

A Special Invitation To Subscribe To The Endtime Issues Newsletter

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Dear Fellow Believer:

Have you ever wished that you could keep abreast with those significant developments in the religious world that have prophetic significance for our Christian life today? If you have, you will be pleased to receive this invitation to subscribe to the **Endtime Issues Newsletter** that examines significant current issues from a Biblical perspective. The number of subscribers to this newsletter has grown to over 6000 in few months and keeps growing at the rate of about 100/150 new subscribers a week. Our subscribers include about 1000 pastors, 500 Bible teachers, 600 medical doctors, and professional people of all kind from all over the world.

The **Endtime Issues Newsletter** generally contains three main features. First, there is an update report on the recent rediscovery of the Sabbath by pastors, scholars, and churches of different denominations. Over 300 Sabbathkeeping churches and groups have come into existence in recent years-some of them function within mainline denominations (Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, etc.). In this sample issue you will read the amazing conversion story of Bishop David Hill. Second, you will find some pertinent comments on the Sabbath School lesson of the week. The comments are designed to help inquiring minds to understand more fully some of the deeper issues of the weekly SS lesson. Third and last, the newsletter includes a Bible study on a current issue. This sample newsletter has a Bible study entitled "The Deception of Conscious Life After Death." As you know, this is one of the greatest deceptions of our time that is spreading like wildfire.

If you find this newsletter informative and inspiring, you are welcome to subscribe. If not, this is the only newsletter you will ever receive. This is a **Completely Free Service** offered to those who seek for a deeper understanding of current issues from a Biblical perspective. **You are free to unsubscribe at any time you choose to do so.**

This **Endtime Issues Newsletter** is the outgrowth of the **Sabbath Discussion Forum** where I posted 21 essays dealing with recent attacks against the Sabbath by former SDA Bible teachers and pastors who have written books and articles against the Sabbath. The response to these essays has surpassed my fondest expectations. In few weeks over 5000 persons from all over the world subscribed to the **Sabbath Discussion Forum**, requesting all the essays that I posted.

The incredible interest shown for an in-depth Biblical analysis of significant developments of our times, has encouraged me to continue and expand this cyberspace ministry by adopting the name **Endtime Issues Newsletter**. I have chosen this name because it fittingly expresses my goal to provide a Biblical analysis of crucial endtime issues we are facing today. My plan is to post a newsletter every two/three weeks. These newsletters are designed to help fellow believers to keep abreast of significant recent developments and research that affect our Christian beliefs and practices. Already 20 timely studies have been posted. When you subscribe, you will receive all the past and future **Endtime Issues Newsletters**. Many pastors, Bible teachers, and Sabbath School teachers are downloading these Bible studies and sharing them with their students.

I view this cyberspace Bible class as an extension of my teaching ministry here at Andrews University. The advantage of this class is twofold: (1) it is free, (2) you do not

have to worry about studying for the test and earning a good grade. Take time to enjoy the rest of this sample newsletter and let me know if you want to subscribe.

THE AMAZING EXPERIENCE OF BISHOP DAVID HILL

Several reports have appeared on the internet during the last few days about the amazing experience of David Hill, a former bishop of the Church of the Living God, who next Sabbath, June 5, will be accepted into the fellowship of the SDA Church together with 150 members of his congregation. Some of the reports indicate that Pastor Hill came into contact with our Adventist message during the recent crusade at the Newark First SDA Church, in New Jersey conducted by Elder Leo Schreven, Evangelist for IT IS WRITTEN. This is not true. Pastor Hill told me that he visited for the first time an Adventist church service on May 21-22, when he attended the SABBATH ENRICHMENT SEMINAR I presented at the Newark First SDA Church. Let me briefly share few basic facts about Pastor Hill's experience, that I have learned tonight during the 45 minutes telephone conversation.

During the next few days Pastor Hill will write out the story of God's providential leading in his life and will forward it to me. I promised to post it for the 6000 members of our ENDTIME ISSUES FORUM, because I believe we can all gain encouragement from learning how the Lord has led in the life of a fellow believer. The following is only a brief preview of the more detailed account that Pastor Hill himself will soon write out.

For the past twelve years Pastor Hill has served as the pastor of the Church of the Living God, in Newark, New Jersey. This denomination of Pentecostal leanings, has numerous congregations across North America and overseas. In January 1997, a members of his congregation asked Pastor Hill on a Tuesday night if he could explain to her the Biblical reasons for observing Sunday. He replied that he would preach a sermon on that very subject the following Sunday.

