

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

DOES GOD KILL?

By Pastor David Clayton

(This is the first article in a series of studies dealing with subjects of recent agitation that were discussed at the Illinois Bible Conference.

Editors)

This article has become necessary because a significant number of those who have embraced the truth about God and His Son have also adopted the position that God does not kill. Some of those with whom I have discussed it have stated that it is a vital message, and the final “truth” to be revealed to the world because it is “the ultimate revelation of the love of God.”

I believe most of those who have accepted this doctrine are honest and sincere people. At least, those with whom I have discussed it seemed to be. I can also count a few of them as being among my good friends. This article, therefore, has nothing to do with people or personalities. It is only about the truth. All truth is safe and nothing else is safe.

What does the doctrine teach?

Specifically, the teaching that I wish to discuss says that God Himself never, ever, under any circumstances, personally takes or removes the life of any creature. It says He may allow others to do it, He may accept the blame for it, but He Himself never is the agent or the cause which removes life. What this means is that every place in the Bible where it says that God killed or destroyed or took a life, it is not to be believed the way it reads, but must be reinterpreted to fit this doctrine. So then we would have to accept that God never caused the great flood in Noah’s day, never destroyed Sodom & Gomorrah, never slew Korah, Dathan and Abiram, never destroyed Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea, etc. etc.

The reasoning behind this belief is that God cannot break His own laws. The Sixth Commandment says, “Thou shalt not kill.” These laws are not simply a set of rules, but are actually a revelation of God’s character; a description of what God is really like. Therefore, the reasoning goes, God cannot deny His own character. Since, “Thou shalt not kill,” describes what He is like and reveals His nature, we must accept that it is contrary to God’s character and nature to kill. Thus, we end up with the doctrine, “God Does Not Kill.”

Two Cents

(Brother Dennis Robertson wrote recently expressing his appreciation for Pastor David Clayton’s article, “Thoughts on the Love of God” published in the October issue of Old Paths. Brother Robertson noted, “if I may, I would like to add my ‘two cents worth.’ ” However, we believe that the thoughts he provokes are worth much more than gold!)

My concern is that what greater priority can a Christian have than understanding what Christianity is about? How can a Christian understand what Christianity is about and practice it if a Christian does not seek to understand the source of it and why it is critically essential?

Does not the Word of God tell us to take His yoke upon us and learn of Him? (See Matthew 11:29.) Does not the Word of God speak to us of searching the deep things of God? (See 1 Corinthians 2:10.) If we shall be learning in eternity,

Continued on page 6.

Also in this issue:

Special Tape Offer.	p. 6
Thoughts From Stardusk Acres	p. 7
Notes of News	p. 8
The Investigative Judgment	p. 9
Youth’s Corner	p. 11

Magnifying God's Word

There is a verse in Psalm 138 which we do well to consider. The last part of verse two reads as follows: "for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." (Psalm 138:2)

Let us just think of what this is saying. The *name* of God represents His character, His attributes, His authority. The Lord taught us to pray, "hallowed be thy name." However, here the Lord tells us that there is something which *He Himself* has magnified or exalted even above His name. What is this thing? It is His Word. This teaches me something: My concept of God's name or God's character must be subject to what God has revealed in His Word! My concept of God's character cannot be above that Word.

What do we do with all the clear, unmistakable passages which say that God not only killed, but ordered the killing of people? Here is one striking example:

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." (1 Samuel 15:2, 3)

Here we have plain, unmistakable statements. Samuel says to Saul, "*Thus saith the LORD.*" Who was it that gave Samuel that message? Was it God? Was it the devil? Who spoke the words to Samuel which he claimed was coming from God? I have asked this question of some of my friends who believe that God does not destroy. I have asked it over and over but I have been unable to get an answer. They have talked about principles and character, but I cannot get a simple, "God said it," or, "Satan said it." You see, if God said it, then we have the problem of a God who cannot kill, Who will not kill Himself, but Who does order His servants to kill; a God Who asks others to do what He Himself will not do. But if Satan gave this command to Samuel, then what do we have? We have a prophet who says, "Thus saith the Lord," when it is really "thus saith Satan." This would make Samuel a prophet of Satan rather than a prophet of God.

