In the third place, it cannot be quenched, for any quenching material such as water, would immediately have its atoms stripped of electrons and be packed in with the rest. In the fourth place, since astronomers have been, and still are, studying this strange phenomenon, it is only too evident that the lake of fire has been prepared and is now ready. Although we cannot say that God will actually use these lakes of fire in fulfilling His Word, the answer to the skeptic is in the heavens where there are lakes of fire. (Ibid., p. 561)

Perhaps an even more likely (certainly more frightening) location for Gehenna hell is known by astronomers as a black hole. Stated as simply as possible, a black hole is the hypothetical result of a runaway or uncontrolled gravitational collapse of a supernova. Eventually a collapsing object, such as a star, will reach a limited size, called the Schwarzschild Radius, which depends upon the mass of the object. For the sun the Schwarzschild Radius would be about two miles. If the contracting object continues to contract to less than its Schwarzschild Radius, it becomes a black hole. The gravitational forces exerted by this object are so strong that no matter or radiation can

escape from it. The light emanating from this object is trapped and effectively removed from the “observable universe.”

Dr. Kip Thorne, of the California Institute of Technology, one of the world’s authorities on collapsed stars writes:

We believe a black hole is an extremely smooth structure; it can never have ripples or mountains. Anything it traps can never escape. The black hole can neither split nor decrease in size; it can only grow....

Ultimately, if the universe itself does not collapse and die first, the black holes will eat up all the matter in our galaxy. Already, as much as one ten-thousandth of the universe might be down black holes. We would like to sweep this fact under the rug, but occasionally we drag it out and look it in the face and shudder. (*National Geographic*, May 1974, 620)

According to Dr. Paul Ho, researcher at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, a black hole, one million times more massive than our sun, has been discovered in the center of the Milky Way, about 30,000 light years from earth in the constellation Sagittarius. This was reported by various U.S. newspapers in 1989.

IX. The Final Place for Saved Man: Heaven – Both heaven and hell are either ignored, ridiculed, or denied by the world today. In his book *The Biblical Doctrine of Heaven*, Dr. Wilbur Smith lists two significant quotes from a world-famous theologian and a scientist about heaven:

“It is unwise for Christians to claim any knowledge of either the furniture of heaven or the temperature of hell” – Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr (p. 12).

“As for the Christian theology, can you imagine anything more appallingly idiotic than the Christian idea of Heaven?” – Dr. Alfred Whitehead (p. 21).

William Inge, dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral, once wrote:

The discovery that the earth, instead of being the centre of a finite universe, like a dish with a dish-cover above it, is a planet revolving round the sun, which itself is only one of millions of stars, tore into shreds the Christian map of the universe.

Until that time the ordinary man, whether educated or uneducated, had pictured the sum of things as a three-storied building, consisting of heaven, the abode of God, the angels, and beatified spirits; our earth; and the infernal regions, where the devil, his angels, and lost souls are imprisoned and tormented.... The Copernican astronomy, and all the knowledge about the heavens which has been built upon this foundation, leave no room for a geographical heaven. Space seems to be infinite, or as some prefer to say, boundless – a distinction not very intelligible except to the mathematicians; and among all the stars, planets, satellites, and nebulae which are sparsely scattered over its vast empty distances we can hardly imagine that one has been chosen as the abode of the Creator and the site of the heavenly Jerusalem. (*The Church in the World*, p. 156)

To the contrary, the poll revealed those who believe in an after life lead happier and more productive lives than those who do not.

In reality, we are told a surprising number of things in the Word of God about our future home.

A common approach of the liberal clergyman is that he does indeed believe in a literal heaven and hell, but limits them both to this earth. In other words, life's good experiences are "heaven," and its bad moments "hell." Without him probably being at all aware of it, his Bible-denying philosophy does contain a very potent truth. The facts are that this world is indeed the only hell the believer will ever experience, and the only heaven the unbeliever will ever know.

Sometimes a "pious" objection is raised concerning the very study of heaven. The protest goes: "But don't you think we can become so heavenly minded that we're no earthly good?" This may be, but for every one like this, there are probably ten believers who are so earthly minded that they are no heavenly good. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3).

