ISSUE # 4 - HEAVEN AND HELL

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Category: The Main Issue

Caution! Brace yourself for an extraordinary ride as The Main Issue takes you through an excursion that will surely impact your life. Indeed, to read it may take a pinch of courage. But not reading would rob yourself of life-giving knowledge.

You think about it once in a while – heaven and hell – but it can be scary. Some have told you they are both myths, something Christians invented to entice/scare you into the Christian fold. But what does the Bible say?

The Bible. It all rests on the Bible. If the Bible is true then what this book has to say about heaven and hell must likewise be true.

So what does the Bible say about heaven and hell? And has anyone ever seen these places and come back to tell about them? You are about to find out. So take courage, fasten your seat belt, open your mind, and hang on! And away we go!!

WHAT IS HEAVEN?

Much can be determined about heaven from the Bible. Heaven is a place where God lives. It is a real planet that you could see if you were close enough. In heaven there are cities and buildings and houses and trees and animals and streets and mountains and streams and flowers. It is as real as our planet Earth, with many similarities. As a matter of fact, earth was fashioned after heaven. Earth was at one time, before the fall of Adam and before the great flood, much more profound and excellent and exciting than now. But undoubtedly, even at its best, earth was only a shadow of the beauty and prominence of heaven.

New Jerusalem is a city in heaven. Approximately 1500 miles square and rising 1500 miles at its highest peak, the entire city is surronded by a wall of jasper, about 300 feet high. On each of the four sides of the enormous wall are three huge gates of pearl, a total of twelve, never closed. The foundation of the city is adorned with precious stones and jewels. The streets are made of pure gold, transparent and clear as glass. The glory of God's presence is brighter than the sun and illuminates the city with a brilliance unknown. The effect of gold and precious stones sparkling in this light must be awesome indeed.

At the summit of the city is the throne of God where He rules the universe. From His throne flows "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal," and this river probably meanders down the apex throughout the entire city.

Heaven is a place of order and peace and happiness and beauty and excitement. There are no wars, picket lines, shortages, tears, nightmares, factions, sorrow, epidemics, sin, or boredom. It is awesome beyond our ability to imagine. If an angel were to escort you on a tour throughout that celestial planet you would be unable to find words to adequately describe it.

WHAT IS HELL?

Hell is a prison, a place of banishment and a place of torment, Actually, there is more than one hell. (Or, there is more than one location the Bible translates hell.) First there is the place the Hebrew language calls sheol in the Old Testament, and the Greek of the New Testament calls hades. We could call this location sheol-hades.

Another location the Bible translates hell is called Gehennah in the Greek. Gehennah and sheol-hades are two distinct locations, and are somewhat different in construction.

SHEOL-HADES. Sheol-hades is a prison divided into two regions, a) paradise and b) a place of torment. Paradise was a prison for those throughout the milleniums who trusted in the coming Messiah (Jesus Christ), a very comfortable place. There is a large chasm separating paradise from the place of torment which no man could cross. Paradise is now empty of its inhabitants as Christ had led them out of captivity immediately after His death on the cross and brought them with Him to heaven.

The place of torment, the second region of sheol-hades, is totally opposite paradise. This section is a place of continual torment. Jesus tells of one man in this place who cried out in agony, “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.” Those who are there are not in their bodies (earthsuits) but would still be recognizable because their spirits are the same size, shape and form. They are very much the same person they were when living on earth, only minus their physical bodies.

GEHENNAH. Gehennah is called “the lake of fire” and it too is a prison and a horrible place of punishment, beyond the ability of man to describe, much worse than sheol-hades. It was this location that Jesus warned of many times, a place He called “outer darkness” and a place of

"weeping and gnashing of teeth."

DEAR READER

The Bible teaches that:

You will live forever. And yet you will experience death, perhaps more than one. How can that be? Let me explain.

The word death, in the Bible, has different meanings. It can mean spiritual death, or physical death, or eternal death.

Jesus once said to a disciple requesting permission to bury his father, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead." How can dead people bury dead people?

Jesus was referring to two different deaths. He was saying, in effect, "Let the spiritually dead people bury their physically dead people."

A person who is spiritually dead is one who is separated from God. Without the presence of God he/she will never be the person God created him/her to be. The spirit-life is gone. He is spiritually dead.

An illustration: God warned Adam that "the day" he sinned "you shall surely die." Adam did sin but lived many years after. Did God make a mistake? No, God was not speaking of a physical death, but a spiritual death. When Adam sinned he experienced a spiritual death, a spiritual separation from God.

Sin does that. It separates. It brings division between sinner and Creator. The apostle Paul wrote it very clearly: "The wages of sin is death."

And then there is eternal death. This death does not mean eternal non-existence. Eternal death is eternal banishment (separation) from the presence of God. It is eternal hopelessness – a forever without hope.

Eternal death is for those who have not found life (through Christ) while on earth. After dying (a physical death) it is too late. Eternity has been determined and there is no hope of reversing that decision.

Now let's talk about life.

Jesus said, "I have come that they (you) may have life, and that they (you) may have it more abundantly." This life, which is yours for the receiving, is indeed "abundant," for it is not only physical and spiritual, but eternal. Let's look at it:

First the spiritual.

Jesus said, “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” What did Jesus mean, "born again"? He answers that question Himself: “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”
The spirit of a man is united to God through a spiritual birth. Another word for the spirit of man is inner man. You see, the physical body you see in the mirror is only the housing of the inner man, the spiritual man.

The body could be called an earthsuit. If you saw an astronaut in his space suit you would realize the real person is inside. So it is with your earthsuit – the real person is inside. It is this inner man that becomes “born of the Spirit” – thus one is born again, or born the second time (the first being from the mother’s womb).

Jesus dealt with the sin factor at Calvary. Remember, it is sin that separates man from God. Jesus paid the price of our sin on the cross. It was for this purpose He came. Forgiveness from sin is in His hands, and He will dispense it to whoever will come to Him to receive it. When a man’s sins are washed away there is no longer anything separating him from God. So he is no longer spiritually dead. He therefore becomes spiritually alive. This is the abundant life Jesus was talking about. This is spiritual life.

Next, physical life. Jesus also paid the price for sickness and disease and poverty. This physical health and well-being is the physical life that can also be obtained through Christ.

And now eternal life. The one who dies in Christ will be assured of an eternal life, a life non-ending. This eternal life is spent with Christ, His Father and the Holy Spirit, as well as other Christians, angels, etc.

So there you have it: death and life. You are, right now, in one or the other. And you are, right now, walking into either eternal death or eternal life.

Eternal life will be spent in a place called “the New Jerusalem” which is a very large city in heaven. Eternal death is spent in Gehennah, “the lake of fire.” The Bible calls this place hell.

Heaven and hell, the subject of this fourth edition of The Main Issue, will possibly (probably?) be the most important paper you have ever read. I encourage you to stay with it even though it might get uncomfortable. Jesus said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” It is crucial that you read the entire paper.

Please keep in mind this issue is built on the word of God, the Bible. (Issue number three deals with the integrity and supernatural qualities of the Bible.) We can be sure heaven and hell are real simply because the Bible declares they are real.

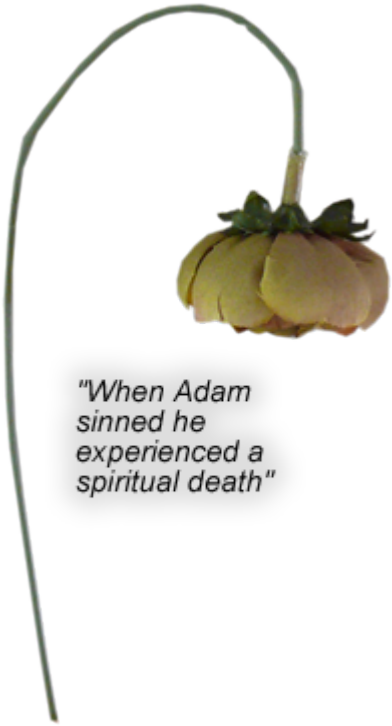
Also, eyewitness accounts of people having seen heaven and hell are cited in this publication for the reader’s consideration. It may seem hard to believe that there could be some who have peered into the spiritual realm and returned to tell of it. But Scripture itself records that such has happened thousands of years ago, and it seems only logical the same could happen in our day.

The apostle Paul saw heaven. John was taken to the New Jerusalem, actually measured it, and wrote his observations in the book of Revelation. And the Bible also tells of others who have seen heaven. So it should not be overly surprising that some make the same claim to have seen into the spiritual world.

Caution: Eyewitness accounts should never be put on par with the Bible. The Bible is infallible, men are not. Nonetheless the Bible does declare, "by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established."

Because I am convinced the reader will spend eternity in one of these two locations, heaven or hell, I again strongly urge you to give this paper very serious consideration.

The editor



"When Adam sinned he experienced a spiritual death"

"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"

ADULLAM – FROM VISIONS BEYOND THE VEIL

Permission has been granted to print excerpts from Visions Beyond the Veil, authored by H.A. Baker, published by Whitaker House.

Page 6: The ministry in China was exciting. In the southwest corner of Yunnan, the most southwest province of China, was a little town of 5,000 called Kotchiu. The Bakers were warned that Kotchiu was in the hands of brigand robbers. In fact, it was said to be the worst town in all China. But the Bakers settled there in the midst of vile and sinful surroundings, and began to let the Light of God shine out.

Almost immediately, they were conscious of the many teenage beggar boys who were starving and dying in the streets. That was when they decided to open the Adullam Home. In addition to dysentery and other internal diseases, the boys had terrible sores all over their bodies. Josephine found real joy and satisfaction in removing their filthy rags and giving them baths. Disheveled hair was cut and clean clothes were given them. Their sores healed rapidly as they responded to the love of Jesus.

There were forty boys in the home when the great miracle took place. There was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the like of which is recorded in few pieces of Christian literature. They fell prostrate on the floor under the power of God. While in the Spirit, they saw into the next world. They saw angels and talked with them; they played in the wonderful parks of Paradise; they saw the saints of old.

This outpouring went on for days and days. Little children preached under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The lowest, most outcast beggar boys saw revelations of invisible worlds and the glories of the redeemed.