Let us consider also the destruction of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea. Somebody performed a miracle and opened up the sea for the children of Israel. This happened when Moses stretched out his rod over the waters. Who was it that opened the sea, held back the waters and delivered Israel? Was it God or was it Satan? A little later, Moses stretched out his rod again and the waters came sweeping in and destroyed the

armies of Pharaoh. Who was it that now released the waters? Was it God or was it Satan? The same person who held back the waters is the one that released them. If Satan was the one who released the waters, destroying the armies of Pharaoh, then it must have been he who delivered the Israelites and took them through the Red Sea by holding back the waters. But if God was the One who parted the waters and held them in place, then it must have been He Who released them, thus wiping out Pharaoh's army. One person performed both actions. We cannot have it both ways.

How do we understand these, and a hundred other similar Scriptures? There is not a single verse in Scripture which says, "God does not kill." There are, on the other hand, dozens of verses which say that God not only killed people, but also commanded people to kill other people. My brothers and sisters, do not these verses carry any weight with us? Having formulated our ideal of what love should be and what mercy means, shall we come to the Bible with our minds already made up and make strenuous efforts to bend the Scriptures to fit this doctrine? Note carefully that the doctrine is not taught by the Bible. The belief is first implanted in the mind: "God is too good to kill anyone. True love means never ever taking life." This is a false concept of love. However, once this idea has been accepted, the next step is that the Bible must be bent to fit this idea no matter how many verses must be twisted, chopped, or ignored. "Thus saith the Lord," must be overruled by, "does it fit my doctrine?" In all honesty, my brothers and sisters, is this the way to study the Bible? No, the proper way is to read the Bible, hear what it has to say and base our beliefs upon its teachings. Thus we may discover what is truth. When we find things which are hard to understand let us seek for understanding through prayer and careful study, but never resort to denial of the plainest teaching of the Word of God. Why was it necessary for God to order the death of women, children, sheep, oxen etc.? There is something to be learned here, but not by denying the Scriptures. Let us accept what the word of God says as our starting point, and then we can move on from there.

When we examine this doctrine carefully, we find a dangerous principle at work. What is it? It is simply this: "Even if the Bible says it, I won't believe it if it doesn't fit in with my ideas." This is surely a dangerous approach to take in studying the Bible.

Let us note a passage in the Bible where it says that God did a certain thing, while another passage clearly indicates that it was Satan who was responsible. One

example of this is where David was tempted to number Israel. In this particular reference it says:

“And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.” (2 Samuel 24:1)

However, when the same story is told in First Chronicles it says:

“And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.” (1 Chronicles 21:1)

Here we see plainly that God is credited with that which He permitted. He had a purpose in allowing it. Nevertheless, the active agent in the temptation was actually Satan. So we know that there are times when God does take the blame, or accept responsibility, even though He does not personally perform the action. The question, though is not whether it happens *sometimes*, but whether it is true in *every* single case.

How then shall we understand the Bible? This is a most critical question. This doctrine compels us to focus on the issue of whether or not the Bible is the dependable Word of God. Who inspired those men who made all those statements in the Bible about God killing, or destroying? Did holy men of God speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? (See 2 Peter 1:21.) Did the Holy Spirit inspire these men to make statements which were not true? This is the dilemma we end up in when we deny the truth that God does kill. *We must either deny this doctrine or deny the Scriptures!* My dear brothers and sisters, let us not come to the place where “thus saith the Lord” is not good enough for us. Must we, like the Trinitarian and the Sunday worshiper, now declare, “this doctrine is not explicitly taught in the Bible (in fact the very opposite is explicitly taught!) but we believe it anyway?” I say to you my brethren, if our concept of God requires us to twist or disbelieve the plainest statements of God’s own Word, then our concept of God is wrong! Let us immediately abandon the false concept for there is no safety in an idol. If our concept of God is based on error, where are we any better off than the Trinitarian? God gave us His Word for our learning. Let us then learn as we read. It is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (2 Timothy 3:16) Let us then learn doctrine from it, be reproved and instructed by it. Let our ideas of God be based on it, but God forbid that we should come to the place where we are wiser than the Scriptures; where, “thus saith my opinion,” is of more weight than “thus saith the word of God.”

God’s character

It has been said that the issue in the understanding of this doctrine is the character of God. We agree. The greatest fault of the “God does not kill” concept is that it distorts the character of God. It presents God in a light which is not the truth. This means that we end up worshipping a false philosophical God; a God of our own imagination. This is idolatry!

Popular Christianity today likes to speak about “love.” Everything is “love.” Yet, their concept of God’s love has created a God in their minds who will accept you regardless of your beliefs and regardless of whether or not you continue to commit sin. This doctrine that God does not kill is in the same vein. It gives a false picture of love, making it into a sentimental principle without the discipline or the strength to fulfill the requirements of justice.

