



Our Firm Platform

The Truth for Our Times

To proclaim the Third Angel's Message to the World

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Why Not go to Heaven at Death? & Will God Give us a Fair Trial?

by Elder M.L. Andreasen

Taken from *Immortality & Eternal Life*, Chapters 6 & 7

ORIGINALLY heaven was synonymous with all that pertains to joy and happiness; but when sin reared its ugly head, a note of discord was struck, and sorrow and pain made their entrance even into the courts above.

Was there rejoicing in heaven when Christ hung upon the cross and in agony of soul cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Was there joy in heaven when thousands upon thousands of God's martyrs gave their lives at the stake or suffered in dungeons?

Was there joy in heaven when the Old Testament prophets were persecuted? When Israel went after strange gods? Or when, in the days of Noah, God sent a flood upon the whole earth? And will there be joy in heaven when God's people at last come face to face with "the beast and his image" and go through "the time of Jacob's trouble"? No; not until sin shall be eradicated and sinners be no more will perfect happiness and joy reign supreme.

There cannot be joy and happiness in the very nature of the case, for Jesus is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15); He weeps with those that weep (John 11:35); "in all their affliction He was afflicted" (Isaiah 63: 9). ...

It would indeed be sad if God were not sympathetic and considerate, if our sorrows and perplexities did not touch His heart. If He is a God of love, He cannot unfeelingly stand by and see His creatures suffer. He suffers with them. With unutterable love He cries out, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? Mine heart is turned within Me." Hosea 11:8. Stronger expression than this cannot

be found. It connotes extreme grief and sorrow on the part of God.

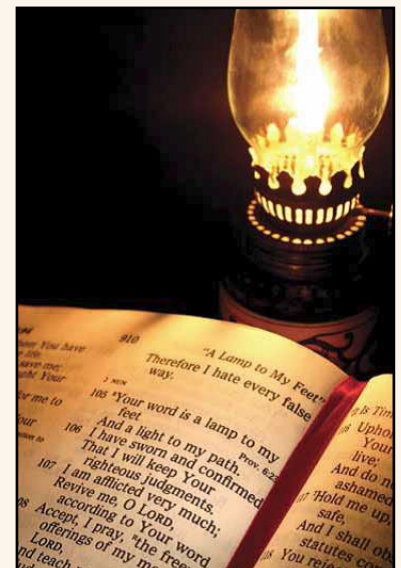
The world has gone through many sad experiences since sin entered, and trial and persecution have been the lot of God's people. There is no sorrow on earth that has not found a responsive chord in heaven. The Father's heart is indeed touched with our grief. When we therefore speak of heaven as a place of joy and happiness, we must qualify that as having reference to the future state, when sin shall be no more. At the present time the statement would not apply.

Heaven is a place of busy activity. Its interests center on this earth—in man's salvation. Angelic messengers are ever on the alert to be of assistance where needed. They are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Hebrews 1:14.

Prayers are continually ascending to God, and angels are dispatched hither and yon in answer to requests for help.

Suppose a soul from earth were suddenly transported to heaven, as is the common belief of those who think the soul immediately goes to glory

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at death. In what condition would such a soul find itself?

One of two things would be possible: The soul—or as we would prefer to say, the person—could be shut off from all knowledge of the earth and the happenings therein. That, however, would not be ideal; for it is in things here on the earth that all heaven is interested. It is here that Christ lived and died. It is here that the great controversy is being decided. It is here that even right now the struggle between good and evil is being waged to a consummation. And the soul that has just arrived from earth would certainly be interested in knowing how the others he left behind are getting along. To be shut off from any knowledge of the earth would be to live in a state of dreadful suspense.

And the soul, perchance, left father or mother or some near and dear relatives at a critical time in their career. And now he is in heaven, but shut off from any knowledge of things on earth. The angels bring messages continually, prayers are ascending daily, but the newly arrived soul is kept in complete ignorance of what it is all about. Every body else is busily engaged in helping men still on the earth, but he can have no part therein.

It would seem that such a condition would not be very satisfactory. To be in heaven, where everyone is anxiously interested in men on earth, and yet to be shut out from any participation in the work and plan of salvation; to be kept in ignorance of the progress and fate of those in whom we are vitally interested—husband, wife, daughter, son; to find ourselves surrounded by angels who are busily engaged in helping those for whom we ourselves would gladly lay down our lives, and yet be unable to get any word concerning our loved ones or be permitted to join the busy workers,—this would hardly be an ideal heaven. In fact, many would be tempted to think that they would be better off not to be there.

The other alternative would be to let the newly arrived soul have full access to all the knowledge of earth that heaven possesses. Let him have a part in the work the angels do for man's salvation. Permit him to follow the fortunes of those he left behind. Keep him acquainted with things on earth and how the battle is going. Let him assist in a special way those who by ties of nature are near and dear to him.

That surely would seem satisfactory. And yet, would such a thing be satisfactory after all? Suppose—and this is not an

extreme case, either—that a wife and mother died leaving a husband, two daughters, and a son. The home she leaves motherless and wifeless has always been a happy, love-filled, Christian home.

But sudden death takes her away, and—according to the popular conception—she goes at once to heaven. She is delighted with heaven, but of course her mind is upon her lonely husband and motherless children.