Page 12: I am convinced that the experiences of these Adullam children were not manufactured. These wonders could not possibly have been the product of the natural minds of these children. Such uneducated, mentally untrained, unimaginative boys as these could not themselves have conceived of such things. Nor could these spiritual experiences, visions, and revelations have been the working of their subconscious minds. Many of these children were too young, too ignorant, or too recently rescued from paganism to know the Bible teaching on these subjects. Neither can these things be explained by the psychology of mental suggestion from others..... Neither can these experiences be explained as any sort of mental excitement, religious frenzy, natural emotion, nervous state, nor any sort of self-produced condition. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit came to ordinary children as they went about the not-too-exciting business of going to school.

Page 23: As the children in visions saw the awfulness of hell, the anguish of lost souls, and the indescribably hellish power of the devil and his angels, their agonizing crying was beyond anything I had ever heard or imagined. It was all so real to them. Many saw themselves bound and dragged to the very brink of hell. Condemnation for sins and the power of the devil over them was terrifying in its reality. But freedom from this evil power through the grace of the Lord Jesus was just as real. When they experienced this liberating power from the clutches of the evil one, their salvation was as real as had been their condemnation. Their joy, laughter, and peace of soul in the knowledge of

what they had been saved from gave them an experience which I am sure they will never be able to forget.

Page 49: The Bible tells us the heaven of the redeemed is the “third heaven.” The future home of the people of the Lord is a place in the third heaven. This place is a city. The name of this city is "The New Jerusalem." This New Jerusalem is not a figure of speech. It is not a combination of ideas skillfully clothed in earthly words to give man a false conception of something it is not. The Bible says this New Jerusalem is a real city with a real foundation which God himself laid.

Page 50: The Adullam children were caught up in vision to this city of God. How they could see the city I do not know. How Abraham saw it I do not know. How Paul could be caught up to Paradise..... I do not know. These things are beyond natural order. We need not, at present, know the how. We know the fact. John was shown the city. He was told by the Lord to write the things he had seen and send them to the churches.

In the Spirit Adullam children were caught up to this city time after time, not as in a dream but as a living reality. Their visits were so real, in fact, that the children thought their souls actually left their bodies to go to heaven and return, or that in some unaccountable way they had gone to heaven soul and body just as they might in daily life visit some distant place. Frequently when they were in Paradise plucking and partaking of the heavenly fruit, they gathered some extra to tuck in their garments to bring back to earth for “Muh Si and Si Mu” (Pastor and Mrs. Baker).

They knew they were on a visit to heaven and soon to return. Upon returning, when the Spirit lifted from them in our Adullam rooms, they proceeded at once to search in their pockets for the delicious fruit they had brought back to please us. Not finding this fruit, a look of great surprise, confusion and disappointment came over their faces. They could not, for the time, believe they had not bodily gone to heaven and come back with the fruit tucked in their garments.

Walking on the streets of the New Jerusalem was to them as real as walking on the streets of a Chinese city. One day, when walking down the street in bright sunshine, I asked the boys if the visions were as real and as clear as what we then saw. “Just as real,” they said, “but much clearer due to the light in heaven, the white garments, and the cleanliness everywhere, all adding to the brightness.”

Page 52: The Adullam children said they went to the third heaven. As they passed through the first heaven they felt air on their faces. Having passed the second heaven , they looked back upon the stars in their wondrous beauty, much as from a mountain height a person might gaze down upon a beautiful, light-studded city below.

Finally they reached the third heaven and came within sight of the New Jerusalem. As they approached this heavenly city they saw its lights in the distance. Coming nearer, they saw the beautiful wall radiating its wonderful jasper light. The foundations were of indescribable beauty, sparkling with red, yellow, orange, purple, blue, green, violet, and all the other colors of the twelve

most beautiful jewels.

Page 53: The children of Adullam entered by its pearly gates into the city of golden streets. Angels in white guarded the gates and welcomed those entering in. No beggarly reception this. Here the one-time rejected off-scourings of the earth were welcomed as kings by these angelic hosts. Had not the Savior promised the weakest and humblest of his children a kingdom where they shall reign with the King of Kings for ages and ages?

Through the gates into the city! Out of earth into heaven! Out of the mortal into the immortal! Out of death into life! All the old life behind and below! All the new life ahead and above! Inside the gates! Angels, angels everywhere. Angels talking, angels singing, angels rejoicing, angels playing harps and blowing trumpets, angels dancing and praising the King. Such a scene no mortal ever saw; such a flood of inner joy as no one ever knew flooded the whole being.

The children clapped their hands in rapture. They shouted for joy. They sometimes rolled on the floor in unrestrained laughter and jumped and danced in great delight, while their faces were so transformed by this heavenly joy that the glory of the celestial city seemed to shine upon us. There was no sorrow in this city; no mournful, long-faced religion there; no funeral dirges in the hymns. This was a city of joy, "joy in the Holy Spirit," "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Page 55: Not only about the gates of the city were these happy angels, but also throughout the city everywhere were these heavenly hosts. Angels were always ready to escort the children from place to place throughout the city; angels walked with them and talked with them; angels explained to them the meaning of things they did not understand, even as they talked with John and revealed to him the things of God.

Often in these experiences with the angels our children were given harps and taught to play them and sing as the angels did. They were also taught to blow the trumpets and were taught the music and language of heaven.

Page 56: The climax of all heavenly joy and wonder was “seeing Jesus” and worshipping Him who had saved them by His blood. Soon after entering the gates of the city the children were escorted by the angels to “go and see Jesus.” We could hear these children talking about "going to see Jesus." When they came into His wonderful presence they stood reverently gazing with love and devotion upon the Lord of all creation, who was also their Savior. First of all they thanked Him, adoringly worshipped Him and bowed in true obeisance. Then they knelt and bowed their faces to the floor in true worship "in Spirit and truth."

Page 57: No matter how amazed were the children at the wonders of the golden city, no matter how happy in the pleasures of Paradise, no matter how joyful in the presence of the angels, Jesus was never forgotten. His name was mentioned in all the conversation; His praise was mingled in all the enjoyments; he was always magnified everywhere, in everything, and in everybody there.

On either side of the beautiful golden streets were buildings side by side, a room for each person, every room opening unto the street. On the door and above the front were precious jewels so resplendently brilliant that the building shone with light and glory. The name of each occupant was above the door. Angels led the children into the rooms. Within all the rooms were the same kinds of furnishings: a beautiful golden table upon which was a Bible, a flower vase, a pen, and a book; by the table was a golden chair; there was also a wonderful golden chest and a golden bed. In each room was a jewelled crown, a golden harp, and a trumpet. The walls were gold. From the Bible, made of such paper as had never been seen on earth and bound with gold, light and such brilliant glory shone forth that the whole room needed no other light. The visitors were told that when they came to stay after death they could go out into Paradise and pick any flowers of their choice to place in the beautiful vase on the golden table.

Page 58: In these excursions through heaven, the children, though lost to their real surroundings on earth, were always conscious that their visits to heaven were temporary. They knew they were there only to see what was prepared for them after death, so they might go back to earth again to tell others. The angels and the Lord told their visitors that, if they believed and obeyed, all these things would be theirs.

Page 59: Can we suppose the Lord saved these boys, baptized them in the Holy Spirit, and then deceived them by showing them a figurative and mythical heaven? Impossible! An earthly father may deceive his children with false hopes and false promises, but our heavenly Father shows his children what he has for them (1Cor. 2:10), promises he will give these things (Rev. 3:21), and then gives the very things which he has promised (Luke 11:9,13).

Page 59: The first day when the Holy Spirit fell upon the children, one of the boys was caught up to heaven and he was welcomed by the angels and two Adullam boys who had died the year before. These two, “Hsi Dieu Fu” and “Djang Hsing,” had with them in heaven a little girl who died in Kotchiu four years previously, and whom our children had forgotten.

These who had died and gone on before led those who were caught up in the joys and wonders of heaven. They led them to see Jesus first of all, and to worship and thank Him. After this they were shown their dwellings and escorted around the city or led out into Paradise to play.

All who went to heaven were given white garments. The angels, also dressed in seamless garments of spotless white, had wings, but the redeemed did not have wings. There was a clear distinction between the two.

Page 60: Heaven was so real, so near, so wonderful, so certain, that if one of our children had died in those days the others would have envied him his privilege.

The step to heaven after death or at the coming of the Lord seemed so small and the coming of the Lord so near that it removed from our minds all mystery as to why the first disciples could sell their possessions and face persecution and death without wavering.

Our kingdom is not of this world. Our citizenship is in heaven. Our life, our work, our service, our hardships here are only brief and passing incidents on the way to the true life, the true city, in the true kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Page 69: I am sure you will be interested, as we were, in what our Adullam children saw in the Paradise, the Eden, in the city beyond the sky. One of the young men was in Paradise almost as soon as he entered the heavenly city. There he was met by the two Adullam boys who had died in Hokow. These boys, taking him through Paradise and the other parts of the Holy City, soon came to a great, lawn-like, grassy, open plot surrounded by magnificent trees.

The whole scene was so entrancing that the young man said to his two glorified friends, “This is good enough for me. There can’t be anything more beautiful. I’ll stay right here.”

The boys who had preceded him to heaven said, “No, don’t wait here, for there are much greater marvels.”

Going on a little farther they came to still more wonderful trees, some of them bearing fruit. The whole park-like surroundings and the grassy lawn beneath the trees were enticing beyond any earthly understanding.

The young man said, “I must stay here, I cannot go on and leave this great beauty. I am so happy."

“Come on,” said the others, “there are many things in heaven exceeding this.”

“You go,” he replied, “but I shall remain right here for awhile.”

The others left him on the grass under the trees with the great, open, velvet-like grassy space before him. Floods of joy and happiness he had never known on earth flooded his whole being. He was in the land of joy, “joy unspeakable and full of glory,” “the land that is fairer than day.”

Page 70: The angels were dressed in seamless garments of white; their faces were perfect; one was not more beautiful than another. “When they smiled – Oh, I can’t describe that,” the boy said later, “there is no way on earth to describe an angel’s smile.”

Similar and surpassingly beautiful scenes in Paradise were seen repeatedly by a large number of Adullam children. In Paradise they saw trees bearing the most delicious fruit, and vistas of the most beautiful flowers of every color, sending forth an aroma of heavenly fragrance. There were birds of glorious plumage singing their carols of joy and praise. In this park were also animals of every size and description: large deer, small deer, large lions, great elephants, lovely rabbits, and all sorts of little friendly pets such as they had never seen before.