Brethren, we do not want a false concept of love. We do not want a false concept of God! Many parents today will not punish their children. Why? They say they “love” them too much to cause them pain! Is this love? A sentiment which is too weak to do what is necessary is not true love, but is rather a vile imposter which results in the uncontrollable, dangerous society in which we live today.

Surely, if we are required to have a character like God’s and God never, ever destroys life, what shall we do when plagued by rats, cockroaches, flies, or mosquitoes? Surely there must be something wrong with a doctrine which creates a moral dilemma for me every time I am forced to kill a mosquito! We may destroy a wasp’s nest, without feelings of vengeance or vindictiveness. Feelings are not the issue. But the nest may be built in a place where its very existence is a threat to the safety of my children. It does not matter how I feel. If I care for the welfare of my family, I must do something about it. If I am too weak, or squeamish, or busy, or have a moral conflict about it, then I must get somebody else to destroy the nest. This is the simple fact.

Once I had to kill a dog. It was suffering, dying of a crippling disease, paralyzed from the neck down. It was not my dog, but I listened to it crying all night as it suffered. The next day I asked permission to end its suffering and the owner gladly agreed. When I stood above that dog with the upraised hoe in my hand, it was not easy to strike. Those eyes looked up at me with such trust that I had to pause long enough to cover her eyes with a piece of cloth before finally striking once with the hoe at the base of her skull. She shuddered once and then died. A feeling came over me which I cannot describe. It was one of the hardest

things I have ever done in my life, *but it was necessary!* I did it because of sympathy for that dog. I could not stand the thought of her suffering needlessly and indefinitely. Which was the loving thing to do? Which was the stronger thing? To let the dog continue to suffer because I was “too good” to kill it, or to end its suffering even though it caused me pain? Think of this story, and consider that at times it is consistent with love to take away a life. Killing is not always motivated by hatred, malice, cruelty or evil motives.

Those who believe in this doctrine state that God does not kill those who deserve to die, and who are continually suffering as the slaves of sin. Instead He leaves them to the “tender mercies” of Satan who tortures them at will. Which is the greater mercy, the more loving thing to do, to kill irredeemable sinners or to leave them to the mercy of Satan?

“Thou shall not kill”

What is it to kill? Killing is basically the performance of any action which results in the death of another. If I perform an action which causes someone to die, then I may be said to have killed that person. I may shoot somebody myself, pay somebody to strangle him, or remove all access to food so that he eventually starves to death. It does not matter how I do it. If *my action results in the death* of another person, then it is I who have killed that person. I am the responsible; the guilty party. Therefore, the judge who passes the death sentence on a murderer is guilty of killing him. The man who hangs him is also guilty. They have both killed him.

The fifth commandment says, “thou shalt not kill.” We find this command in Exodus 20:13. Did God mean what He said when He gave this command? Did He intend that the Israelites should take it seriously? Did He expect them to obey? Certainly He did! Why then did He, a few verses later in the very next chapter, seemingly order them to disobey this command?

“He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.” (Exodus 21:12)

“And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.” (Exodus 21:17)

“Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” (Exodus 22:18)

“Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death.” (Exodus 22:19)

Did God contradict Himself? Not at all. The fact of the matter is that when God said, “thou shalt not kill,” He clearly was not referring to just and judicial acts of killing and execution. He was referring to acts of murder. Deliberate, unjust, premeditated killing. The Hebrew

word translated “kill” in Exodus 20:13 is *ratsach* and it means “premeditated murder” or “assassinate.” This, you shall not do because God NEVER does this. God’s character is that He never murders anyone.

Ellen White, the messenger of God, wrote in one place:

“God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself.” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 84)

If this statement is taken out of context, it may seem to support the view that God never takes the life of any person. However, inspiration can never contradict itself. Once we understand this, the meaning of this quote from Ellen White is simple. God never ever predestines any man to be destroyed. God never ever arranges circumstances so that a soul may be lost. Every man chooses his own way, charts his own course and in this sense destroys himself. He chooses the way which leads to death. Notice that in this sense, even Satan, the great destroyer, may be said to “destroy no man.” In the above quotation, even he is not given the credit for destroying men but, “every man destroys himself.” It is clear that this, and similar quotes should not be used as a basis for claiming that God never removes a person’s life. This is talking about destruction in the sense of choosing it, and not in the sense of executing it. Here is another quote from Ellen White which teaches in the clearest possible way that God does commission His angels to destroy, or kill men:

“The same angel who had come from the royal courts to rescue Peter, had been the messenger of wrath and judgment to Herod. The angel smote Peter to arouse him from slumber; it was with a different stroke that he smote the wicked king, laying low his pride and bringing upon him the punishment of the Almighty. Herod died in great agony of mind and body, under the retributive judgment of God.” (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 152 — See also *The Great Controversy*, p. 614.)