A poll taken by sociologist Andrew Greeley refutes the oft-repeated claims of Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche who argued that hope in a heaven inhibits individuals from enjoying or caring about earthly life. To the contrary, the poll revealed those who believe in an after life lead happier and more productive lives than those who do not.

In reality, we are told a surprising number of things in the Word of God about our future home. Contrary to popular opinion, heaven is discussed far more than hell in the Scriptures.

A. The categories of heaven – In the Bible we read of four heavens. Briefly, these are:

1. The first heaven – This heaven is the home of the birds and clouds, the atmospheric heaven. "The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it" (Dan. 4:12). "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt. 6:26).
2. The second heaven – The second heaven is the home of the sun, moon, and stars. "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies" (Gen. 22:17). "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psa. 19:1).

In the 1960s (beginning with the Russian orbit in 1961 and climaxing with the U.S. moon landing in 1969) man for the first time in history succeeded in developing a spacecraft that would transport him out of the first heaven into the second heaven. But

as wide and wonderful as it is, the second heaven (like the first) cannot be confused with the heaven of salvation.

3. The third heaven – The third heaven is the home of God. “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven” (2 Cor. 12:2). “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?... And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive” (1 Kings 8:27, 30).

This and this alone is the true third heaven. It has already been noted how man’s brain power recently transported him from the first to the second heaven. But no space vehicle can ever be devised which will take him from the second to the third heaven. This journey can only be effected by blood, and not by brain. In fact, Jesus once told Nicodemus a man could not even see this heaven, let alone enter it, apart from the new birth. “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

In Matthew 6:9 our Lord taught his disciples to pray: “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name” (Matt. 6:9).

4. The fourth heaven – “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isa. 65:17). “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:13). “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:1).
- B. The capital of heaven – For all intents and purposes, the believer, in contemplating his or her final heavenly home, should think of it in terms of a literal, physical, incredibly large and costly, dazzling bright, and blessed city located among the stars.
1. This city is anticipated in the Old Testament.
- a. By Abraham – “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).
 - b. By David – “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High” (Psa. 46:4). “Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah” (Psa. 87:3).
 - c. By all the men and women of faith – “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.... But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:13, 16).
2. This city is promised in the Gospels – “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I

would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

3. This city is referred to in the Epistles –"Jerusalem which is above... " (Gal, 4:26). "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels" (Heb. 12:22). "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13:14).
 4. This city is described in the book of Revelation –"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2).
- C. The characteristics of heaven (facts about the new Jerusalem)

1. The size –"And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal" (Rev. 21:16b). According to our present-day measurements this city would be roughly 1,400 miles long, high, and wide. If placed in America, it would reach from New York City to Denver, Colorado, and from Canada to Florida.

How big is a city this size? Our earth has approximately 120 million square miles of water surface and 60 million square miles of land surface. If one multiplies 1,400 by 1,400 by 1,400 (the dimensions of the new Jerusalem), he arrives at the total cubic miles of the city, a staggering figure of 2.744 billion. This is some 14 times the combined surface of the entire earth, including both land and water area.

It has been estimated that approximately 40 billion people have lived on our planet since the creation of Adam. Of this number, over 5 billion are living today. Density studies of city populations assure us that every single one of these 40 billion could easily be accommodated upon just the first "foundational floor" of this marvelous 1,400-layer metropolis.

Taking a different approach, heaven will consist of 396,000 stories (at 20 feet per story) each having an area as big as half the size of the United States.

2. The shape –"And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth... The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal" (Rev. 21:16).

This description allows for two possibilities, namely that the new Jerusalem is either in the shape of a tetragon (a perfect cube) or of a vast pyramid.

- a. Arguments for a cubical city – John's statement in Rev. 21:3 seems to indicate it. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men."

Gary Cohen writes in "Some Questions Concerning the New Jerusalem":

It is interesting to note that the Holy of Holies inside the Tabernacle is cubical-shaped (20 x 20 x 20 cubits).