The children held the little pets in their arms and passed them from one to another. They found the lion peacefully lying beneath a tree and climbed on his back, ran their fingers through his shaggy mane, brushed his face, and put their hands in his mouth. If they desired, they curled down beside him to enjoy together the love of their common Maker.

Page 71: The little children rode the small deer, while the other children rode the larger deer or the friendly elephant. All was perfect love. All was great harmony. Such shouts of joy! Such happy childish laughter! Who but our Father in heaven ever thought of or planned such a Paradise?

When hungry, the children ate of the wonderful fruit or gathered freely the sweet tasting, refreshing manna that was scattered all about. Were they thirsty? Here and there trickled little brooks of the stimulating and refreshing water of life.

In the open, lawn-like vistas amidst the trees and flowers and birds of Paradise, the children of Adullam saw companies of the redeemed dancing and playing trumpets with the angels. Sometimes they joined this happy, festivel group, in which were small children, larger children, and adults, but where no one was old. What heavenly scenes! What heavenly singers! What joy among the angels and the redeemed!

Page 72: I well remember how one of our boys was given a vision of what happens at the death of a Christian. As relatives and friends gathered about the dying one, an angel stood by the bed awaiting the liberating of the Christian's soul. When the man was set free from his bodily encumbrance, the angel took him by the arm and ascended with him into heaven. The principalities and powers of evil hosts in mid-heaven in their attempts to hinder the passage of the angel and his charge were overcome by the angel's faith and praise as the ascent continued toward the heavenly city.

Having been welcomed at the gate, this new arrival was received by hosts of angels, singing, dancing, rejoicing, all uniting in giving him a royal welcome into the eternal city of the redeemed. Such visions as these have but confirmed our faith in the Word of God and its promise of eternal life through Christ Jesus.

Editor's note: I have read Visions Beyond the Veil by H.A. Baker six or eight times. I read it to my children when they were young and I encouraged many others to read it, so moved was I by its content. Excerpts have been printed by permission of Whitaker Publishers who hold full copyrights. Anything added to the writing by myself for the purpose of explanation is inserted in brackets .

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"There was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit"

"I am convinced that the experiences of these Adullam children were not manufactured

"Angels in white guarded the gates and welcomed those entering in."

"Angels, angels everywhere."

"Jesus was never forgotten"

"Our kingdom is not of this world. Our citizenship is in heaven."

"In paradise they saw trees bearing the most delicious fruit"

WHO LIVES IN HEAVEN?

First of all, God lives in heaven. There are three persons that make up God: the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. All three are separate persons, yet all three are fully God. (More on this later.) God the Father rules from His throne which is situated at the apex of the great city, the New Jerusalem. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father.

There are angels in heaven, "ten thousands times ten thousand." Angels are divided into ranks with the archangels being the most prominent. The angels are mighty, radiant beings who carry out the will of God. The Bible also speaks of other creatures in heaven.

And there are millions of people in heaven. After Jesus was buried, he descended into paradise to preach to the saints. Paradise was, as already mentioned, a part of sheol-hades, a comfortable holding place for the saints of the Old Testament who put their trust in the coming Messiah. Jesus led these believers into heaven and that is where they are to this day. Also, the saints who have died since Christ's death on the cross have instantly gone to heaven.

WHO LIVES IN HELL?

There are many more people in hell (sheol-hades) than in heaven. Perhaps the number is in the billions. These would include all who died without Christ. Those who died without Christ are those

who did not put their trust in Christ (to save them) while on earth. Jesus taught, “narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” And Jesus also taught that the way “that leads to destruction” is wide and “there are many who go by it.”

GEHENNAH. Gehennah at the present time is empty. The first people to be cast into this place of “fire and brimstone” will be two men – the antichrist and his forerunner who is “the false prophet.” (More will be said about these two in another publication.) Many scholars agree this will occur in the very near future. One thousand years later, satan will be cast into Gehennah, along with his vast army of weird underlings. Also at this time, those awaiting judgment in sheol-hades will be thrown into Gehennah immediately after their trial. Gehennah, therefore, is the final and permanent living quarters of every rebel, every despot, every weird demon and the devil (satan) himself.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the editor of The Main Issue,

I am not a Jehovah's Witness, however, I do read the bible and know of the faith which you so naively speak of in your second issue. Throughout your paper you recognize Jesus as God, yet you claim to understand the bible. After a little research of the bible, it is evident that this is not true. The bible makes it very clear and understandable, if you're open to understanding. Mark 13:32 says, "However, no one, not even the angels in heaven, nor I myself (Jesus), know the day or hour when these things will happen; only the Father knows." John 5:19 says, "Jesus replied, 'The Son can do nothing by Himself. He does only what He sees the Father doing, and in the same way.' " John 14:28 says, "For now I can go to the Father, who is greater than I am."

The way you talk about Jesus insinuates He had severe mental and emotional problems, depicting Him as a man who talked to Himself, called out to Himself, praised Himself. Your reasoning would make scriptures like Mark 13:32 read, in short, "nor I myself know, only I know." John 5:19 would read, "The Son can do nothing by Himself. He does only what He sees Himself doing." John 14:28 would read, "For I am greater than Myself." For further confirmation compare John 17:19-23 with Matthew 19:5 so that you might understand what is truly meant by the oneness and unity of the Father and Son. The following page lists several more scriptures regarding the Facts.

Mark 12:29: God is "one."
Luke 4:8: Worship him "alone."
Psalm 83:18: You "alone" are Most High.
John 5:44: "Only" God.
Mark 3:11: Son "of" God.
Mark 13:32: Nor the Son, but the Father knows.
John 5:19: Son can only do what He beholds Father doing.
John 14:28: The Father is greater than I am.
Mark 1:24: Holy One "of" God.
2Corinthians 1:3: God and Father "of" Jesus.
Mark 12:29: God is "one." If you look up the definition of "one" in any dictionary you will find its meaning. One: being a single individual; single in kind.
Luke 4:8: Worship him "alone." Alone: without company excluding all others; without equal.
Mark 3:11: Son "of" God. Of: coming from; away or at a distance from; produced by.
John 5:44: "Only" God. Only: solely, exclusively, single; standing (alone) by reason of superior excellence. Exclusively: having no duplicate; being the only one.

As for Jehovah's Witnesses,
You talk of them bullying, yet whenever they have come to my door, never have I been bullied or pushed. My prior employment required that I know of and work amongst cultism at times. Cults are

very ritualistic, involved in kidnapping, ceremonial brainwashings, animal and human sacrifices; they are very secretive - to mention a few things.

You say you are not being critical or judgmental yet you are the one that pokes fun at these people by saying "nice teethy smile – again. Different person, same teeth." You liken them to that of a stranger giving a little girl a ride. You say, “It would be very foolish to go to a Jehovah’s Witness for the truth about the Watchtower Society." You talk about Jehovah’s Witnesses having so much more bad fruit. But of course you are not being critical or judgmental! You also say, "Think for yourself; come to your own conclusions." Yet you are the one pushing your own beliefs and misconceptions regarding these people. I know for a fact that your material is poorly researched, example: (just one example of the many misconceptions) Jehovah’s Witnesses do not ask you to join the Watchtower Society for salvation or any other purpose. The Watchtower Society is a place where the Watchtower is published by Jehovah’s Witnesses, it adheres to the bible as its authority. You said you were not being judgmental or critical, yet your paper is full of this.

You tell your readers that it would be very foolish to go to a Jehovah’s Witness for the truth about the Watchtower Society. Who better to go to, to find out the truth about this? As in your own words, “Think for yourself, come to your own conclusions.” Your paper might be worth reading if it was based on fact and not misconceptions or personal ideologies. An example of this: Where does it say in the bible that God would have you renounce Russellism?

There are so many misconceptions already regarding the bible and its words. It might be wise to not add any more misconceptions. You have proven yourself a liar and hypocrite as pointed out, using your own words. I do not consider myself better than you, for the bible says that man was created equal. I’m sure however, you are aware of what the bible says about being judgmental and lying. We all have a lot to learn.

No Signature

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Friend,

I want to sincerely thank you for your letter. It is obvious you have given the second issue of The

Main Issue, Jehovah's Witnesses: Christian or Cult? serious perusal, and I appreciate your courtesy in expressing your comments and concerns and objections. I sense an honesty and a hunger for truth. Again, I express my sincerity and best wishes toward you, and I ask that any expressed convictions conflicting with your own will not cause you to conclude otherwise.

Yes, there is only one God, as you so ably pointed out. But in that one Godhead are three persons: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three persons are distinct from each other, and are each fully God (i.e. omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent and eternal). The Bible is very clear on this, calling all three "God." The Bible sometimes uses the word 'God' in the singular when referring to one of these persons, or in the plural when referring to two or three of them (i.e. "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.' " Gen 1:26).

This should not be so difficult to grasp. Scripture teaches a man and wife are one flesh. A singular family consists of many members. A man consists of a body, a soul and a spirit, yet he is one person.

From the foundation of the church Christians have always believed in the Trinity; believe me, I have not invented a strange doctrine. Jesus commissioned his disciples to baptize converts "in the name of (1) the Father, and of (2) the Son and of (3) the Holy Spirit." The Godhead can be seen at the baptism of Jesus: (1) Jesus was baptized, (2) the Father spoke to Him, and (3) the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. The triune God can be seen in these words of Christ, "The Helper, (1) the Holy Spirit, whom the Father (2) will send in My (3) name, He will teach you all things." (John 14:26) The Bible declares that (1) the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:24), (2) Jesus raised Jesus from the dead (John 2:19), and (3) the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. (Rom. 8:11) If you find this difficult to comprehend, remember only the person who is equal to God can fully understand God.

God never invited us to challenge His Word, and it's not my place to defend it. I simply tell you what the Bible plainly teaches. When I come upon a verse I cannot understand, I am obligated to believe it and accept it for what it says. I dare not bring the word of the mighty God down to my human level, for He said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways..... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8,9)

In the fourth century a fellow by the name of Arius (of Alexandria, Egypt) popularized a theory that Jesus was a creation of God, and not the eternal God. That theory has since been known by the church as the 'Arian heresy.' With much fervor the Jehovah's Witnesses have promulgated this heresy to the degree that they have deliberately perverted certain Scripture verses in their 'translation' of the Bible, the New World Translation (as I pointed out in Issue two).