Men choose their own course, decide their own actions, but when they come to the place where they have so perverted themselves that they are no longer fit to live, God Himself may remove their lives or commission His agents to do it. There is nothing in this which is contrary to God’s character of love. God, Who is strong enough and loving enough to give life, is also strong enough to take that life when it is clear that it has been perverted beyond hope of recovery. If all killing is evil, and God never does it because it is evil, then it means that He has ordered His servants to

do what is evil MANY, MANY times. Could He then be good?

Actions are nothing. Motives are everything. At least this is true when it comes to questions of guilt. If I sprinkle poison in a bowl of soup thinking it is salt, and accidentally kill all the people who drink that soup, then I have killed several people. Am I then guilty of murder? The answer is no. If, however, I knowingly sprinkle the poison in the soup, then I am guilty of murder. The action itself is not the critical issue where guilt is concerned. The critical question is, "What motive prompts the action?" In the same way, killing may be an innocent act or it may be a murderous deed. It is the motive which counts.

The point is that, removing a life is just an action. It can be accomplished in a thousand ways. What really is important is the question of what prompts that killing. What is the motive, the reason behind it?

Is it hatred? Malice? Retaliation? Or is it mercy or justice? When justice demands the death of a sinner, God, the righteous Judge, is responsible for seeing that justice is carried out! I am not contradicting the fact that mercy provided a way, through the death of God's Son, for the forgiveness and redemption of all guilty sinners; for the satisfaction of the claims of justice. But what about those who reject the gift of God's free grace and continue in a life of willful transgression? Is God, the righteous Judge, still responsible for seeing that justice is carried out? He most certainly is. God is sovereign. He is Lord of the universe. He cannot abdicate His responsibility. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25)

He may send an angel to execute those who are unfit to live, He may send a flood of waters, or He may send fire and brimstone from heaven. He may send His servants as He sent the Israelites against the Canaanites; He may permit the evil person to be destroyed by Satan or his angels. However, the result is ultimately the same. God has carried out righteous judgment and has executed those who were no longer fit to live. God has performed it, God has ordained it, God has commissioned it, God has allowed it, therefore it is He who destroys the wicked. This is justice and is not contradictory to a true concept of love.

"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the

blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." (Revelation 16:5, 6)

Let us acknowledge that God is never cruel, never vindictive, never causes unnecessary pain. Yet sometimes an action may seem cruel or vindictive to us, only because we do not understand all the factors. Let us bow in humility and accept what the Scripture says! Who are we to judge the words of God? When



Pastor David Clayton

God told Abraham to cast out Hagar and Ishmael, was this an act of cruelty? On the surface it seems so. Hagar and Ishmael suffered a great deal as a result of what seemed like a harsh command. This does not seem like the work of a God of love, so what shall we do? Shall we conclude that Satan gave this command to Abraham? If we follow the principle of interpretation of those who say that God does not kill, then we will have to conclude that this must

have been the work of Satan! However, as humble, finite, foolish mortals, the correct thing to do is to accept the word of God. God did give this command.

Conclusion

1. The greatest fault of the "God does not kill" doctrine is that it destroys the validity of the Scriptures.

a. What rule of interpretation can we follow if, when the Bible says one thing, it means the exact opposite?

b. To say that "God does not kill" requires the manipulation of hundreds of texts which say that He does.

c. How then can we know that we are reading the truth on many other teachings?

d. It calls into question the inspiration of men like Moses, Samuel, David, etc., who plainly declared that God told them to kill.

e. This doctrine causes us to stand as judges of Scripture. We decide what it means based on our biases or preconceptions. No longer do we read and accept the words of the Bible. No longer does this book serve as our definer of truth. We now have a greater rule: our opinion!

2. The second greatest fault of this doctrine is that it distorts God's character:

a. It presents God in a light which is false (idolatry).