The suggestion that the entire city is a huge Holy of Holies, cubical in shape as was the sacred inner sanctuary of the Temple (1 Kings 6:20), perfectly fits the truth

that this city will be the very place in which God makes His dwelling. (*Grace Journal*, vol. 6, 24)

b. Arguments for a triangular city – H. A. Ironside writes:

I rather think of that holy city as the mountain of God, a vast pyramid resting on a foursquare base, 12 thousand furlongs each way, and rising to a height as great as its length and breadth, and the throne of God and of the Lamb, the very apex of it, from which flows the river of the water of life, winding about the mountain, in the midst of the one street of gold on either side of that river. But in either case, whether we think of a cube or a pyramid, the thought is the same: it is a city of absolute perfection. (*Revelation*, p. 357)

Dr. J. Vernon McGee, however, takes a different approach from the two above views:

The shape of this city is difficult to describe.... Some have envisioned it as a cube, others as a pyramid. In view of the fact that it is hanging in space as a planet or star, it seems that it would be a globe.... The city is inside the globe.... The light would shine through the 12 foundations, giving a fantastic and startling coloring to the new universe.... From the outside, the city looks like a diamond. The gold is transparent and the diamond is the setting for the gold on the inside.... We live on the outside of the planet called earth, but the Bride will dwell within the planet called the New Jerusalem. The glory of light streaming through this crystal clear prism, will break up into a polychromed rainbow of breathtaking beauty. The sphere will have the circumference of 8,164 miles. The diameter of the moon is about 2,160 miles and that of the New Jerusalem sphere is about 2,600 miles: thus the New Jerusalem will be about the size of the moon. And it will be a sphere, as are the other heavenly bodies.

While the Bible definitely pictures the New Jerusalem as floating in space, it should not be thought of as a satellite city to the earth, but rather the opposite, that is, the earth as a satellite planet encircling the New Jerusalem. (*Reveling through Revelation*, pp. 86-47, 105)

3. The names – At least seven names and titles are given for this celestial city.

- a. New Jerusalem (Rev. 3:12; 21:2)
- b. The Holy City (Rev. 21:2; 22:19)
- c. The heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 11:16; 12:22)
- d. Mount Zion (Heb. 12:22)
- e. The Bride, the Lamb's wife (Rev. 21:9)

- f. Paradise – “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; 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).

Judson Cornwall observes:

Both the Old and the New Testaments speak of paradise. In the King James version of the Old Testament the Hebrew word for paradise is translated as, “an orchard” (Song of Solomon 4:13; Eccles. 2:5), and “a forest” (Neh. 2:8), probably because it is actually a Persian word that was coined to describe the magnificent parks and gardens that were designed for the Persian kings. Later this word was picked up by the Latin scholars who produced the Septuagint version of the Old Testament scriptures (a translation from Hebrew into Greek) who used this word as a name for the garden of Eden. Whereas our English Bible calls the first habitation of God’s special creation “Eden,” the Greek translation calls Adam’s home “paradise.” (Judson Cornwall, *Heaven*, p. 32)

- g. The Father’s house (John 14:2)

4. The foundations (Rev. 21:14, 19-20) – The city rests upon 12 layers of foundation stones, with each layer being inlaid with a different precious gem. These are:

- a. First foundation – The first foundation is inlaid with jasper, a crystal clear diamond, as bright as a transparent icicle in the sunshine.
- b. Second foundation – The second foundation is inlaid with sapphire, a blue opaque stone with gold specks.
- c. Third foundation – The third foundation is inlaid with chalcedony, a sky-blue stone with stripes of other colors running through it.
- d. Fourth foundation – The fourth foundation is inlaid with emerald, a bright green stone.
- e. Fifth foundation – The fifth foundation is inlaid with sardonyx, a white stone with layers of red.
- f. Sixth foundation – The sixth foundation is inlaid with sardius, a fiery red stone,
- g. Seventh foundation – The seventh foundation is inlaid with chrysolyte, a transparent golden yellow stone.
- h. Eighth foundation – The eighth foundation is inlaid with beryl, a sea-green stone.
- i. Ninth foundation – The ninth foundation is inlaid with topaz, a transparent golden-green stone.
- j. Tenth foundation – The tenth foundation is inlaid with chrysoprasus, a blue-green stone.
- k. Eleventh foundation – The eleventh foundation is inlaid with jacinth, a violet stone.
- l. Twelfth foundation – The twelfth foundation is inlaid with amethyst, a flashing purple stone.