A close study of the Bible reveals:

1. God is the Creator and Jesus is the Creator. (Since there is only one Creator, Jesus therefore must be God.)

2. God is the redeemer and savior, and Jesus is the redeemer and savior. (The above logic equally applies.)

3. God is our shepherd and Jesus is "the good shepherd."

4. God is the King and Jesus is the King.

5. God is "I Am" and "I am He," and Jesus is "I AM" and "I Am He."

6. God is the Rock and Jesus is the Rock.

7. God: "I am the First and I am the Last." And Jesus, "I am..... the first and the last." (How many first(s) and last(s) can there be?)

The Bible gives more indisputable proof that Jesus is, in fact Jehovah God: They called the Babe, Immanuel "which is translated, God with us." In other words, Christ was called "God with us."

Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God." Did Jesus refute Thomas (as He certainly would have if Thomas had spoken an untruth)? No, certainly not. Jesus let Thomas' declaration stand so that people of every century would know for a certainty that Jesus is Jehovah God. Hebrews 1:8 quotes the Father as saying to Jesus, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." (The 'translators' of the NWT perverted this text.)

John writes, "and the Word (Jesus) was God." (Yes, they mistranslated this verse as well, calling the Word 'a god.')

Paul tells us Jesus created all things. How could He create all things if He Himself was created? (The 'translators,' recognizing the dilemma, added the word 'other' to make it read that Jesus created all other things.)

Surely this is plain evidence that Jesus is Jehovah. And there is more:
John tells us Jesus declared that "God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." (I am sure you will agree that anyone equal to God is God.) They crucified Jesus on the grounds of blasphemy (claiming to be God).

Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God."

John the baptist was sent to "Prepare the way of Jehovah " (NWT) and, as you know, John was the forerunner of Christ as indicated by his own words, "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' " Therefore Christ must be Jehovah.

When Jesus arrived on planet earth through the body and through the obedience of a virgin, he left his Godly power behind and became as we are. (He did so voluntarily, so He could become the innocent sacrifice to atone for man's sin - which God's righteousness demanded.) He walked on earth as a man and related to God the Father as a man. And as a man He depended on the Holy

Spirit to empower Him. That is why "The Son can do nothing by Himself." And that is why He did not "know the day or hour when these things will happen." Yes, Jesus is the Son "of" God, but this does not mean produced by as you say, no more than the Spirit "of" Christ means that the Spirit was produced by Christ, (or for that matter, that the God "of" Israel was produced by Israel).

I trust that you will find these insights helpful.

As for Jehovah's Witnesses: I am not critical of the individual Jehovah's Witness knocking on my door. I said in issue two, speaking to Jehovah's Witnesses, "I am not being critical of you. And I am not being critical of anyone else, for they are all, without exception 'Followers of followers, victims of victims.' Again, I am not being critical of you. Actually, I can very much identify with you. I really can. I know what it is like to be indoctrinated. As a Catholic I was taught that…"

But I am very critical of the Jehovah's Witness organization! And so should anyone else who has examined its deadly doctrines, its many false prophecies and its history of cruelty and intrigue.

I don't think you grasp the import of who they claim to be. They are saying to you and I (and everyone else) that they alone are God's spokesman, and if we do not become a part of their organization, if we do not unquestionably submit to their every dictate, if we do not carry their gospel of death to wherever they would send us, we are under the wrath of God and have no hope of escaping the tribulation that will soon fall upon humanity. Surely we have a right and responsibility to judge for ourselves whether or not this claim be true or false.

Would you not warn your son or daughter about the cults you have come in touch with, even at the risk of being criticized and ridiculed? Would you really hold back your criticism and let them walk into a trap?

Do I not likewise have the responsibility of warning the citizens of our city of a cult, the Jehovah's Witnesses organization, whose hidden intent is to make them the androids they have become? To arm them with a defense, the truth about Jesus Christ and His ability to save to the uttermost? Listen to what the Watchtower Society itself says on this subject (excerpt from both Awake, Nov 22, 1971 and an article, Execution of Divine Judgment Upon False Religion):

"It is not religious persecution for an informed person to expose publicly a certain religion as being false, thus allowing persons to see the difference between false religion and true religion..... To make a public exposure of false religion is certainly of more value than exposing a news report as being untrue; it is a public service instead of a religious persecution and it has to do with the eternal life and happiness of the public. Still it leaves the public free to choose..... But ask yourself: Why did Jesus publicly criticize religious men who claimed to serve the same God he preached? Was his motive bad? Not at all. Though he was mild-tempered and kind, his love for righteousness and his desire to aid honest hearted persons moved him to criticize those who were teaching or acting contrary to God's revealed will..... Was it only Christ who could properly make such comments? No, for the Bible shows clearly that Jesus' disciples also called attention to religious error. For example,

read Stephen's bold denunciation of the Jewish leaders..... And note that the apostle Paul branded the Athenian worship of idols as 'ignorance'..... Further, out of love for truth these first-century Christians exposed deviations from true Christianity by ones professing to be Christians. So the disciples were being Christian – not unchristian – in pointing out religious error..... Consequently, is it unchristian today to offer Bible-based comments about another religion? The Scriptural answer must be No. True, criticism that reveals faults in the teachings or practices of someone's religion might at first seem severe. Yet, how should one react? Not like those who became violently enraged over Stephen's criticism..... Far from being rejected as unchristian then, criticism based on God's Word should be carefully considered, for it can bring real benefits."

True, they did not have themselves in mind when publishing these statements, but unless they admit to a double standard they would have to agree the same principles apply to themselves. You say, "never have I been bullied or pushed." I warn you, the trap is closing.

A man phoned my wife after reading Jehovah's Witness: Christian or Cult? He and his wife have been raised in the organization since youth and all their acquaintances are Jehovah's Witnesses. He wants out. But he knows if he tries to leave they will try to split their marriage and he will lose everything. If he has children he will lose them to the Watchtower Society and he will become his children's enemy. What advice would you give this man? I don't think he would agree that the Jehovah's Witnesses never bully or coerce.

The following conversation is between a Jehovah's Witness Elder and myself (not word for word – my memory is not that good) which I had just prior to Issue Two:

Do the people in your organization have the right to make their own decisions, to think for themselves and come to their own conclusions?

Elder: Oh yes, people can think whatever they want. It's a free country. We do not dictate what people do.

Do you mean to say that a Jehovah's Witness for example, is free to have a blood transfusion if he honestly thinks it is Scripturally sound to have one?

Elder: Oh yes. We are not like that. People are free to do whatever they please. Like I said, it's a free country.

And such a person can remain a Jehovah's Witness?

Elder: No, only those who agree with our teachings can be a Jehovah's Witness.

But don't you teach that anyone who is not a Jehovah's Witness cannot be saved? That they are under the wrath of God?

Elder: Yes.

Again, is this not "bullying" people to submission? Treated like a little child, a Jehovah's Witness is not 'allowed' to vote, attend a wedding at a church, join the armed forces, speak to someone who has been disfellowshipped, take a transfusion, sign a petition, etc., etc. What word should I have used to describe this degrading control? If Jehovah's Witnesses are not held in fear of this 'organization-god,' as one author called it, why, may I ask, did you not sign your letter? I am not criticizing, just asking you to look at it. Whom do you fear?

I think you are more influenced by this society than you realize. The arguments you presented against the deity of Christ is Watchtower Society reasoning. They have a way of steering their victims to their logic while making them believe they came to those conclusions themselves.

The Jehovah's Witness organization IS a cult as they put themselves on par with God's word. It is true there is no official membership in the Watchtower Society, but they do claim that it is impossible to attain salvation (their brand of salvation) without their help. They oppose almost every Biblical truth while, as you say, claiming to adhere to the Bible as its authority. My paper was not poorly researched, and if you would but read the books listed (in issue two) you would agree.

If you contact me I will send you any one of these books free of charge, so much do I want you set free from this organization. Why?

Because there really is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun, even though the Witnesses say otherwise. I quote a Mr. Walter Martin, a writer who has studied the cults for many years:

Jehovah's Witnesses know beyond doubt that if Jesus is Jehovah-God then everyone of them is going to a flaming hereafter, and hell they fear above all else. This no doubt explains a great deal of their antagonism to the doctrines of the Trinity and Hell. The Witnesses, it must be remembered, consistently berate the Trinity doctrine as "of the Devil," and never tire proclaiming that "the Bible Hell is the grave." The thought of being punished in unquenchable fire for their disobedience to God is probably the strongest bond that binds the Watchtower's flimsy covers together."

The only one who can save you from hell and bring you into the New Jerusalem is Jesus Christ, "My Lord and my God." Although the Bible does not specifically say to renounce Russellism it does say, "Come out from among them and be separate," referring to everything ungodly. Please believe me when I say that I only want to see you there. That is my motive. That was the heart behind Jehovah's Witnesses: Christian or Cult?

Publicizing the teachings and history and false prophecies of the Jehovah's Witnesses organization was a good work. The intent was not to injure but to set free, and to give the uninformed a defense. I am glad you have read it. Yes, you were offended, but the gospel does that. Now my question to you is this:

What will you do with Christ?

Will you embrace Him into your life, or reject Him? Will you turn to Him for eternal life, or put your

trust in an organization whose history abounds in bad fruit? Will you not turn to Him, as did Thomas, and profess, “My Lord and my God”? Again I ask you:

What will you do with Christ?

Most sincerely,
The editor

" in that one Godhead are three persons. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

" Adam's every need
was supplied,
including a wife"

"They called the Babe,
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TEEN PROBE

S-T-R-A-I-G-H-T T-A-L-K T-O T-E-E-N-S

Guest Writer: Garry Lefebvre

Editor's Note: It was the fall of 1973. Two of us were chuckling about this guy who was interviewing Garry Lefebvre after the Grey Cup game. Garry had just won the Canadian Most Valuable Player award, and in the interview, before millions of Canadian viewers, he was testifying his love for Christ. The poor interviewer didn't know what to do with the microphone – he wasn't prepared for this! Anyhow, as we were laughing about this the Lord spoke to me, "One day you will be associated with this man." Just like that! Frankly, I didn't believe what I clearly heard. How could I ever be associated with a CFL football player from Edmonton? The Main Issue is but one way Garry and I have been associated, just as God had said. With that, I introduce you to Garry Lefebvre, a close friend, a man of God:

As a young boy growing up in Edmonton, Alberta, I was as ardent an Eskimo fan as anyone. Jackie Parker, Rollie Miles, Don Getty, Johnny Bright, Normie Kwong, and the rest of the team of the Fifties, were all my heroes. It was during my grade-five year that I decided I would some day become a wide receiver for the mighty Eskimos. I dreamed night and day of catching that long touchdown pass. At school we played football in the spring, summer, winter, and fall. All the guys loved the game but I think I was the only one who ate, slept, and lived it constantly.