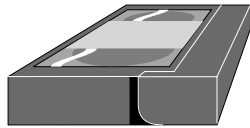
- b. It gives a false picture of love.
- c. It presents the contradiction of a God too loving to kill, who instead leaves persons to be tortured at will by the cruelest being in existence.
- d. It questions the integrity of a God who does not personally kill but instructs His servants to do so.
- e. It perverts the requirements of justice; declaring as illegal and unrighteous every act of just execution which has ever taken place since the universe began until now.
- f. It removes God’s sovereignty. It suggests that God is helpless to act when beings pervert themselves and rebel against Him. All He can do is leave them to Satan and hope that Satan will put them out of their misery quickly. ✍

(Brother David Clayton writes from his home in Jamaica. You may write to David at P. O. Box 23, Knockpatrick, Manchester, Jamaica, W. I. David’s e-mail address is: david000@cwjamaica.com.)

Special Tape Offer

Pastor David Clayton of Restoration Ministries, in Jamaica has just completed production of a video tape on a subject that we know will be very helpful. The message is entitled, “The Sanctuary in Hebrews 9.”

I have personally heard Brother Clayton give this study on at least three other occasions. Each time my heart has thrilled to hear the message so clearly pre-



sented. I am greatly pleased to share this tape with the readers of *Old Paths* because I believe, that by the grace of God, the Holy Spirit, through David, has made an even clearer presentation!

David discusses the usage of the Greek expressions “hagion,” “hagia,” and “hagia hagion” in Hebrews nine, clearly demonstrating the Scriptural teaching of a two apartment heavenly sanctuary. The quality of the recording itself is not on a level of professional standards, but the message more than makes up for it.

The suggested donation for a copy of this powerful, Scripture filled tape is \$6.50 plus actual postage. Send your requests to Smyrna Gospel Ministries at the address listed on page twelve.

should our learning be “self-constrained” now? Is not knowledge one of the principles to make our calling and election sure? (See 2 Peter 1:5.) Did not Hosea from the Word of God tell us that we are “destroyed for lack of knowledge”? (See Hosea 4:6.)

Surely if the truth about God isn’t that important to be *prioritized*, then what should? Can the Sabbath, prophecy (Daniel and Revelation), worship, health reform, the investigative judgment, state of the dead, or sanctuary doctrine be that important? Maybe all we need to do is just “believe on the Lord.” I disagree.

How do you love someone you don’t know? That’s what many of us as “Christians” are trying to do! When we de-emphasize the desire to understand (as much as we are allowed to understand at this time) we deny ourselves the privilege to know the greatest Loved-One in history. Many of the marriages in humanity have been destroyed due to a lack of knowledge and understanding between spouses. The covenant relationship is epitomized by understanding and knowledge (especially of the holy). How can we say we truly understand love and salvation when we minimize the importance of knowing and understanding Who loves us and saves us? (John 5:39) When we look at the Bible from Genesis to Revelation we see the empowerment of those who sought understanding fervently. (Proverbs 4:7; Hebrews 11:6)

Finally the “fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge [wisdom]” and how can we “fear” or reverence One we don’t know? No principle or precept of God should be minimized at the expense of another, but what greater wisdom should we desire than to understand the source of these precepts and principles!

Let us be affirmed and confirmed to study to show ourselves approved. Let us be empowered by the Spirit of God to not be “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of truth” (as deeply as we can be enabled to understand). (2 Timothy 3:7) Will we always consume milk and never eat bread? The pen of inspiration devotes the entire first chapter of the book *Patriarchs and Prophets* to the subject of the Godhead and the eschatological parameters thereof; should we “who love the Lord” do any less?

Dennis Robertson

(Brother Dennis Robertson writes from his home in Keystone, West Virginia. You may contact Dennis by writing to him at: P. O. Box 535, Northfork, WV 24868.)

THOUGHTS FROM STARDUST ACRES

Just how friendly is our friend the Sun; that blazing orb which drives away the chill from a cold and frosty morning; that puts that nice golden tan on a vacationer; that puts all those freckles on a young'un, and the rosy complexion on good health; that dissolves the blackest night, so that the sailor on a disabled boat can see a familiar shoreline on the horizon? Just how indestructible is our favorite space capsule, the earth? Maybe there is another face to our sunny sun. Maybe it is trying to tell the fun loving idolaters of fame, fortune, people, self, materialism, a population deluded by Satan, that all is not as secure as many would like to believe.

On March 4, 1989, at 11:20 AM, an unusual surge of explosive activity was noticed on the Sun's northeast limb (or arc). As soon as the area of interest slid into view (Action Region #5395) it commanded the intense attention of all of earth's solar scientists and geophysicists because of its intensity and the large area involved. (The Sun does rotate, just like the Moon, Earth, and the other planets.)

Statements from scientists said the power of some of these explosions were twenty times those associated with solar flares (prominences). Usually one million degrees of heat is involved. This time the heat created was in the area of twenty million degrees. The Sun's brilliance during these troubled times is claimed to have been 2,000 times as bright as usual.