During the rest of the week Pastor Hill spend considerable time re-examining the first day New Testament texts commonly used to support Sundaykeeping. To his surprise he discovered that they have no probative value for Sundaykeeping. When he stood up to preach the following Sunday, he told his congregation that he needed more time to study the Biblical basis for Sundaykeeping before he could preach a sermon on that subject.

For the next three months Pastor Hill contacted various libraries and bookstores, inquiring about books dealing with the change from Saturday to Sunday in early Christianity. One of the bookstore that he called was the Adventist Book Center in New York. Mr. Reid, a sales person at the New York ABC, was most helpful. He reassured Pastor Hill that he had just the book that he was looking for and he would mail it to him immediately free of charge.

The book was my dissertation FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY, where I investigate the rise of Sunday observance in early Christianity. The Lord has used this book to help thousands of people around the world to accept the Sabbath and join our SDA church. Pastor Hill told me on the phone: "Your book set my soul on fire. I carried it in my brief case every where I went and used it to share my new found conviction about the validity of the Sabbath with every person I met."

After three months of diligent Bible study, on March 1997 Pastor Hill did finally preach the sermon on the Biblical basis for Sundaykeeping. But to the surprise of his congregation he publicly admitted that after diligent study of the Biblical and historical data, he had come to the conclusion that Sundaykeeping has no Biblical origin or justification. He urged his congregation to follow him in returning to the Biblical principle and practice of Sabbathkeeping. Most of his members did accept the Sabbath and consequently they moved their church services from Sunday to Saturday.

As one would expect, the Presiding Bishop of the Church of the Living God became terribly upset with Pastor Hill, and told him: "You have committed a terrible sin. You must repent and tell publicly your congregation about your mistake. The evidence for Sundaykeeping is all around you. Only few sectarian churches observe the Sabbath."

The situation deteriorated when Pastor Hill refused to repent and confess his alleged sin of abandoning Sundaykeeping. Instead he began sharing the Sabbath truth with all his fellow pastors across the country and overseas. The unwillingness of Pastor Hill to reconsider his decision, caused the Presiding Bishop to take some drastic actions. He terminated Pastor Hill's employment and with the help of the police evicted him from the parish house. Even the parish car (a Cadillac) was taken away from Pastor Hill. I will let Pastor Hill tell the details of this traumatic experience in his forthcoming report.

What amazes me about Pastor Hill's experience, is his undaunted courage and contagious enthusiasm. The trials he has to face to take his stand for the Sabbath, have not break his spirit. Instead he has become bolder in sharing the Sabbath truth. I wish that you could have heard him speak on Sabbath afternoon, May 22, at the First Newark SDA Church. During the questions/answers period, our local SDA Pastor Jeddy Hooker who was on the platform with me, suggested that I invite Pastor Hill to come forward and say few words.

He came up to the platform bringing along a minister of another denomination with whom he is studying the Sabbath. Pastor Hill spoke for about ten minutes and I can truly say that he brought the house down. He is a most gifted black preacher who knows how to communicate with a congregation. After almost ever sentence there was a round of applause. He appealed to me for his earnest desire to follow the teachings of the Word of God, rather than those ecclesiastical traditions that contradict Scripture. His eagerness to share his faith is both admirable and contagious.

During the telephone conversation Pastor Hill told me that he had just received a call from a bishop of the Church of the Living God in Surinam-a South American country between British and French Guyana. This bishop informed Pastor Hill that he had received and read FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY. At present there are four pastors with close to one thousand members in Surinam who have accepted the Sabbath. The bishop asked Pastor Hill to inquire if I would be willing to visit them in Surinam and help them to understand the Sabbath more fully. I reassured Pastor Hill that I would do my best to include this assignment in my 1999 calendar which is already practically full with commitments in North America and overseas.

The witnessing influence of Pastor Hill is incredible. He wants me to meet with a bishop of the Church of the Living God in Los Angeles and others in different parts of the country. To support his outreach endeavors I am mailing him as a gift a complete case of my four Sabbath books, in addition to a set of the 15 books I have authored on fundamental Biblical truths.