My first opportunity to play on a real organized team came in the summer of 1955, at the age of eleven. The Martin Paper Wild Cats were having try-outs at the practice field next to Clark Stadium, (the home of the Eskimos), and I was the first one there Saturday morning. Almost a hundred boys showed up for the first practice that day. There were only spots for forty players, but I was sure I would be one of them. At the end of the practice Coach Joe Hudson called me over to talk with me privately. I was expecting him to tell me what a good practice I had, but instead of patting me on the back he cut my world out from under me. I could barely hold back the tears as I heard him say:

"Garry, I don't know how to tell you this except to give it to you straight. Son, you will never be a football player, you're just too small. If I were you I would take up another sport. Football is a tough game and you're just not built for it."

It seemed as if my world had come to an end. All that I had dreamed of, my life's ambition and goal, had come crashing down. I walked home totally bruised. Tears came in waves as I kept saying to myself over and over, "It isn't fair, he didn't even give me a chance. I know I could make the team. I know I am as good as the other guys, in fact better than most of them."

Mom and Dad tried to console me, telling me that there were other things more important in life than football, but I wasn't going to give up that easily. For the next three days I went to the practice field and stood outside the fence. My heart ached as I watched them run up and down the field. At the end of the third practice Coach Hudson strolled across the field to the fence and looked at my tear stained face and said, "You really want to play bad, don't you kid?"

"I'd give anything," I replied, and swallowed hard, anticipating his next words.

“Okay, you can be on the team,” he said, “but I can’t promise you’ll play very much.” He thought I was just too small.

And Coach Joe kept his promise. I sat on the bench the whole year until the last five minutes of the final game of the season. He looked over at me sitting there with my head hanging down and shouted, "Lefebvre! Get in there at tight end."

I jumped to my feet and sprinted out to the huddle. Our quarterback called a play but I wasn’t sure what to do. So I just stood on the line and watched, hoping I wouldn’t get in the way. The five minutes went by quickly and I never even touched the ball.

When the final gun sounded, Coach Joe walked over to me and apologized for not letting me play all year. Then he said, “You come back next year and who knows, you might be one of the stars of the team. You’ll be bigger and faster and probably make first string.” I lived on those words for the next 10 months, and dreamed my dream again. When football practices began again the following July I soon realized that I was one of the better players.

The day before our first league game Coach Joe asked me if I would take a walk with him. I could tell by the look on his face that what he was about to say wasn’t good. He put his arm on my shoulder and said, “Son, I don’t know how to tell you this, but first I want you to know that I’ve done everything I can, but it's no use. Garry, your birthday is November 12th, and the cut-off date for twelve-year-olds is November the 15th. You are three days too old, and the League won’t let you play!”

The door had slammed in my face once again. But after the initial shock had passed I again began to set my sights on my goal. I held onto it for another two years until I entered Eastglen Composite High School at the age of fourteen. Three weeks into the junior team practice sessions my bubble burst again when my mother informed me that I had to find an after-school job and give up the idea of playing football for awhile.

It all finally began to come together in grade twelve when I made the senior squad as a wide receiver and punter, and I stepped out on to the field for my first real game. The first ball I punted flew over the heads of the punt receivers and bounced through the end zone for a 75 yard single point. A few minutes later I caught the first pass ever thrown to me and ran 76 yards for a touchdown. The excitement of knowing that my career was finally getting off the ground was short lived as a few minutes later I was carried off the field with a broken ankle. I spent the rest of the season on the sidelines watching again.

The dream, however, remained and at eighteen I became an Edmonton JR. Wildcat. My three years as a slot back and wide receiver were just great and as a result I was invited to Eskimo training camp. I can’t describe the elation I felt after the final cut, and I knew that I made the team. Those 10 years of setbacks and heartbreaking disappointments were over at last and my boyhood dream had come to pass.

My first year as an Edmonton Eskimo was unbelievable. The Esks made the play-offs for the first time in years, and I was voted ROOKIE OF THE YEAR. Overnight I had become a star. Reporters wanted to interview me and fans wanted my autograph. I'd finally arrived!! I rode the crest of that wave all through the '66 season, but two months into the off season I began to experience feelings that I couldn't understand. Although I had "made it," there was an emptiness in me that's hard to describe. It was like I had struggled to climb to the top of a ladder only to discover that I was at the bottom of another. Something seemed to be missing and I didn't know what it was. I wasn't aware that the real problem was spiritual.

Two years later my world fell to pieces. Our first child was born posterior (face up), and her lungs were full of fluid. She spent her first 10 days on this earth in a respirator. Sandy and I (Sandy is my wife, a very special person) named her Cheri (French for 'dear one'). She was bald with a cute round face. Sandy and I were thrilled with our bundle from heaven. We were stunned the next day when our pediatrician informed us that our beautiful baby girl had Downs Syndrome, a form of mental retardation.

I walked out into the parking lot, and looked up into the dark, cold, November sky and cried out from the depths of my heart, "God if You're up there, WHY ME? What have I done to deserve this!?" It seems we have to be knocked flat on our backs before we look up.

I began to question the existence of God, and why things happened the way they did. Is there a God who is in control, or does everything just happen by chance? Our physician suggested that we place Cheri in an institution, and not burden ourselves with trying to raise her. No way! We accepted our baby just as she was and took her home.

From the day Cheri arrived home she has been a real joy to raise. The one real difficult thing to overcome was the reaction of friends. They just didn't know how to handle the situation, so they stayed away and didn't acknowledge Cheri's birth. Sandy was crushed as many of her high school friends never even called. I guess they were afraid and didn't know what to say. Cheri is now 22 years old and is still a blessing to our home and to everyone else.

I closed the door of my mind and heart to God, and just accepted our daughter for who she was and went on with life as usual. The empty feeling was still there, though I tried to ignore it.

Shortly after, another bomb shell was dropped on us. I could hardly believe my ears as head coach Neal Armstrong began to explain to me that they had just traded me to the Montreal Alouettes. I had said to Sandy just three months earlier, "Honey, if I was ever traded from the Eskimos, I would go anywhere but Montreal." Without any warning my childhood dream of playing for the Eskimos had been smashed again.

Well, I ate those words and packed my bags for Montreal. The Alouettes wanted me there immediately, so I flew out the next day to a team that not only was on the other side of Canada, but was at the bottom of the league. It wasn't long after I had arrived at the Alouette Stadium that I

realized just why they were in the cellar. The whole organization, from the general manager down, was more sloppily run than a sand lot football team. After three years with a class organization like Edmonton, the change was unbelievable. We won only two games that '69 season and I was surprised we did that well. During the off-season, the club was sold to Sam Berger. He immediately canned the management and coaching staff, and hired Red O'Quinn as the new G.M. and Sam Etcheverry as head coach.

1970 was one of the greatest Cinderella stories in the history of the C.F.L. Under the direction of Sam we went from the basement in 1969 to Grey Cup Champions in 1970. The excitement of just being in the Grey Cup was incredible, and to catch a touchdown pass as well was awesome.

Montreal had not been in the Grey Cup for nineteen years and the city went wild. When the team arrived home the next day, there were 10,000 screaming fans jammed into the airport terminal. The following day three million people thronged the streets just to catch a glimpse of us as we rode around the city in convertibles. This was by far the biggest thrill of my life. But a few weeks later the excitement had subsided and those feelings of emptiness were back. And now another crisis.

Sandy was pregnant again and we were hoping for a boy, a healthy boy. Brad arrived January 28th, 1971 after just 6 hours labour. I was elated when our Dr. Crooks carried Brad out to me. "Garry you have a 7 lb, 10 ounce healthy boy." But the next day we were told that there was something seriously wrong with the baby's intestinal tract and he must have surgery immediately. So Brad was operated on when just two days old, and again at six days, and a third operation at six weeks.

It was during that time of crisis that we learned to do something we had never felt the need to do before. We got down on our knees and prayed. We figured we had everything under control and certainly didn't need any help from God. But when our baby went on the operating table we learned how to pray. It still amazes me that most people, like ourselves, wait until a real emergency hits before they give God a thought. Brad is now a healthy 20 year old young man, and we thank God for him as well as for Julie, 18, and Jesse, age 7.

Through Brad's ordeal we realized that there was a God in heaven who cared. We knew He existed, but we didn't know Him. Sandy and I began to search for truth and this search lasted for almost a year and took us through many religions. As we explored supposed "Christian" groups, there was something inside us which prevented us from getting snared. We later found out that it was the prayers of Christian friends that protected us from deception. The Bible says that we will find God when we search for Him with our whole heart.

The Lord spared our son in answer to our prayers and those of others. Months later we discovered that a church of 2,000 people had been praying for Brad and us and an old acquaintance, Larry Kerrychuk, had also taken up our burden. Larry and his wife Sue were born-again Christians and their love and concern for Brad moved us. It was they who the Lord used to bring us to Himself.

When Larry invited Sandy and I to an Athletes In Action Conference in Dallas, Texas, I agreed,

thinking that I would simply back out later. I told Sandy that I wasn't keen on going to Texas; I would rather stay home to play in a benefit hockey game. Sandy protested. "Give up a free trip to Dallas for a stupid hockey game?" She was right but I had to get out of this somehow. "How about if I ask God to give me a sign if He wants us to go?" She agreed and I prayed. "God! If You really want us to go to Dallas, then show us a sign." I thought I was safe. But moments later I felt this numbness go down my left arm. My team doctor had warned me that if this symptom, from an earlier spinal chord injury, ever returned I would be facing an operation that would end football for me. Sandy, realizing my career was over, cried and I felt like joining her. But then I remembered! I just asked God for a sign! Could this be it? I immediately threw my hands in the air and said, "Okay God I got the message." The numbness left immediately and that's how we ended up at the Athletes In Action Conference in Dallas, Texas on February 17th, 1972.

The first thing that impressed us was the number of world class athletes that were there. We noticed the love, peace, and joy they all seemed to possess. These people sure were different from the average person. They had something that was real.

During the first morning session we were presented with a booklet, The Four Spiritual Laws. We were challenged with the truth of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, not just some man's ideas, but the claims of Christ Himself who said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Father but by me." That day Sandy and I recognized that we were sinners and separated from God because of our sin. We realized we were, as everyone, hopelessly headed for Hell. We were presented with the fact that Jesus Christ (through His death and resurrection) was, and is, God's only provision for man's sin, and only through a personal relationship with Jesus can we all escape the Judgment of God.