Just about now you're probably thinking "hum, interesting, but how does this all affect me?" I'm glad you asked, because each time the sun has a flare (prominence) it releases countless energized protons (microscopic particles) that can travel 600,000 miles per hour. Some may think, "Okay, I'm impressed, but how does that affect ME?"

We all know a compass reacts to the magnetic field that surrounds and penetrates this earthly spaceship. But did you know that this field extends outward some 34,000 miles? That's 12,000 miles beyond the NOAA, GOES, and TV satellites. Interesting? Read on. Ten hours after the above mentioned

explosions of solar wind (energized particles) the magnetic field around spaceship earth sustained sledgehammer blows driving it down to an altitude of only 14,000 miles. This is *inside* the orbit of NOAA, GOES, etc.

In compressing the magnetic field, it built up heat, expanding the very thin atmosphere making it more dense, causing more friction, causing an earlier fall from orbit.

Not only was this causing a problem for the space-oriented people, but also for engineers related to the more "down to earth" jobs. As a conductor is passed through a magnetic field, a current is caused to flow in the conductor. The longer the conductor, the stronger the field and, accordingly, the higher the amperage. Possibly as much as 1000 amps in a railroad track, pipeline, power line, etc. could occur. Fortunately the majority of responsible engineers have built safeguards into these types of facilities. However, Quebec, Canada lost power to many thousands for some time, and satellite linkages, as well as long distance radio communication was disrupted. A few places in the United States had power surges, but no power outages were reported.

So what do you suppose the bottom line is? Solar records have been



"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?" (Psalms 8:3, 4a)

diligently kept for the last 130 years, and never before had one lasted anywhere as long since records started being kept. Those weeks in March may have been the earth's greatest test of magnetospheric strength since humans began to measure the sun's influence on our planet.

Do you suppose the SON is trying to tell us something? The following are some texts that are worthy of your consideration in the light of these thoughts. By reading for yourselves in your Bible you'll get far more from the text.

"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?" (Psalms 8:3, 4a)

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven [I believe we are here], and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." (Matthew 24:29)

Matthew 24:22, 32, 33—When you see all these things, know He is at the very door.

Matthew 24:37, 38, 39—Like in the time of Noah, they were unaware till it was too late!

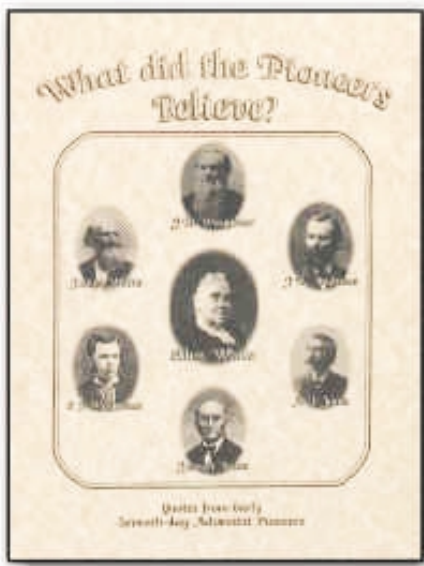
Matthew 28:20—But the sure promise is, "I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world."

Bob Talios

(Bob Talios is an amateur astronomer who lives in Florida during the winter months. Bob is currently recuperating from a heart attack. He is on the mend, and he and his wife "Sparky" would like to thank those who have been praying for Bob and ask that you continue to lift him up in prayer.)

Notes of News

Pioneer book reprinted ... Again



The book, *What did the Pioneers Believe?* has been reprinted and is now currently available. With over 10,000 copies distributed, this is one of the most popular books covering the doctrine of the Trinity among early Adventists ever published. The suggested donation for the book is \$3.00 plus actual

shipping costs. Ten or more are \$22.50 plus actual shipping costs. For further information, contact Brother Lynnford Beachy.

Tanzanian boy asks for sponsors

By Heidi Allaback

This is a portion of a letter I received from a young man I and my family met in Holland:

"I need to be sponsored by anybody for my two year's studies on the course Administration and Business.

"I beg you to ask your friends, or church members to help me, because I want also to help my father and mother and young sisters for their daily bread; since my father and mother are getting older.

"Please, please, please think of this now and everyday onwards; a Tanzanian boy from the country of Tanzania, in East Africa needs help for his education."

Fadhili W. Magoire

Box 7

Manyoni

Tanzania, East Africa

He wrote us because he met us in Holland. Prayerfully consider if you will and can help sponsor this boy even if it is a little, for together we can do a lot and can send him to school so he can get an education.