These 12 foundations were not only inlaid with costly gems, but each foundational layer carried the name of one of the 12 apostles of the New Testament. “And the wall of the

city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Rev. 21:14).

It should be noted that these jewels roughly parallel the 12 stones in the breastplate of the high priest (Exod. 28:17-20).

5. The walls – The walls of the new Jerusalem are some 216 feet high and are made of jasper (Rev. 21:17-18). The wall is obviously not for protection, but for design and beauty only. In comparison to size, a 216-foot wall around a 1,400-mile-high city would be like a one-inch curb around the Empire State building.
6. The gates – There are 12 gates to this city, 3 gates on each side. On each gate is the name of one of the tribes of Israel. Each gate is composed of a beautiful solid white pearl (Rev. 21:12-13, 21).

It has been observed that the “coat of arms” in the new Jerusalem is not the 12-jeweled foundation (Rev. 21:19-20), nor the jasper wall (Rev. 21:18), nor the streets of gold (Rev. 21:21), nor the ivory towers (indicated by Psa. 45:8), but rather the gates of pearl. In reality the believer will literally be surrounded by pearls. Whether one looks to the north, south, east, or west, the prominent object catching the eye will be the pearl! Why is this? Several suggestions have been offered.

- a. The pearl was the precious gem God selected to depict the church (Matt. 13:45, 46).
 - b. The pearl comes from a body of water, which is often used to symbolize Gentile peoples – The church will consist mostly of Gentiles.
 - c. The pearl is created (unlike a diamond or piece of gold) by a living organism – An oyster experiences a grain of sand in its side. To protect itself, the little creature coats the foreign object with layer upon layer of its own substance until finally a beautiful pearl is formed. Thus, the gates of heaven may be made of pearl to remind the redeemed that each person was once a tiny little grain of sinful sand in the sight and side of almighty God. To solve this problem he forgave our iniquities by coating us with layer upon layer of his own love. We thus become “the pearl of great price” by the marvelous grace of God.
7. The main street – The central boulevard of the new Jerusalem is composed of pure transparent gold. “...and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass” (Rev. 21:21b). When one considers the price of gold, the total worth of this city becomes incomprehensible.
 8. The throne – “The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all” (Psa. 103:19).

At least three biblical men were allowed to gaze upon the awesome sight of God’s throne.

- a. Isaiah – “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:1-3).

- b. Daniel – “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened” (Dan. 7:9-10).
 - c. John – “And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.... And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind” (Rev. 4:2, 6). God’s throne is referred to more than 40 times in the New Testament alone.
9. The river of life – “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1).
- The Holy Spirit doubtless meant to make at least some reference to this river when he inspired David to write: “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psa. 1:3). “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High” (Psa. 46:4).
10. The tree of life – “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:2).
- When God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, he placed at Adam’s disposal (among many other things) the tree of life. But when man sinned, he was driven from Eden and from this tree (Gen. 2:9; 3:24). At this point in human history the tree of life disappears, but here in the new Jerusalem it will blossom and bloom as never before.

In his book, *Reveling through Revelation*, Dr. J. Vernon McGee writes the following words concerning this river and this tree.

Up to this chapter, the New Jerusalem seems to be all mineral and no vegetable. Its appearance is as the dazzling display of a fabulous jewelry store, but there is no soft grass to sit upon, no green trees to enjoy, and no water to drink or food to eat. However, here introduced are the elements which add a rich softness to this city of elaborate beauty. (p. 91)

Paul Lee Tan writes:

Because of the location of the tree of life “on either side of the river,” theologians have understood the “tree” to be not a single tree, but a single kind of tree... a row of trees on either side of the river. Others, however, see one tree planted at the middle of the river, with branches extending to both banks. The tree

is large enough to span the river, so that the river is in the midst of the street, and the tree is on both sides of the river. (*The New Jerusalem*, p. 28)

D. The citizens of heaven – Who will dwell in this magnificent metropolis beyond the Milky Way?

1. The holy and elect angels

a. By name – There are but two holy angels referred to by name in the scriptures.

(1) Michael (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7)

(2) Gabriel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26)

b. By number – God, of course, knows their number, but they are presented to men as uncountable. There may be as many angels as there are stars in the heavens, for angels are often associated with the stars.