Pastor Hill informed me that this coming Sabbath, June 5, both himself and about 150 members of his congregation plan to officially join our SDA church at a special service scheduled for 3:30 p. m. at the Newark First SDA Church. This special service has been set up by our local SDA Pastor Jeddy Hooker together with some officers of the New Jersey Conference. They will preside over the acceptance of David Hill and his members into the fellowship of our SDA church. I am not sure that this will be an official acceptance as members of our SDA church. It would seem to me that it may be more of an acceptance into fellowship, as a prelude to a full fledged acceptance into membership after adequate instruction into the SDA beliefs. I look forward to share the rest of the story in future installments of ENDTIME ISSUES. Within the next few days I should receive Pastor Hill's personal testimony which I plan to post. Let us pray for Pastor Hill and for his witnessing outreach, especial! ly at this critical time when he is facing trials and opposition.

**ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER No. 1:
"THE DECEPTION OF CONSCIOUS LIFE AFTER DEATH"**

In the first Bible study of our **Endtime Issues Newsletter** I chose to address the prevailing deception of conscious life after death. As you know, the belief in disembodied life after death is spreading today like wild fire around the world, due to such factors as the traditional dualistic view of human nature, the polished image of mediums and psychics, the sophisticated "scientific" research into near-death experiences, and the popular New Age channeling craze with the alleged spirits of the past. The latter is successfully promoted by people like actress Shirley Maclaine. The outcome is that the vast majority of people have come to believe Satan's lie that no matter what they do, they "shall not die" (Gen 3:4) but become like gods by living for ever. This lie has done incalculable damage to Christian beliefs and practices.

As Christians we cannot afford to passively watch the spreading of the deception of innate immortality that has fostered such heresies as spiritualism, communication with the spirits of the dead, praying for the dead, the intercession of the saints, purgatory, eternal hellfire, the worship of Mary, indulgences, etc. All of these heretical beliefs fall automatically like dominos when we expose the fallacies of conscious life between death and resurrection.

What inspired me to investigate the deception of conscious life after death, is the unprecedented fulfillment we are witnessing today of the warning penned by Ellen White over a century ago: "**Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions**" (Great Controversy, p. 588). Having spent many years exposing the deception of Sunday sacredness through lectures and publications, I felt the time has come to unmask the equally important popular deception that human beings possess an immortal soul that lives on forever.

To meet this challenge I devoted much of 1997 (an unpaid leave-of-absence from Andrews University) to a painstaking investigation of the Biblical teaching on human nature and destiny. The results of my research were published in the book ***IMMORTALITY OR RESURRECTION? A BIBLICAL STUDY ON HUMAN NATURE AND DESTINY***. The aim of the book is not only to unmask with compelling Biblical reasoning the popular deception of innate immortality, but also to challenge Christians of all persuasions to recover the Biblical wholistic view of human nature and destiny. The Bible teaches that the body and soul are not detachable components that come apart at death, but an indissoluble unity, created, redeemed, and ultimately restored by God.

My plan is to share with you for the next two/three months, what I consider to be some of the highlights of this research that has brought to me a new level of understanding of God's glorious plan for the make-up, redemption, and final restoration of our human nature. I will try to keep my essays to less than 50K so that I do not have to divide them in parts. I hope that you will find this new topic of interest.

You might be interested to know that the response to this study has surpassed my fondest expectations. The first printing of 10,000 copies sold out in few weeks. We reprinted the book immediately to meet the requests coming from all over the world. About 100 seminary professors of all denominations and 50 religious magazines (including CHRISTIANITY TODAY) have requested review copies of the book. If you did not get a chance to get a copy of this timely book before, please let us know it and we will be sure to mail you a copy immediately.

In this first essay we shall compare and contrast the theological and practical implications of the platonic dualistic view of human nature versus the Biblical wholistic view. Your comments on this essay are much appreciated.

DUALISM AND CONSCIOUS LIFE AFTER DEATH

The belief in conscious life after death is spreading today like wildfire. Such a popular belief derives from a dualistic understanding of the make up of human nature. Historically, the vast majority of Christians have believed and still believe today that human nature is dualistic, consisting of a material, mortal body, and an immaterial, immortal soul. At death, the soul allegedly detaches herself from the body and survives in a disembodied state, either in the bliss of Paradise or in the torment of Hell. This means that the first step in analyzing death from a Biblical perspective the popular belief in conscious disembodied life after death, is to study what does the Bible teaches us regarding the make up of human nature. This will be the focus of our attention for in the next two essays.