If you are interested call me at 740-3972500 and ask for Heidi.

Prayer requests

Please continue to keep my son Hans in prayer. He is gaining strength and we praise God for the progress he has made. However, the war is still going on so keep praying. A special thanks for all those who have been so thoughtful to send cards and write notes. Hans wishes to express his thankfulness for them all as they are an encouragement to him. Sorry that we are not able at this time to personally acknowledge each one.

Please continue to pray for Pastor Bill Stringfellow and Brother Milton Graham who are both still fighting with cancer. They each have had some setbacks lately and would greatly appreciate your prayers.

Allen Stump

THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT

By David Clayton & Allen Stump

The following study is given to point out and reinforce the concept of an investigative, pre-advent judgment as a solid, valid, Bible concept. The Scriptures, in many places, clearly teach the concept of the investigative judgment without considering Daniel 8:14 or Revelation 14:6, 7.

The Bible concept of judgment is broad, encompassing more than usually thought of. In most court systems of the world today there are three phases or portions to judgment. There is first the *investigative phase* where the evidence is presented and then a verdict is rendered. The next phase is the *judicial phase* where the type and degree of punishment is decided for the guilty party. Finally, there is the *executive phase* where the penalty decided in the judicial phase is carried out.

As in the earthly system of judgment, based on the heavenly, the order of the heavenly judgment is fixed. First, the investigative phase, second, the judicial phase, third, the executive phase. It is important to realize that this order may not be broken!

1. Who will be judged?

“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge **the world** in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31)

2. What categories will be judged?

“And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of **quick [living] and dead.**” (Acts 10:42)

3. Who will be there (must appear) at the judgment?

“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 Corinthians 5:10)

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then **every one us** shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:10-12) We must ALL appear (Christians included).

4. For what purpose must we appear at the judgment?

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall **give account thereof** in the day of judgment.” (Matthew 12:36)

“So then every one of us shall **give account of himself to God.**” (Romans 14:12) We will give an account of our deeds.

5. What will be taken into account in the judgment?

“For God shall bring **every work** into judgment, with **every secret thing**, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.” (Ecclesiastes 12:14)

6. What results will the judgment produce?

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be **justified**, and by thy words thou shalt be **condemned.**” (Matthew 12:36, 37) Some will be justified and some will be condemned. This proves that Christians will be included in the judgment for it is impossible for sinners to be justified.

7. When will the judgment occur?

“I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead **at his appearing and his kingdom.**” (2 Timothy 4:1)

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13, 14)

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand **when he appeareth?** for he *is* like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.” (Malachi 3:1-3)

“He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country **to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.** ... And it came to pass, that when he was

returned, **having received the kingdom**, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.” (Luke 19:12, 15)

Christ appears or comes to the Ancient of Days and receives His kingdom before He returns.

8. Will the living be judged on the basis of records in books?

“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.**” (Daniel 7:10)

“Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” (Revelation 14:7)

They will be judged on the basis of their response to the final crisis brought on by the Sunday laws.

“The image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided.” (*Maranatha*, p. 164)

“This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who prove their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin, and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast.” (*Ibid.*)

9. Is it possible for a Christian to be condemned in the judgment in the light of John 5:24?

“When I shall say to the righteous, *that* he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, **all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered**; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.” (Ezekiel 33:13-16)

Also see the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30), and the parable of the wedding garment (Matthew 22:1-14). Notice that many are called; but few are chosen. There is first a calling process, then a choosing process. In this parable, as in most of the

others relating to the end time, all who have ever responded to the gospel call are represented as being present when the final separation takes place. This means the living as well as the dead Christians are there when the King comes in to examine the guests.

The parable of the net (Matthew 13:47, 48), and the parable of the unjust steward (Matthew 18:23-35) also teach these same concepts.

10. What will be the standard which which we will be judged?

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not **my words**, hath one that judgeth him: **the word** that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” (John 12:48)


“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by **the law of liberty.**” (James 2:12) The words of Christ will judge the sinner.

11. Why is God is called the Judge in some places (Revelation 3:6; 1 Corinthians 5:13; Hebrews 13:4; Daniel 7:9, 10) while in other places we are told that Jesus is the one who has been appointed to judge?

A judge presides and passes sentence, but it is a lawyer (advocate) who presents the evidence and argues the case to establish either guilt or innocence. Likewise it is the jury who decides whether or not the accused is guilty, based on the evidence presented.