“The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place” (Psa. 68:17). “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels” (Heb. 12:22). “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” (Rev. 5:11).

c. By notation – Several ranks of angels are described in the Bible:

(1) Seraphim (Isa. 6:1-7)

(2) Cherubim (Gen. 3:24; Exod. 25:18-20; Ezek 1:4-28; 10:1-22)

(3) Living creatures (Rev. 4:6-9; 5:8; 6:1-7)

(4) Ruling angels (Eph. 1:12; 3:10; Col. 1:16; 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:22)

(5) Guardian angels (Matt. 18:10; Heb. 1:14)

(6) Angels associated with horses and chariots (2 Kings 2:11; 6:17; Psa. 68:17; Zech. 1:8-11; Rev. 19:14)

(7) Archangels (1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 9)

2. The church – “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.... Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:1, 7-8).

“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Rev. 21:9). “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17).

3. Saved Israel – Although the new Jerusalem is basically a wedding present from the Bridegroom (Christ) to the bride (the church), Israel nevertheless is also invited to dwell within these jasper walls. The following passages bear this out:

“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:16).

“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.... His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt, 25:10, 23).

Our Lord quotes these words during his Olivet Discourse. In relating two parables he likens saved Israel to some prepared wedding guests (parable of the Ten Virgins), and later as two faithful servants (parable of the Talents), He thus pictures saved Israel as joining the bride and the Bridegroom.

4. All the redeemed who ever lived – “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5:9). “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Rev. 7:9).
5. The Father – We have previously noted those occasions when Isaiah (Isa. 6:1-3), Daniel (Dan. 7:9-10), and John (Rev. 4:2, 6) saw heaven’s throne and someone seated upon it. The context of all three passages strongly indicate this figure was the Father himself.
6. The Son – “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” (Rev. 5:6).
- Here we learn that not only is the Lamb of God an occupant of heaven, but the very source and strength and center of heaven, without which there could be no heaven. Thus we see:

The light of heaven is the face of Jesus.

The joy of heaven is the presence of Jesus.

The song of heaven is the name of Jesus.

The theme of heaven is the work of Jesus.

The fullness of heaven is the person of Jesus.

- a. In the book of Revelation John refers to Jesus as a Lamb no less than 27 times – From these verses we see that heaven’s Hero will be:

(1) A slain Lamb (5:6)

(2) A redeeming Lamb (5:9)

(3) A worthy Lamb (5:12)

(4) A comforting Lamb (7:17)

(5) A life-giving Lamb (13:8)

(6) An overcoming Lamb (12:11; 17:14)

(7) An eternal Lamb (5:13)

(8) An angry Lamb (6:18)

(9) A loving Lamb (19:7)

(10) A glorious Lamb (21:23)

b. In addition to the title of Lamb, the following names should be added for this

“Jewel of the new Jerusalem,” Jesus Christ:

(1) The Faithful Witness (1:5a)

(2) The First Begotten of the Dead (1:5b)

(3) The Prince of the Kings of the Earth (1:5c)

(4) The Alpha and Omega (1:8)

(5) The Beginning and the End (1:8b)

(6) The Son of man (1:13)

(7) The Son of God (2:18)

(8) The Lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5a)

(9) The Root of David (5:5b)

(10) The King of Saints (15:3)

(11) The Lord of Lords (17:14a)

(12) The King of Kings (17:14b)

(13) The Word of God (19:13)

(14) The Bright and Morning Star (22:16)

(15) Jesus (22:16)

7. The Holy Spirit – Although the Spirit of God is not as prominent as the Father or Son, he is unquestionably an occupant of the new Jerusalem, as attested by the following passages: “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13). “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17),

E. The counterpart of heaven (the relationship of the heavenly Jerusalem with the earthly Jerusalem) – There will be two fabulous cities of God in the future. One is located on the earth. It will be known as Jehovah Tsidkenu, meaning “the Lord our righteousness,” (Jer. 23:6; 33:16), and as Jehovah Shammah, meaning “the Lord is there” (Ezek 48:35).

The circumference of the earthly Jerusalem during the Millennium will be “eighteen thousand measures” (Ezek 48:35), or about six miles. The heavenly city is suspended in space, and, as we have previously noted, is many times larger. To summarize, it would seem all resurrected and raptured believers will reside in the heavenly city, but will reign upon the earthly city. There is disagreement concerning whether the earthly Jerusalem will be phased out after the Millennium or continue alongside the heavenly city forever.