Our eyes were opened when we found the truth we had been searching for in the person of the Son of God. We bowed our hearts before God that glorious day, repented of our sins, and asked Jesus to come into our lives. As the Bible describes it, we were both Born Again (born of His Spirit). The first thing that hit me was the emptiness was gone, and in its place was a sense of peace and contentment.

Louis Pasteur, a French physicist, wrote: "Every person is born with a God-shaped vacuum in their heart which cannot be filled with any created thing, but only by God Himself, made known through Jesus Christ."

Jesus said, "My peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you, not as the world gives, give I unto you." The world offers you a pseudo peace, but Jesus will give you the real thing.

Our new life began nineteen years ago, and that same peace that comes from knowing who we are, why we are here, and where we are going, is still in our hearts. You too can have this peace that Jesus offers. He said, "whosoever will, may come and drink of the waters of life freely."

The Apostle Paul who had a personal encounter with the Resurrected Lord Himself said "whosoever

shall call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

The return of Jesus Christ to this earth is very near. Ask God to reveal Christ to you before it's too late. I repeat, He is coming very soon.

It is written, "It is given unto man once to die and after that the Judgement."

God loves you. That's why you were led to read this story.

"I dreamed night and day of catching that long touchdown pass"

"Son you will never be
a football player"

"I was voted ROOKIE
OF THE YEAR."

"Our beautiful baby girl had Downs Syndrome"

"There were 10,000 screaming fans jammed into the airport terminal"

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the father but by me"

BIBLE HIGHLIGHT – LUKE 16:19-31:

19. "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

20. "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,

21. "Desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22. "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

23. "And being in torments in hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24. "Then 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.'

25. "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in the lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and you are tormented.

26. 'And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

27. "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,

28. 'for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'

29. "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

30. "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

31. "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "

There is much that can be derived about life after death from these verses. It is important to note that it was none other than Jesus who spoke these words. In a very real sense Jesus spoke these words to you, as much so as to the people who heard Him. Jesus knew you would hear them through this publication, or wherever. Some call this account of Lazarus and the rich man 'just a parable.' It is not 'just a parable.' Jesus never hinted it was anything less than an account of a real happening. Jesus calls Himself "the truth." "The truth" does not fabricate, mislead or exaggerate. With that in mind, we can safely conclude from the words of this account that:

a) There is life after death. Both the poor man and the rich man died (physically) but were very much alive in new locations.

b) The spirit of a person (the inner man) resembles the physical person; the rich man recognized the poor man who once begged at his gate.

c) The angels escorted Lazarus to paradise. (We can likewise assume the angels will escort the believer to heaven.)

d) Sheol-hades is a place of torment. It is extremely hot and dry, no water to quench the thirst or wet the dry tongue.

e) Sheol-hades is a prison; the rich man, who is now the beggar, would surely leave if he could.

f) Mercy is not dispensed to those in sheol-hades, not even a drop of water.

g) Lazarus, now the rich man, was comfortable.

h) It seems the brothers of the rich man were on their way to sheol-hades. They had heard the good news of Jesus Christ, they had read the Bible (the Old Testament) but refused God's salvation (Christ). If Lazarus, or anyone else, were released to tell the brothers of the reality of hell they would not be convinced, no matter how emphatic or descriptive the messenger might be.

Those refusing Christ may one day meet the rich-man-turned-beggar..... if he can be found in that sea of lost humanity. Those setting their faith in Christ to save them will undoubtedly, upon request, meet Lazarus, the beggar-turned-rich, wealthy beyond description.

Lazarus is no longer in paradise. Immediately after Jesus conquered satan and sin on the cross, He descended into paradise to release all the believers. They are now in the city of New Jerusalem in heaven.

The rich man is still in sheol-hades. He will be there for approximately another one thousand years. From there he will go to the to be judged by Christ where he will await sentencing. There it will be revealed the degree of suffering awaiting him in gehennah, the lake of fire. He will remain there, in torment, "forever and ever."

The account mentions Abraham. Elsewhere in the Bible it states, "Abraham was justified by faith" in God and not good deeds (being a nice guy). Lazarus was not in paradise because he was poor, but because he had faith in God. Adversely, the rich man was not in sheol-hades because he was rich, but because he did not place his trust in God to save him from sheol-hades.

If you are not convinced by the Scriptures about the reality of sheol-hades and gehennah, you would not be convinced even if someone you knew returned from these locations to warn you, so hardened are you against the Bible.

There is power in the words of God. There is power in truth. What you have just read is both God's word and truth about the reality of sheol-hades. Sheol-hades is as true as these words of Jesus, as true as the Bible is true. Yet, sadly, most reading this publication will not be convinced to turn to

Jesus to save them from this awful place they are walking into. What about you?

"There was a certain beggar name Lazarus"

"between us and you there is a great gulf fixed"

"Jesus spoke these words to you"

"Lazarus, now the rich man, was comfortable"

A REAL SCARE

More and more of my patients who are recovering from serious illnesses tell me there is a life after death. There is a heaven and a hell. I had always thought of death as painless extinction. I had bet my life on it. Now I have had to reconsider my own destiny, and what I had found isn't good. I have found it may not be safe to die!

I requested that a patient perform what we call a "stress test" to evaluate complaints of chest pain. In this test we exercise the patient and simultaneously record the heartbeat. A treadmill machine paces the patient's exercise so that he slowly builds up to a jog, then to a run. If the heart record (EKG) goes "haywire" during the exercise, we can usually be sure the patient's chest pains originate in the heart, explaining the source of his "angina pectoris," or pain in the chest.

This patient was a forty-eight-year-old white male who was a rural mail carrier. He was of medium build, dark haired, and had a personality that would please anyone. Unfortunately, he represented one of those rare instances where the EKG not only went "haywire," but the heart stopped altogether. He had a cardiac arrest and dropped dead right in my office. Instead of fibrillating (twitching without a beat), the heart had just plain stopped. He crumpled to the floor, lifeless.

With my ear to his chest, I could hear no heartbeat at all. With my hand alongside his Adam's apple, I could feel no pulse. He gave one or two sighing breaths before he quit breathing altogether. There were scattered muscle twitchings and then convulsions. He was gradually turning blue.

Although six doctors worked as partners in the same clinic, it was late afternoon and they had gone on to other hospitals to make evening rounds. Only the nurses were left. But they knew what to do and their performance was commendable.

While I started external heart massage by pushing in on the chest, one nurse initiated mouth-to-mouth breathing. Another nurse found a breathing mask, which made it easier to expand his lungs for him. Still another nurse brought the emergency cart containing pacemaker equipment. Unfortunately, the heart would not maintain its own beat. A complete heart block had occurred. The pacemaker was needed to overcome the block and increase the heart rate from thirty-five beats per minute to eighty or one hundred per minute.

I had to insert a pacemaker wire into the large vein beneath the collarbone which leads directly to the heart. One end of this electric wire was manipulated through the venous system and left dangling inside the heart. The other end was attached to a small battery-powered gadget that regulates the heartbeat and overcomes the heart block.

The patient began "coming to." But whenever I would reach for instruments or otherwise interrupt my compression on his chest, the patient would again lose consciousness, roll his eyes upward, arch his back in mild convulsion, stop breathing, and die once more.

Each time he regained heartbeat and respiration, the patient screamed, “I am in hell!” He was terrified and pleaded with me to help him. I was scared to death. In fact, this episode literally scared the hell out of me! It terrified me enough to write this book.

He then issued a very strange plea: “Don’t stop!” You see, the first thing most patients I resuscitate tell me, as soon as they recover consciousness, is “Take your hands off my chest; you’re hurting me!” I am big and my method of external heart massage sometimes fractures ribs. But this patient was telling me, “Don’t stop!”

Then I noticed a genuinely alarmed look on his face. He had a terrified look worse than the expression seen in death! This patient had a grotesque grimace expressing sheer horror! His pupils were dilated, and he was perspiring and trembling – he looked as if his hair was “on end.”
Then still another strange thing happened. He said, “Don’t you understand? I am in hell! Each time you quit I go back to hell! Don't let me go back to hell!”

Being accustomed to patients under this kind of emotional stress, I dismissed his complaint and told him to keep his "hell" to himself. I remember telling him, “I’m busy. Don’t bother me about your hell until I finish getting this pacemaker into place.”

But this man was serious, and it finally occurred to me that he was indeed in trouble. He was in a panic like I had never seen before. As a result, I started working feverishly and rapidly. By this time the patient had experienced three or four episodes of complete unconsciousness and clinical death from cessation of both heartbeat and breathing.

After several death episodes he finally asked me, “How do I stay out of hell?” I told him I guessed it was the same principle learned in Sunday School – that I guessed Jesus Christ would be the one whom you would ask to save you.

Then he said, “I don’t know how. Pray for me.”

Pray for him! What nerve! I told him I was a doctor, not a preacher.

“Pray for me!” he repeated.

I knew I had no choice. It was a dying man’s request. So I had him repeat the words after me as we worked – right there on the floor. It was a very simple prayer because I did not know much about praying. It went something like this:

Lord Jesus, I ask you to keep me out of hell. Forgive my sins. I turn my life over to you. If I die, I want to go to heaven. If I live I’ll be “on the hook” forever.

The patient’s condition finally stabilized, and he was transported to a hospital. I went home, dusted off the Bible, and started reading it. I had to find out exactly what hell was supposed to be like. I had always dealt with death as a routine occurrence in my medical practice, regarding it as an extinction with no need for remorse or apprehension. Now I was convinced there was something about this life

after death business after all. All my concepts needed revision. I needed to find out more. It was like finding another piece in the puzzle that supports the truth of the Scriptures. I was discovering that the Bible was not merely a history book. Every word was turning out to be true. I decided I had better start reading it closely.

The man, by the way, has stayed "on the hook." He is now a strong Christian, although before this incident he had gone to church only occasionally. Although he is too shy to speak before groups, he has remained a compelling witness for Jesus Christ on a one-to-one basis.