Until recently only the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a handful of other Sabbatarian churches have been teaching and preaching that human nature is wholistic, consisting of an indivisible being where body, soul, and spirit, are only characteristics of the same person. The soul is the animating principle of the body, which is manifested in the conscious, thinking, living aspect of a person. At death, the body and soul do not come apart at death, but simply cease to exist and rest unconsciously in the grave until the resurrection. At that time the total mortal person will be resurrected either to eternal life or eternal death.

Catholics and Protestants have historically rejected the wholistic view of human nature and label as "sectarian" the few Sabbatarian churches that held such view. But I am pleased to report to you that a radical change has occurred during the past 50 years in the thinking of the scholarly community. Leading Catholic and Protestant scholars have reexamined the Biblical view of human nature and they have concluded that in the Bible there is no dichotomy between a mortal body and an immortal soul that "comes apart" at death. Both body and soul are an indivisible unity that ceases to exist at death until the resurrection. In short, the verdict of modern scholarship is that the Adventist wholistic view is Biblical while the popular dualistic view is unbiblical, derived from Platonic dualism rather than from Scripture.

These developments have raised serious concerns on the part of those who find their traditional dualistic understanding of human nature severely challenged and undermined. In fact, some evangelical leaders have reacted very strongly, adopting in some cases tactics of harassment. Oscar Cullmann, a renowned Swiss theologian, for example, found himself bitterly attacked by many who strongly objected to his book *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?* He wrote: "No other publication of mine has provoked such enthusiasm or such violent hostility." In fact, the criticism became so intense and so many took offense at his statements that he deliberately decided to keep silent for a time. I should add that Cullmann was not impressed by the attacks against his book because he claims they were based not on exegetical arguments, but on emotional, psychological, and sentimental considerations.

Respected Canadian theologian Clark Pinnock mentions some of the "tactics of harassment" used to discredit those evangelical scholars who have abandoned the traditional dualistic view of human nature and its related doctrine of eternal torment in a fiery hell. One of the tactics has been to associate such scholars with liberals or sectarians like the Adventists. Pinnock writes: "It seems that a new criterion for truth has been discovered which says that if Adventists or liberals hold any view, that view must be wrong. Apparently a truth claim can be decided by its association and does not need to be tested by public criteria in open debate. Such an argument, though useless in intelligent discussion, can be effective with the ignorant who are fooled by such rhetoric."

Despite the tactics of harassment, the Biblical wholistic view of human nature which negates the natural immortality of the soul and, consequently, the eternal torment of the unsaved in hell, is gaining ground among evangelicals. Its public endorsement by John R. W. Stott, a highly respected British theologian and popular preacher, is certainly encouraging the trend. "In a delicious piece of irony," writes Pinnock, "this is creating a measure of accreditation by association, countering the same tactics used against it. It

has become all but impossible to claim that only heretics and near-heretics [like the Seventh-day Adventists] hold the position, though I am sure some will dismiss Stott's orthodoxy precisely on this ground."

Stott himself expresses anxiety over the divisive consequences of his new views in the evangelical community where he is a renowned leader. He writes: "I am hesitant to have written these things, partly because I have great respect for longstanding tradition which claims to be a true interpretation of Scripture, and do not lightly set it aside, and partly because the unity of the worldwide evangelical community has always meant much to me. But the issue is too important to be suppressed, and I am grateful to you (David Edwards) for challenging me to declare my present mind. I do not dogmatize about the position to which I have come. I hold it tentatively. But I do plead for frank dialogue among evangelicals on the basis of Scripture."

Stott's plea for a "frank dialogue among evangelicals on the basis of Scripture" may be very difficult if not impossible, to realize. The reason is simple. Evangelicals are conditioned by their denominational traditional teachings, just as much as the Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. In theory, they appeal to *Sola Scriptura*, but in practice, Evangelicals often interpret Scripture in accordance with their traditional denominational teachings. If new Biblical research challenges traditional doctrines, in most cases, Evangelical churches will choose to stand for tradition rather than for *Sola Scriptura*. The real difference between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics is that Catholics are upfront about the normative authority of their ecclesiastical tradition, while Evangelical churches are not.