F. The challenges in heaven – A popular but totally perverted concept of heaven would describe that future life in the skies in terms of some disembodied spirits piously perched on fleecy clouds and strumming their golden harps. This may be heaven according to Walt Disney, but not according to the New Testament. The Scriptures would indicate:

1. Heaven will be a place of singing – “Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing” (Psa. 100:2). “Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted” (Isa. 49:13).

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5:9). “And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth” (Rev. 14:3). “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev. 15:3-4).

2. Heaven will be a place of fellowship – One of the most beloved gospel songs is entitled “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms.” The first stanza begins: “What a fellowship, what a joy divine....” Sometimes, however, as one observes the petty squabbling that goes on in local churches, this verse might be rephrased to read: “What? A Fellowship? What? A joy divine?” But in heaven real and eternal fellowship will prevail.

Not only will believers enjoy blessed fellowship with other believers but, even more important, we shall know and be known by the Savior in a far more intimate way than ever possible here on earth. Note the things this Good and Great and Chief Shepherd will do for his sheep in heaven as listed by John:

- (a) He will feed us that hidden heavenly manna; he will give us a new name (Rev. 2:17).
 - (b) He will lead us beside the living waters and dry all our tears (Rev. 7:17).
 - (c) He will allow us to sit with him on his throne (Rev. 3:21).
 - (d) He will array us in fine linen (Rev. 19:8).
 - (e) He will reward us (Rev. 22:12).
3. Heaven will be a place of serving – “Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them” (Rev. 7:15). “And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:” (Rev. 22:3). While we cannot be dogmatic on the exact nature of this service, we do know from the following passage that a portion of our labor for the Lamb will be that of exercising authority and judgment over angels. Erwin Lutzer suggests:

That word servant is found frequently in the book of Revelation for it pictures a continuation of the relationship we even now have with Christ. However, the word serve used here is used primarily in the New Testament for service that is carried on within the Temple or church (Matt. 4:10; Luke 2:37; Acts 24:14). Thus we shall serve Him in that special, intimate relationship available only to those who are included within the inner circle of the redeemed. David Gregg gives his conception of what that kind of work will be like:

“It is work as free from care and toil and fatigue as is the wing-stroke of the jubilant lark when it soars into the sunlight of a fresh, dear day and, spontaneously and for self-relief, pours out its thrilling carol. Work up there is a matter of self-relief, as well as a matter of obedience to the ruling will of God. It is work according to one’s tastes and delight and ability. If tastes vary there, if abilities vary there, then occupations will vary there.” (*Coming to Grips with Heaven*, p. 31)

4. Heaven will be a place of learning – “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (1 Cor. 13:9-10).

“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:15-21).

It is evident, as one panders the theology of Paul’s prayer here in Ephesians, that all these glorious spiritual truths cannot possibly be learned in their fullest sense by the believer down here. These precious principles must surely find their consummation in eternity. This is also true concerning his later prayer in the same epistle: “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,... that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph. 3:14, 17-19).

What will we learn about in Heaven?

- a. We will learn concerning the person of God – Let us suppose in heaven we are able to double our learning each year concerning the person and attributes of God. This is not at all an unreasonable assumption, for the Christian will possess a sinless and

glorified body, along with a holy and tireless desire to know more about Jesus! So here is a believer who begins eternity with x amount of knowledge about God. At the beginning of his second year he has double this, the third year four times as much, the fourth year he knows eight times as much, etc. By the end of his eleventh year he will increase his knowledge concerning God a thousandfold. At the conclusion of his twenty-first year the figure jumps to one million. At the end of the thirty-first year the number leaps to one billion. Following the forty-first year it reaches one trillion. As he finishes his first century in eternity his knowledge of God (doubling each year) would reach 10^{29} (one followed by 30 zeros) times what it originally was.