Note: This true account was taken, by permission, from the book Beyond Death's Door by Dr. Maurice Rawlings, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers. Dr. Rawlings is a noted heart surgeon, a graduate of George Washington University Medical School. He serves as consultant to various hospitals, was physician to the surgeon general and joint chiefs of staff, Pentagon. He was appointed to the American Heart Association's Council on Clinical Cardiology and is a teacher in the Canadian and American Heart Association. Dr. Rawlings has been present at many resuscitations whereby the patient passed "beyond the veil," perhaps more than any other person.

THE GAMBLER

This article is for those who are not convinced of the reality of heaven and hell. Yes, you've read the evidence presented in The Main Issue. You have been warned by other Christians. You know the Bible quotes Jesus Himself warning about a place of "weeping and gnashing of teeth." But you are not fully convinced. You might take a lesson from professional gamblers.

A professional gambler knows how to play the percentages. He wouldn't last long if he couldn't recognize a good bet when he seen one. Some things are just bad risks, others too good to pass by.

A good bet is when the chances of winning are better than the chances of losing. Or, if the chances of losing are greater, the investment is small in comparison to the prize.

Yes, a pro knows he will lose sometimes, often as a matter of fact. But if his winnings are larger than his losses he will realize a profit. His profit is wins minus losses. So the odds must be in his favor.

A professional gambler would not buy a Sweepstake ticket; the odds are very much against him. He would likely have better success betting on a particular horse. Or his chances of winning at, say, a poker game would be much greater than a lottery.

A gambler wants to know three things: l) what are the odds, 2) what is the required bet, and 3) what is the prize.

Let's say a ticket for a thousand dollar prize would cost you $100 and you knew that there was only to be 12 tickets sold. Your chances of winning, you calculate, are one in twelve. And your chances of losing are 11 in 12. Doesn't sound too good. But you learn they had trouble selling the tickets and the

deadline for selling them is only a few minutes away. They had only managed to sell three tickets. You quickly calculate your chances of winning the $1000 prize, if you buy the fourth and last one, is now one out of four. What would you do?

Any professional gambler would jump at the opportunity. Though the odds of winning are still against him, the prize far outweighs the required bet. Too good to pass up.

Now let's say you are offered a lot of money to transport some explosives to a certain construction site over very bumpy roads. It is calculated that the chances of the explosives going off en route are only one in a thousand. Would you do it? Some would, some wouldn't. How about if the chances of an explosion are one in 500? Or one in a hundred? Or one in ten?

We all play the percentages. We have that inner ability to make quick calculations to determine what is likely to bring us the better profit or steer us out of trouble. Some might drive over a mountain pass if there has been only a little snow, others if it is reported there has been a number of accidents, a very few if there were blizzard warnings. Most would conclude the odds are against them.

So you are not convinced that there is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun. Okay, but what do you think the chances are that you are wrong, that there may be a heaven and a hell, taking into consideration all the evidence presented? A 50% chance? 25%? How about just 10? How might a professional bet? Remember, he is interested in only three things: 1) what are the odds, 2) what is the required bet, and 3) what is the prize. So let's look at it.

1) THE ODDS. Let's assume that the odds, in this case, are just 10%, one out of ten. In other words, there is one chance in ten there is a heaven and a hell – that Jesus was not misquoted and that He didn't lie, that the apostle Paul really did go to heaven as the Bible states, that even one of the testimonies in this paper are true.

2) THE REQUIRED BET. Now let's look at what you have to lose if you put your life in Christ's hands – make a deep commitment to live with and for Jesus. First, you would have to humble yourself, and maybe that doesn't come easy. You would have to admit your guilt before God and ask Jesus to forgive you. You would have to remove yourself from the throne of your life and solemnly invite Jesus to sit there. (Perhaps you are messing up your life anyhow, so the required bet may not be that much.) You would risk being persecuted by friends and loved ones, and that can hurt. You would have to forsake sinful pleasures.

3) THE PRIZE. The prize is beyond comparison and description and value (that is, assuming the Bible is authentic). Not only will you escape a non-ending nightmare of "weeping and gnashing of teeth," but you will gain more joy than you knew existed. Keep in mind this prize is non-ending, you can never spend it all, it will never wear out, no one can steal it from you.

Jesus Christ is a very good "bet," even if there were only a ten percent chance heaven and hell are

realities (that is, a ten percent chance the Bible is true). The required bet compared to the prize is like an old sock the dog has chewed up and dragged in the mud to a King's wardrobe. Not much to lose, lots to gain.

What will you do with Jesus? Whether you like it or not, you have a choice to make. Is Jesus who He claims to be? Is He really "the way, the truth, and the life"? Does He really have the power to forgive your sins and give you a brand new life, as the Bible claims?
What will you do with Christ?

WHO SAID THAT??

It is hardly necessary, I am sure, to quote additional passages to show what the Bible says about the future destiny of the wicked. I am not trying to convince you that there is a hell, not at all; I am merely trying to show you what the Bible says clearly concerning this place. Then, if you reject it, you are not rejecting my word, but God's own holy, infallible Word. If you differ with me, that is not serious, for I too may be wrong, but if you differ with the teaching of the Word of God, you do it only at your peril and the expense of your own immortal soul.

Dr. M.R. DeHaan, author

WHEN DOES ONE GO TO HEAVEN?

The saved (those saved from the due punishment of their sins) go to heaven immediately after one dies. Paul taught that "to be absent from the body" is "to be present with the Lord." And since the Lord is in heaven, it is obvious the Christian goes immediately to heaven.

WHEN DOES ONE GO TO HELL?

The unsaved go immediately to sheol-hades after he dies. He is there before his funeral. He will remain in sheol-hades until he is brought before "The Great White Throne" judgment where Christ will declare his/her degree of punishment. From there he will be delivered into gehennah.

FEARFUL TRIP

NOTE: I hesitated to print Mr. Geo. Godkin's account of hell (sheol-hades and gehennah). Could it really be possible? Could there actually be places of such suffering, such anguish awaiting those who enter a Christless eternity? When sharing this hesitation with a friend, I recalled the words "LAKE OF FIRE," the Bible's description of Gehennah, and these words confirmed to me that Mr. Godkin's report was indeed harmonious with Scripture, that his narration was in no way exaggerative, and it would be an incalculable injustice to withhold his report from the reader. Further, Jesus would never exaggerate, and He described gehennah as a place of "weeping and gnashing of teeth." The

following is taken, with permission, from Mr. Godkin's tract, "I Saw The Spiritual World."

…my guiding angel said, "Come." I was then guided to the place in the spiritual world called Hell . This is a place of punishment for all those who reject Jesus Christ or who just forget God. I now had the horrible privilege of not only seeing Hell but also feeling the torment that all will experience that go there.

Hell is an area in the spiritual world of outer darkness. The darkness is so intense it seems to have a pressure per square inch. It is an extremely black, dismal, desolate, heavy, pressurized type of darkness. It gives the individual a crushing, despondent feeling of loneliness. The heat is a dry, dehydrating type of heat. Your eyeballs are so dry they feel like red hot coals in their sockets. Your tongue and lips are parched and cracked with the intense heat. The breath from your nostrils as well as the air you breathe feels like a blast from a blast furnace. The exterior of your body feels as if it were encased within a white hot stove. The interior of your body has a sensation of scorching hot air being forced through it. The agony and loneliness of hell cannot be expressed clearly enough for proper understanding to the human soul, it has to be experienced, but unfortunately the soul in hell has reached the point of no return. The sad horrible fact is that the worst is yet to come, for there is a one way road from hell to the Lake of Fire .

The agony that is experienced in the Lake of Fire is far more horrible than that which is experienced in Hell. God says that at some future time, Hell and all those therein shall be cast into the Lake of Fire. The angelic being once again said to me, "Come," and we entered this other area of outer darkness called the Lake of Fire. This will be the final resting place of the Devil and his Angels and all those who reject God. The souls who think they have suffered in Hell will have a change of mind when in the Lake of Fire.

Being in the Lake of Fire is like being submerged into a lake of molten lava. It is a lake of liquid fire just as the term indicates. The liquid fire fills your eye sockets so that your eyeballs are floating in the fluid fire. The liquid lava penetrates your ears, flows throw your nostrils, fills your naval passages, goes down your throat and lungs until all your internal organs are filled and saturated with this agonizing burning liquid. Your veins and arteries are filled with this boiling liquid and you have a sensation and feeling of your heart pumping this searing fire through your system. That tongue of yours that cursed God and refused to confess Him as your Lord and Master shall move in a mouth filled with burning liquid fire. Although your brain shall be submerged in liquid fire the memory of your thoughts and deeds on this earth shall be your only companion in this Lake of Fire. The lusts of your flesh shall be intensified in this place of desolation and despair. I shall never forget that clinging sticky mess of white hot liquid fire that burns and burns but never consumes. How long I was in these two places I do not know, but this I do know, all the hardship that may be experienced on this earth because of obedience to the Word of God is nothing in comparison to the penalty of disobedience.

Hebrews 10:31: It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

FOUR ERRORS

There are many errors regarding life after death. Four such errors are brought under the light of God's Word for the reader's consideration.

ERROR #1: PURGATORY

Purgatory is an invention of the Catholic Church. Purgatory, so the CC teaches, is a temporary place of suffering whereby one is released into heaven after serving his/her sentence. The length of one's term in purgatory would be relative to his/her sinful life.

There are ways of shortening one's stay in purgatory. Indulgences can be bought or earned, and these indulgences can be used to offset one's time in this prison. Much of the building of the Vatican in Rome in the middle ages was financed by Catholics making payments of ten shillings to get relatives and friends released.

When I was a boy I did a number of peculiar things to build up an account for myself to get out of Purgatory as soon as possible – i.e., go to mass on nine consecutive first Fridays of the month, kneel

and pray before the tabernacle (that's where Jesus is stored when Mass is over) at certain times of the year, make the stations of the cross (prayers before fourteen pictures depicting Jesus' death), use lots of holy water, etc., etc.

Besides this, I wore a scapular (two pictures held together by a cloth string hanging over the neck), and Mary, I was told, assured us that anyone who died wearing a scapular would never go to hell. And if that didn't work, surely a friend or relative would buy a mass on my behalf, either a Low mass or, better yet, a High mass, depending on how much they could afford.

None of the above is derived from the Bible and is utmost fantasy – very cruel fantasy, as millions have risked their eternal future on these heretical teachings and no doubt curse both teachings and teachers from their miserable dwelling place in sheol-hades.

WHY WAS HEAVEN CREATED?