To be an "Evangelical" means to uphold certain fundamental traditional doctrines without questioning. Anyone who dares to question the Biblical validity of a traditional doctrine can become suspect as a "heretic." In a major conference held in 1989 to discuss what it means to be an evangelical, serious questions were raised as to whether such persons like John Stott or Philip Hughes should be considered evangelical, since they had adopted the (Adventist) view of conditional immortality and the annihilation of the unsaved. The vote to exclude such theologians failed only narrowly.

Why evangelicals are so adamant in refusing to reconsider the Biblical teachings on human nature and destiny? After all, they have taken the liberty of changing other old traditional teachings. Perhaps one reason for their insistence on holding to the dualistic view is that it impacts on so many other doctrines. We noted earlier that what Christians believe about the make-up of human nature largely determines what they believe about human destiny. To abandon dualism, also entails abandoning a whole cluster of doctrines resulting from it, especially the cherished belief of conscious life after death. This may be called "the domino effect." If one doctrine falls, several others fall as well.

To help the members of our list to appreciate the importance of a correct understanding of the Biblical view of human nature, in this first essay we wish to briefly compare and contrast the practical and doctrinal implications of the dualistic and wholistic view of human nature.

Practical Implications of Dualism versus Wholism

Dualistic View of Life. Christians who hold to the dualistic view of human nature conceptualize the present life dualistically. They view the spiritual life of the soul as more important than the physical life of the body. Historically, this dualistic view has envisioned the saints as persons who devote themselves primarily to *vita contemplativa* (contemplative life), detaching themselves from the *vita activa* (secular life). Since cultivating the soul has been seen as more important than caring for the body, the physical wellbeing of the body often intentionally has been ignored or even suppressed.

I witnessed this dualistic mentality during the five years I spent at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. Often I would see some of my classmates, mostly Catholic monks and priests from all over the world, first going to the chapel to cultivate

their soul through prayer and meditation, and then going to the bar at the end of the hallway to intoxicate their bodies by partaking of alcoholic beverages and smoking cigarettes. They saw no conflict between the two activities, because, according to their dualistic mentality, what they did to their bodies did not affect the salvation of their souls.

The same dualistic mentality prevails today in the Protestant world where redemption is largely associated with the salvation of the soul, rather than the caring of the body. Many Christians are guilty of divorcing the human body from its soul by making salvation an internal experience of the soul rather than a total transformation of the whole person.

The comment I constantly hear on the various discussion groups where I have been sharing what the Bible teaches about lifestyle issues like Sabbathkeeping, dress and adornment, use of alcoholic beverages, marriage, pre or extra marital relationships, runs something like this: "You are majoring on minors! This is not the Gospel. Salvation has to do with accepting and professing Christ as your personal Savior and not with lifestyle issues" Such comments reflect a dualistic mentality. As long as people accept Christ with the mind, what we do with their bodies does not really matter.

Wholistic View of Life. This dualistic mentality is openly contradicted by the Bible which teaches us to glorify God not only with our mind but also with our body, because our body is "a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 6:19) to be presented as "a living sacrifice" to God (Rom 12:1). As Adventists we have long recognized and emphasized that the way we treat our bodies reflects the spiritual condition of our souls, because our bodies and souls are one. If we pollute our bodies with tobacco, drugs, unhealthy foods or intemperate lifestyle, we cause not only the physical pollution of our bodies, but also the spiritual pollution of our souls.

The challenge that Adventists and other Christians who hold to the Biblical wholistic view face today, is to integrate such a view more fully in their teaching, preaching, educational, and medical programs.

The Biblical wholistic view of human nature challenges us to be concerned about the whole person. This means that in our preaching and teaching, we must meet not only the spiritual needs of the soul but also the physical needs of the body. We need to teach people not only how to cultivate their spiritual life but also how to care for their physical bodies.

Gospel gives us no basis for a doctrine of redemption which saves the souls apart from the bodies to which they belong. The Gospel commission is not to save souls but whole persons. What God has joined together at creation and redeemed at the Cross, no Christian has the right to put apart.

In Christian education Biblical wholism means that we should aim at the development of the mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of life. A good physical-education program should be considered as important as its academic and religious programs.

In medicine Biblical wholism means that physicians must treat the whole person, including physical, emotional, spiritual, nutritional condition of the patient. Biblical wholism challenges us also to serve the world and not to avoid it.