This figure is thousands of times more than the combined total of all the grains of sand on all the seashores of the earth. But this number marks his first 100 years. How much knowledge doubling will he have experienced at the end of his first one million years? This staggering figure cannot even be comprehended by the mortal mind, but whatever it is, and however many zeros it represents, it will double itself the very next year. The point of all the above is simply this. Throughout the untold and unnumbered trillions and trillions of years in timeless eternity, each child of God can double his or her learning about the Creator each year and yet never even remotely exhaust the awesome height, depth, or length of the Person of God. Our testimony will continuously be: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

- b. We will learn concerning the precepts of God, the Bible itself – Dedicated and brilliant godly scholars have throughout history given their lives in the study of but a handful of verses, testifying they only dipped their feet in the mighty ocean of the truths involved. Surely one could spend billions of years pondering each of the 31,173 scriptural verses without fully probing their awesome depths.
- c. We will learn concerning the plan of God – One of the most painful questions asked here on earth by Christians is why a loving and wise God allows certain terrible tragedies to occur. As an example, here is a young, spirit-filled pastor. He has spent a number of years diligently preparing for the ministry. His wife has sacrificed to help put him through school. Now all this is paying off. His church is experiencing amazing growth. Souls are saved weekly. New converts are baptized each Sunday. Additional Sunday school busses are purchased and a new building is planned. A skeptical community slowly finds itself being profoundly influenced by this vibrant and exciting pastor and his people. Suddenly, without any warning, the minister is killed in a freak accident. Shortly after the funeral the still-confused and stunned congregation extends a call to another man. But the new minister shows little compassion and less leadership ability. Soon the flock is scattered and the once-thrilling testimony of a growing and glowing work is all but stilled.

How many times since Abel's martyrdom at the dawn of human history have similar tragedies like this taken place? But the searing and searching question remains: Why does God permit such terrible things? We may rest assured that in heaven God will take each of us aside and explain fully the reason for all our suffering and trials. We then will say the words once stated by a Galilean crowd in Jesus' day: "He hath done all things well" (Mark 7:37).

- d. We will learn concerning the power of God – "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

Just how vast is our universe? It is so huge that it takes a beam of light (which travels some 700 million miles per hour) over 10 billion years to cross the known universe. Within this universe are untold trillions of stars, planets, and other heavenly bodies. God made them all to instruct man concerning his power and glory: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psa. 19:1). "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names" (Psa. 147:4). "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isa. 40:26). We shall someday therefore visit each star and explore every corner of our Father's universe.

5. Heaven will be a place of testifying – "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so" (Psa. 107:2).

"Jesus... saith... Go... tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19).

- G. The clarifications concerning heaven – Here are some suggested answers to at least five of the most frequently asked questions concerning heaven.

1. What kind of bodies will we have in Heaven? In essence, our bodies will be like the glorified body of Jesus. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21). "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

Note the features of Christ's resurrected body:

- a. It consisted of flesh and bone – "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet" (Luke 24:39-40).
- b. He ate in this body, partaking of fish, honeycomb, and bread (Luke 24:41-43; John 21:12-15).
- c. His body was not subjected to the regular laws of time and gravity (John 20:19; Luke 24:31, 36).

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul answers questions concerning this transformation. In verse 44 he writes, "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." What is the difference?

Consider a book with a sheet of plain white paper stuck inside it. In this illustration the book is man's body and the paper sheet is his spirit. Down here the book "bosses" the spirit. It has the final say. This is the natural body, governed by the physical laws of gravity and time. But now take the white sheet out of the book and wrap it around the book like a cover. Now the sheet (spirit) is on top. It has the final say. This is the spiritual body, unaffected by the physical laws of gravity or time, but enjoys the blessings of eternity.

2. Will our bodies be recognizable? In other words, will we know each other? In this the Scriptures answer with an emphatic yes. During his transfiguration, our Lord spoke freely with Moses and Elijah centuries after both these Old Testament heroes departed from this earth. "And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him" (Matt. 17:3). Yet they are still recognized as Moses and Elijah. In addition to this, the Apostle John, during his vision of the Revelation, sees and recognizes the differences between elders, angels, and various redeemed peoples from all the nations of the earth. Perhaps the apex of this beautiful truth is found in Paul's love chapter: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12).
3. What age will we be in heaven? Thomas Aquinas believed (based on Ephesians 4:13) that the human body would have the development appropriate to the age of 30, which was that of the risen Christ in his full, human maturity. Thus those who were younger and those who were older would be resurrected and transformed to look like what they were when they were 30 or what they would have looked like had they reached the age of 30.