12. How long will the judgment day last?

At least for a thousand years. In 2 Peter 3:8 we have the suggestion that God, in some cases, reckons a day as a thousand year period. (See also Psalm 90:2.) A comparison of the seven days of creation week with the six thousand years of this world’s history, along with the approaching millennial Sabbath, also leads to the conclusion that God, at times, uses a day to represent a thousand years.

In conclusion, the judgment begins with the investigation of all who profess to be Christians. Those who are accounted as belonging to Christ will be saved in God’s kingdom forever and ever! Those who only *profess* will be accounted unworthy and will be condemned with those who never professed a belief in Christ; who are counted unworthy by default. The second phase, or the judicial phase, of the judgment continues during the millennium with an investigation of the wicked, which will not only demonstrate God’s justice in excluding them from His kingdom, but will also determine their final “reward.” The final phase of the judgment, the executive phase, concludes at the end of the millennium with the final execution of judgment upon the wicked. This period is also referred to as the day of the Lord: The time during which God settles His accounts with mankind. 

A Good Character

A good character is of slow but steady growth. Mental ability and genius are not character; for these are often possessed by those who have the very opposite of a good character. Reputation is not character. True character is a quality of the soul, revealing itself in the conduct.

If the youth rightly appreciate this important matter of character-building, they will see the necessity of doing their work so that it will stand the test of investigation before God. The humblest and weakest, by persevering effort in resisting temptation and seeking wisdom from above, may reach heights that now seem impossible. These attainments cannot come without a determined purpose to be faithful in the fulfillment of little duties. It requires constant watchfulness that crooked traits shall not be left to strengthen. The young may have moral power; for Jesus came into the world that he might be our example, and give to all youth and those of every age divine help.

God has been very merciful in giving you reasoning faculties, which he has not bestowed on the brute creation. But if with these God-given endowments, man is not faithful in his sphere, God will call him to account for the abuse of those gifts which place him above the beasts. The lowest of the brute creation, in making

the best use of their instinct, sometimes do far better than many men who are never grateful to God for their reasoning faculties. If man, by sinful practices; lessens the power God has given him, he must render an account to God for this. Let young men and young women conscientiously study how they can meet the expectations of God, and there will be far less weakness and indecision, and far greater strength of purpose to attain a symmetrical character. If they will place themselves in connection with Jesus, they will become like him.

The inspired record concerning Christ is: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Of John the record says: "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his birth. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give

knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace." "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." The record concerning Samuel is: "And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord and also with men." These examples are given for the young to imitate. If they make this their aim, they will see the necessity of a close connection with the Source of power and grace. Christ has said, "Without me ye can do nothing." Solomon spake to the youth in God's stead: "My son, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments; for length of days and long life and peace shall they add unto thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart, so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." In these words of inspiration the youth have encouragement and counsel.

Bulk Rate
U. S. Postage
PAID
Welch WV
Permit No. 35

Address Service Requested

SMYRNA GOSPEL MINISTRIES
HC 64 BOX 128 B
WELCH WV 24801-9606 U.S.A.

Children and youth should begin early to seek God; for early habits and impressions will frequently exert a powerful influence upon the life and character. Therefore the youth who would be like Samuel, John, and especially like Christ, must be faithful in the things which are least, turning away from the companions who plan evil, and who think that their life in the world is to be one of pleasure and selfish indulgence. Many of the little home duties are overlooked as of no consequence; but if the small things are neglected, the larger duties will be also. You want to be whole men and women, with pure, sound, noble characters. Begin the work at home; take up the little duties and do them with thoroughness and exactness. When the Lord sees you are faithful in that which is least, he will intrust you with larger responsibilities. Be careful how you build, and what kind of material you put into the building. The characters you are now forming will be lasting as eternity.

Let Jesus take possession of your mind, your heart, and your affections, and work as Christ worked, doing conscientiously the home duties, little acts of self-denial, and deeds of kindness, employing the moments diligently, keeping a careful watch against little sins, and a grateful heart for little blessings, and you will have at last such a testimony for yourself as was given of John and Samuel, and especially of Christ: “And he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with man.” (Ellen G. White, *Youth’s Instructor*, November 3, 1886)

Old Paths is published monthly by Smyrna Gospel Ministries, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, WV 24801-9606. It is sent free upon request. E-mail address - Stump: editor@smyrna.org; Beachy: berean@smyrna.org. Phone: (304) 732-9204. Our web site URL is: <http://www.smyrna.org>.

Editor Allen Stump
Associate Editor Lynnford Beachy