God created heaven as His dwelling place and a dwelling place for His angels and other creatures, just as He created earth as a dwelling place for man. Whether it was God's original intent for man to eventually live in heaven is a matter of debate. Perhaps God intended man to live forever on planet earth; if so, His plans were aggravated by Adam's disobedience.

It is God's nature to create; He is a creative person. Creating heaven was just the "natural" thing to do. God is perfect and everything He does is the right and perfect thing to do, and all He does He does perfectly. Heaven is a product of God's perfection, creativity and might.

Heaven is the dwelling place of all those who "come under the Blood," those who accepted the bloody sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment for their sins.

WHY DID GOD MAKE HELL?

Hell was not a part of God's original creation, but added out of necessity. There was a rebellion in heaven, led by Lucifer (satan), whereby one third of the angels were cast out of heaven. It was for these beings that hell (gehennah) was created. Gehennah was never created for man although, in fact, it will be the eventual home for many, perhaps most.

There was need for a holding place, a temporary place of punishment for the unrepentant. This prison is called sheol-hades, and here the people are held until their judgment (sinners judged by Christ to determine their degree of punishment in gehennah).

God's justice demands a payment for sin. The sacrificial death of His Son Jesus satisfied that demand. But most people refuse to "come under the blood" and therefore must pay the price of their sins in hell. It is a choice they make.

"WHY DID GOD MAKE HELL?"

ERROR #2: ANNIHILATION OF THE WICKED

This error is taught by Seventh-Day Adventists and others.

According to this teaching, there is no immortal soul. The body of man and the soul of man are one unit. Therefore when the body dies so does the soul. This they teach though the Bible definitely teaches the otherwise, that the body and soul of man are distinct entities. Lazarus and the rich man died and were buried, and yet their souls were very much alive. Paul said of the time he was taken to heaven that he did not know if he was in his body or out of his body. Jesus assures the believer, "He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." This should be conclusive proof that one's soul lives after the body dies.

The logic goes that if the soul terminates at the death of the body, the soul will be annihilated when the resurrected body is eventually consumed by hell-fire. In other words, punishment is not eternal, but only temporary. Eventually the sinner will cease to exist. This is putting reasoning above the Bible. God uses unmistakable words to portray eternal, non-ending, ceaseless torment in hell, and to teach otherwise is a product of wishful thinking and not study. Let's look at a few verses:

Revelation 14:11: And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night.

Matthew 25:41: Then He (Jesus) will also say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'

Matthew 25:46: And these will go away into everlasting punishment.

Mark 9:43,44: And if your hand makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched – where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

Revelation 20:10: And the devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

WHO SAID THAT??

He said to me, "When I die, I die like a dog, and that will be the end." But when he had the least pain or sign of illness, he would call me in the middle of the night, scared to death, and hurry me to come. I have seen too many self-styled atheists die, and have seen them cringe and whine like beaten puppies when they actually came face to face with death.

Dr. M.R. DeHaan, author

ERROR #3: REINCARNATON

The New Age Movement is big on reincarnation, adapting it from Eastern religions which has taught this fallacy for centuries.

Douglas Groothuis in his booklet The New Age Movement explains reincarnation as such: "The soul progresses or regresses according to its own karma (good or evil deeds) from one life to the next. Although Eastern religions tend to stress the negative side of reincarnation (rebirth through cycles of human misery), the New Age weds the teaching to its evolutionary optimism, viewing it as a chance for endless advancement."

Reincarnation: another of satan's many counterfeit gospels.

ERROR #4: ECSTASY FOR ALL

There have been million-copy books about life-after-death experiences whereby EVERYONE interviewed had a marvellous out-of-body experience, so much so that they lost all fear of death. The core of these books is EVERYONE who died had a good experience, no matter what decisions they made on earth or how they lived. And ALL those who die should expect the same thing. I term this conclusion "Ecstasy For All." In essence, this assumption teaches that it matters little whether one enters eternity "in Christ" or rebellious to Christ. There are no hints of eternal torment or, for that matter, anything unpleasant whatsoever. These books sell by the millions as it is certainly what many like to hear.

Is it possible? Could these books (that is, the theme or essence of these books) be true?

The only way these books could be true is if the Bible were false, entirely false. If there is no sheol-hades and no gehenna the Bible therefore is erroneous. If one enters a life of bliss even after rejecting Christ then there was no need for the cross of Calvary. Jesus, who more than any other person in the Bible warned of a place of "weeping and gnashing of teeth," either told deliberate fabrications or was misquoted by New Testament writers. Again, it comes down to the Bible. Is it true or is it not true? (Issue # 3 deals with that subject.)

Then why the serious discrepancies? Why are there bestsellers claiming ecstasy for all and others warning of doom?

Interestingly, the patient of Dr. Rawlings did not remember any frightful experience whatsoever after his recovery; he only remembered the pleasant things after saying the sinner's prayer. And this forgetfulness is not uncommon. The mind cannot cope with such horrible experiences and simply erases them from memory (a phenomenon called 'sublimation'). Dr. Rawlings, who has been present at many resuscitations – perhaps more than any other person, says that MORE THAN HALF of the patients had frightful experiences, and most of them could not later recall them.
The big difference between this author and others is that Dr. Rawlings was present at the time of resuscitation, and often conversed with the patient during the critical moments, while the others listened to the patient's account long after the fact. Also, Dr. Rawlings has stated that some of these other Ecstasy For All authors refused to interview those who professed a hell encounter, not wanting to hear negative reports.

The Bible has much to say about satan, the fallen angel who rebelled against God and later usurped authority over the earth from Adam. Scripture says satan "has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." satan has invented, through man's cooperation, many false religions and philosophies and cults – all for the purpose of camouflaging the true gospel of Christ, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them" and they be saved. Ecstasy For All is simply one of his many inventions, another false gospel.

HOW LONG DOES ONE LIVE IN HEAVEN?

The length of stay in heaven is not as long as most think. The "New Jerusalem," the Christian's final and permanent home, will be transported from heaven to earth (perhaps the earth's atmosphere). This earth will by then have been completely renovated by fire and made completely new and perfect.

There will never be another rebellion such as the one initiated by Lucifer. No one will be cast out. Life in New Jerusalem will be as long as eternity itself. It never comes to an end. It is "forever and ever."

How long is "forever and ever"? It is a very long time indeed. If a bird were to dump sand, one grain at a time, from the Sahara Desert into the Mediterranean Sea, life in New Jerusalem would have just got started when the Mediterranean was filled.

HOW LONG IS ONE IMPRISONED IN HELL?

Life in hell is as long as life in heaven. One goes to sheol-hades immediately after death and remains there until the "Great White Throne" judgment which will occur just over a 1000 years from now. After receiving a sentence of punishment (this sentence will reveal the degree of suffering) the prisoner will be sent into gehennah, "the lake of fire," where he/she will spend eternity.

Gehennah is the final residence of all those who die outside of Christ. Like heaven, it is forever and ever. There is no escape. There is no reprieve. The sentence will never be repealed. When the Mediterranean is filled with sand, life in gehenna will have just got started. It is truly a forever of "weeping and gnashing of teeth," an eternity of remorse and hopelessness.

AUTHOR: RICHARD CROCKER

It was about sixteen years ago, and my wife Rachel and I were at a Sunday evening service at the Rutland Gospel Tabernacle church. The pastor had preached a message about the reality of a literal hell. I had heard this same word before from other preachers, yet I listened intently.

The service over, most people were headed for home when I noticed a Christian brother kneeling at the front of the church by himself. I discerned that he was struggling, so I joined him. What happened next is hard to put into words, but I feel I must try. I've got something very important to say and I ask you to hear me.

I was suddenly taken into the spiritual realm, into the place of the departed souls, those who had died without having received Christ as their savior. God let me feel what they felt. I experienced the agony of eternal separation from God, and it is this sense of eternal hopelessness that I am trying to convey.

The feelings, the emotions of hopelessness I cannot describe. The despair, the agony of separation I cannot fully relate. But I felt them, tasted of them. No, I didn't feel the torment of flames – Jesus spared me that – but the total separation from the One who can save and deliver. And I was made to feel what it's like to have rejected Him and to be in the situation of never being able to accept Him. For the opportunity has slipped by. There is no Redeemer in hell.

That life, the life in hell, has no Savior, no Redeemer. It is this life, life on earth, that has hope. This life has opportunity. This life offers a time to change. Only in this life is there redemption. In this life we set our eternal destinies.

In hell there are no choices. The time of decisions is past. One is conscious of one's past life, conscious of what once was, but fully aware that it was now all over. ALL OVER. In that spiritual encounter I had this sense that I was taken down and I could only look back up with memories of what once was. But I couldn't go back. I no longer had choices. Before, there was always a chance. I had a Redeemer, even if I rejected Him. At least there was hope. I could always choose Him if I wanted.

But now! There was no Redeemer to save me. Cry as I might, no one would rescue me. I became totally aware that the Redeemer is for life on earth, not life after death. The souls here had no hope. I know that I keep saying those words. No hope. Hopelessness. Eternal, ceaseless hopelessness. Oh what grief! Oh what sorrow!

I cried out loud in that church. I screamed. The people who had not yet gone home after the service looked on amazed, not knowing what was happening to me.

And why was this happening? Sermons were fine, but often they don't affect us as they should. God wanted me to know what the lost felt. He wanted me to experience eternal hopelessness. Perhaps I

lacked compassion for the unsaved. It certainly gave me an appreciation of my salvation.

I thank God that I have made my peace with Him. I had long ago accepted Jesus Christ as my personal savior. I know my sins are forgiven, and my name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. I have found redemption through His shed blood for my guilt and iniquities. I am not ashamed to be called by His name and to confess Him as Lord. I so appreciate what He did for me at the cross. He made a way of escape for every one of us.

Hell was something that I was casual about. But my experience has forever changed me. What was just words on pages of Holy Scripture I have felt for myself in this experience. But praise God I also have experienced forgiveness and the joy of knowing my destiny is now in God's loving hands. And my future is in heaven with my Redeemer.

But what about you?

I want you to know that there is no such word as hopelessness in this life. You may think that you have sinned too much. You may think that you are beyond God's mercy. But you're not. The Bible says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

And that's the issue. Christ is the issue. It doesn't matter what you feel – feelings come and feelings go – but rather what you decide. What is your decision? What will you do with Christ?

"I've got something very important to say and I ask you to hear me"

"There is no Redeemer in hell"

"I had long ago accepted Jesus Christ as my personal saviour"

"But what about you?"