Of course this is but sheer speculation. We simply do not know, but it is not at all unreasonable to conclude whatever the age, every believer will enjoy the maximum physically, spiritually, socially, and intellectually.

4. What about loved ones not in heaven? Erwin Lutzer offers the following:

The question is often asked how we can be happy in Heaven if one or more of our relatives is in Hell. Can a child, for example, enjoy the glories of eternity knowing that a father or a mother will always be absent from the celebration? Or can a godly mother serve and worship with joy knowing that her precious son will be in torment forever? That question has so vexed the minds of theologians that some have actually asserted that in Heaven God will blank out a part of our memory. The child will not know that his parents are lost in Hell; the mother will not remember that she had a son.

However, it is unlikely that we will know less in Heaven than we do on earth. It is not characteristic of God to resolve a problem by expanding the sphere of

human ignorance. That is especially true in Heaven, where we will have better mental faculties than on earth. In Heaven we shall be comforted, not because we know less than we did on earth but because we know more.

It is more likely that God will wipe away all tears by explaining His ultimate purposes. We will look at Heaven and Hell from His viewpoint and say that He did all things well. If God can be content knowing that unbelievers are in Hell, so will we.

I expect that all who are in Heaven will live with the knowledge that justice was fully served and that God's plan was right. And with such an explanation and perspective, our emotions will mirror those of our heavenly Father. Jonathan Edwards said that Heaven will have no pity for Hell, not because the saints are unloving but because they are perfectly loving. They will see everything in conformity with God's love, justice, and glory. Thus with both head and heart we will worship the Lord without regret, sorrow, or misgivings about our Father's plan. (*Coming to Grips with Heaven*, pp. 38 – 39)

Obviously not all would agree with Lutzer's conclusions. We simply do not know how God will solve this problem.

5. What will our relationships be with our loved ones in heaven? In other words, will a special rapport still exist between husband and wife, father and son, mother and daughter? Again, we are not specifically told. We do know glorified believers in heaven will not marry and raise children (Matt. 22:30). However, it would seem (at least to this author) that certain individuals in heaven will continue to be perhaps closer to me than others. Here I would refer to Sue (my wife), Matthew (my son), etc.
6. What about those who die as babies? The vast majority of Bible students hold all infants and very young children go to heaven upon dying. Both David and Jesus definitely indicated this.
 - a. David's testimony – "And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:22-23).
 - b. Jesus' testimony – "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:2-3). "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).

H. The contrasts and comparisons concerning heaven

1. Those elements absent in heaven:
 - a. No more sea (Rev. 21:1)
 - b. No more tears, pain, or death (1 Cor. 15:54-57; Rev. 21:4)

- c. No more insecurity or night (Rev. 21:25)
 - d. No more sin (Rev. 21:27)
 - e. No more sickness nor curse (Rev. 22:2)
 - f. No more satanic opposition (Rev. 20:10)
 - g. No more thirst, hunger, or excessive heat (Rev. 7:16)
 - h. No more condemnation (John 5:24)
 - i. No more corruption (1 Cor. 15:54; 1 Pet. 1:4)
2. Those elements present in heaven:
- a. Glory (John 17:24; Rom. 8:18; Rev. 21:23) –“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21:23).
 - b. Beauty –“Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined” (Psa. 50:2).
Try to imagine the excitement of walking on the lower level of heaven and looking straight up through 1,400 levels of pure gold streets all sparkling as crystal, strong and glorious – incalculable tons of gold, all worth some \$300 an ounce by American monetary standards. Then look around you, and behold majestic mansions and magnificent houses as far as the eye can see, all made of this same highly purified gold. It is, indeed, a crystal city with nothing to hinder the flow of light and color. Everything is constructed of durable materials; nothing that could decay, rot, mold, or rust is used here, for this city will endure eternally.
 - c. Divine light (Isa. 60:1-3, 19-20; Rev. 21:23-24) –“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21:23).
 - d. Unity – “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (Eph. 1:10).
 - e. Joy – “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psa. 16:11).
 - f. Righteousness – “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:13).