Doctrinal Implications of Dualism. The doctrinal implications of the dualistic view of human nature are even more alarming. A host of heresies that are plaguing the Christian world today derive from dualism. For example, dualism has given rise to the popular deception of conscious life after death that is spreading today like wildfire, a deception that is promoted effectively by the channeling craze of the New Age movement and research into near-death experiences. The latter in turn has fostered such beliefs as the intercession of the saints, the praying for the dead, indulgences, Purgatory, the reattachment of the soul to the body at the resurrection, the eternal torment in Hell, an

ethereal view of Paradise where glorified souls will spend eternity in everlasting contemplation and meditation.

It is impossible for us to estimate the negative impact of these deceptive beliefs on the Christian faith and practice. For one thing these beliefs have weakened and obscured the expectation of the Second Advent. If at death the soul of the believer goes up immediately to the beatitude of Paradise to be with the Lord, there can hardly be any real sense of expectation for Christ to come down to resurrect the sleeping saints. The primary concern of these Christians is to go up to heaven to meet Christ immediately at death, albeit as disembodied souls, rather than to prepare themselves and others to meet Christ when He comes down to this earth at His Return.

In the Bible the Advent Hope is not "a pie in the sky for disembodied souls when their bodies die" but a real meeting upon this earth between embodied believers and Christ on the glorious day of His Return. Out of that real meeting will come a radical transformation affecting humanity and nature. This great expectation is obscured by the belief in individual immortality and heavenly bliss immediately after death.

Dualism has fostered also misconceptions about the world to come. Most Christians believe that paradise is a spiritual retreat center somewhere up in space, where glorified souls will spend eternity in everlasting contemplation and meditation. As a popular hymn puts it: "In mansion of glory and endless delight I will ever adore Thee in heaven so bright."

This ethereal vision of the world to come has been inspired more by Platonic dualism than by Biblical realism. The Biblical vision of the world to come is not a spiritual heavenly retreat inhabited by glorified souls, but this physical earthly planet populated by resurrected saints (Is 66:22; Rev 21:1). In Scripture Christ comes the second time not to help the saint escape from this planet, but to transform this earth to its original perfection. Yes, the world to come is a real world, inhabited not by disembodied souls, but by resurrected bodies, that is, real people like you and me.

Doctrinal Implications of Wholism. The Biblical wholistic view of human nature presupposes a cosmic view of redemption that encompasses the body and the soul, the material and the spiritual world. The separation between body and soul or spirit has often paralleled the division between the realm of creation and the realm of redemption. The latter has been associated to a large extent in both Catholicism and Protestantism with the salvation of individual souls at the expense of the physical and cosmic dimensions of redemption. The saints often are portrayed as pilgrims who live on earth but detached from the world and whose souls at death immediately leave their material bodies to ascend to an abstract place called "heaven." This view reflects classical dualism but fails, as we shall see during the course of this study, to represent the wholistic Biblical view of the human and subhuman creation.

We noted that traditional dualism has produced an attitude of contempt toward the body and the natural world. This other-worldliness reflected in such hymns as "This World Is Not My Home," "I'm a stranger here, Heaven is my home; Earth is a desert drear, Heaven is my home." Such an attitude of disdain toward our planet is absent from the Psalms, the Hebrew hymnal, where the central theme is the praise of God for His magnificent works. In Psalm 139:14, David says: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth very well." Here the Psalmist praises God for his wonderful body, a fact well known to his soul (mind). This is a good example of wholistic thinking, where body and soul are part of God's marvelous creation.

In Psalm 92, the Psalmist urges one to praise God with musical instruments, because, he says, "Thou, O Lord, hast made me glad by thy work; at the work of thy hands I sing for joy. How great are thy works, O Lord!" (Ps 92:4-5). The Psalmist's rejoicing over his wonderful body and marvelous creation is based upon his wholistic

conception of the created world as an integral part of the whole drama of creation and redemption.

The Biblical wholistic view of human nature also impacts on our view of the world to come. In a forthcoming essay we will see that the Bible does not envision the world to come as an ethereal paradise where glorified souls will spend eternity wearing white robes, singing, plucking harps, praying, chasing clouds, and drinking milk of ambrosia. Instead, the Bible speaks of the resurrected saints inhabiting this planet earth, which will be purified, transformed, and perfected at and through the coming of the Lord (2 Pet 3:11-13; Rom 8:19-25; Rev 21:1). The "new heavens and a new earth" (Is 65:17) are not a remote and inconsequential spiritual retreat somewhere off in space; rather, they are the present heaven and earth renewed to their original perfection.

Believers enter the new earth not as disembodied souls but as resurrected bodily persons (Rev 20:4; John 5:28-29; 1 Thess 4:14-17). Though nothing unclean shall enter the New Jerusalem, we are told that "the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, . . . they shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations" (Rev 21:24, 26). These verses suggest that everything of real value in the old heaven and earth, including the achievements of man's inventive, artistic, and intellectual prowess, will find a place in the eternal order. The very image of "the city" conveys the idea of activity, vitality, creativity, and real relationships.

It is regrettable that this fundamentally concrete, earthly view of God's new world portrayed in the Scripture has largely been lost and replaced in popular piety with an ethereal, spiritualized concept of heaven. The latter has been influenced by Platonic dualism rather than by Biblical realism.

Conclusion. Historically, two major, radically different views of human nature have been held. One is designated as classical dualism and the other as Biblical wholism. The dualistic view maintains that human nature consists of a material, mortal body and a spiritual, immortal soul. The latter survives the death of the body and transits to heaven, or purgatory, or hell. At the resurrection, the soul is reunited with the body. This dualistic conception has had an enormous impact on Christian life and thought, affecting people's view of human life, this present world, redemption, and the world to come.

In recent times the dualistic view of human nature has come under attack from scholars who have re-examined the Biblical view of the body, soul, and spirit. They have concluded that the Biblical view of human nature is not dualistic at all; it is clearly wholistic. Many voices from different directions are affirming today that dualism is out and wholism is in.

This brief report on the ongoing debate over the Biblical view of human nature has shown the fundamental importance of this subject for the whole structure of Christian beliefs and practices. It is imperative, therefore, for us to diligently examine what the Bible actually teaches on this vital subject. This we intend to do beginning with the next essay "**THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE**," where we will attempt to define human nature from the perspective of creation, the Fall, and redemption.

A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

For the sake of those who may not know me, let me briefly introduce myself. My background is rather unique. I was born and brought up in Rome, Italy, a stone-throw from the Vatican wall. For my college education I went to England where he earned a B. A. degree in Theology at Newbold College. From England I came to America for my graduate studies and earned a M. A. and a B. D. degrees at Andrews University Theological Seminary. Upon completing my seminary training in 1964, I went with my wife, Anna, to Ethiopia where I served for five years as Bible and History teacher.

In 1969 I returned to my native city of Rome to study at the prestigious Pontifical Gregorian University, where I was the first non-Catholic to be admitted in over 450 years

of its history. At the Gregoriana I spent the next five years working toward a Doctoratus in Church History. I was awarded a gold medal by Pope Paul VI for attaining the academic distinction of summa cum laude for my class-work and dissertation FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY, where I investigate how the change came about from Saturday to Sunday in early Christianity.

After completing my doctorate in 1974, I was invited to teach at Andrews University, a Seventh-day Adventist institution located in Berrien Springs, Michigan. For the past 25 years I have served at Andrews University as Professor of Theology and Church History. To be able to pursue more fully my ministry of research into vital Biblical truths, I teach only from January to May of each year. From June to December I am off-teaching and off-salary so that I can dedicate myself fully to research timely Biblical truths. The result of this ministry has been the publication of 15 volumes which have helped thousands of people around the world to better understand and experience Biblical truths. The **Endtime Issues Newsletter** affords me the opportunity to share the highlights of my research on crucial issues of our time.

A FINAL NOTE:

If you have found this sample issue of the **Endtime Issues Newsletter** informative and inspiring, feel free to request to have your name added to the list. The procedure is simple. Just email me a message saying: Please add my name to your **Endtime Issues Newsletter**. Your name will be removed at any time you wish to unsubscribe. If you are excited about these studies, be sure to tell your friends that they also can receive these timely studies free of charge, simply by asking to be subscribed to the list.

I consider this service as an extension of my teaching ministry here at Andrews University. This is what I call the "CYBERSPACE ENDTIME ISSUES BIBLE CLASS." The advantage of this class is that you do not have to pay a tuition to benefit from the instruction. But the disadvantage is that I cannot test you and give you a grade. For some of you this may be a welcome relief.

Thank you for taking time to read this sample newsletter. I look forward to hear from you and to share my ministry of Biblical research with you.

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