A few months go by, and her husband marries again. The second wife is interested only in spending his money, does not like his children, and lets them go whenever and wherever they wish with no let or hindrance. Soon the boy gets in with wrong companions, engages in petty thievery, and is sent to the state juvenile home. One of the daughters falls in love with a worthless never-do-well, elopes, falsifies her age on a marriage certificate, and begins a life of poverty, with too many children and a husband who eventually deserts her. Instead of finishing her education, the other daughter goes out to work as a waitress in a restaurant. Later she works in a tavern, becomes addicted to drink, and is killed in a drunken-driving accident on the highway at three o'clock in the morning.

All this time the mother, although surrounded by the beauties and felicities of heaven, is frantic over the tragedies in her family on earth. She can do nothing about it, only look on and see it all. To know it all, and yet to be so helpless and powerless, makes heaven a hell for her.

But we need not portray this black picture any further, for it is all fictitious. There is no such thing going on as we have imagined, for those who depart this life rest peacefully and unconsciously in their graves until the day of the great resurrection. God knows best. He knows that any other way for the dead would only result in misery for millions of the departed. So all, saint and sinner alike, sleep until the resurrection morning. Then when all things are ready, when sin is finally done, He will call forth the righteous dead. Then all tears shall be wiped away, and sorrow and pain shall be no more.

How much better God's plan is than man's! It would not do for God to transport souls directly to heaven at death. Such souls would be in misery if they knew of conditions on earth, yet were unable to help; and they would be in misery if they

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were kept in ignorance. In either case heaven would cease to be heaven to them. God therefore “gives His beloved sleep.” Sweetly they rest until they hear the voice of the Archangel calling them. 1 Thessalonians 4:16. And when they are called, the work is finished. It is better so.

There is a divine harmony in all that God does. It would seem awkward, to say the least, to have some kind of judgment at death and send people to heaven or hell immediately, and then afterward have a resurrection and a judgment. Why a resurrection and a judgment when their cases are already decided, and they are in the place assigned to them? Why should a soul who is already in heaven, who has “shuffled off this mortal coil” and is enjoying freedom from hampering bodily restrictions, be asked to come down to this earth and have a resurrection and be put into a body again? Can there be any possible reason for a resurrection under such conditions? A resurrection would seem not only superfluous but a positive detriment. Yet such absurdities are inherent in the doctrine of natural immortality.

It is not the intention to leave the impression that heaven is a place of anxiety and sorrow only. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents. And there are many that repent. But, conversely, there is also sorrow over the many who do not repent. The same Christ who wept over Jerusalem is now weeping over our small and large cities. Yes, there is sorrow in heaven. There is weeping. And as we come to the last great crisis, the intensity increases. It is just as well that those who are laid to rest really rest “until the indignation be over past.” That is God’s plan, and it is best.

We hold, then, to the Biblical doctrine of immortality in Christ only; that those who are in His will gain immortality and life through Christ, and that those who are lost will be punished according to the deeds done in the body; that all, whether good or wicked, sleep quietly until the resurrection, and that then the great and final separation takes place....

Will God Give Us a Fair Trial?

WHAT about the judgment to come? Will there be one? Who will be the judge or judges, and how will justice be administered?

We have already considered the necessity of a judgment.

If virtue is better than vice, if right conduct is preferable to wrong actions, then sometime, somewhere, there should be a recognition of that fact by the God of the universe. Right conduct is not always rewarded here on earth, nor is vice always punished. But if sin breeds suffering and death, and if virtue and good conduct are conducive to happiness and long life, God must in some way step in and demonstrate it. A judgment is necessary, and a judgment day is coming.

God must be just. This is essential and fundamental. And God’s justice must be such as to be comprehensible by man. Being made in the image of God includes an intellectual likeness. Our notions of right and wrong and just deserts for transgressions are reflections of God’s ideas on the same subjects. Men believe that there must be some relation between transgression and penalty for transgression. Our sense of justice forbids us to mete out the same punishment for the infraction of a police regulation—such as overtime parking—as for the crime of kidnapping. Walking on the grass when there is a sign forbidding it is a violation of law, but is not to be compared with highway robbery. A boy who has broken a neighbor’s window may require attention, but no one would treat him as he would a hardened transgressor of the narcotic law. Men make a difference, and fit the punishment to the crime. This appears to them just, and is evidently in harmony with the mind of God.

If God’s judgment is to be just, we would expect that all the factors bearing on each case would be considered. It would not be just to present one side only and leave other vital matters out of consideration. For the sake of justice, therefore, it is comforting to know that God will “bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

Ecclesiastes 12:14. This assures us that nothing bearing on the case, “whether it be good, or whether it be evil,” will be left out. There will be no covering up of testimony. If there are any extenuating circumstances, they will be considered. This approaches ideal justice.

If the ends of justice are to be served, the testimony given must be unimpeachable. Men sometimes forget. Time effaces the distinctness of an event. May we be sure that in God’s court there is no miscarriage of justice because of faulty memory or biased opinion?

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From the Bible it appears that nothing is left to the chance of memory alone, though we suppose that none would doubt the accuracy of angelic testimony. "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books." Revelation 20:12. Apparently a faithful record is made of each life, and every transaction is truthfully recorded. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Matthew 12:36. If we are to give an account of every word, and if we are to be judged out of those things that are "written in the books," it follows that our words are written in the books.

This harmonizes with the statement in Malachi 3:16 concerning the righteous, that "the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written." The words are recorded as they are spoken, and this written record is produced in the judgment. That makes the matter sure. There is no doubt as to the testimony. And to make the matter doubly sure, the individuals under sentence agree with the written record, "their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men." Romans 2:15, 16. This phase of the judgment also seems ideal. Not only are all circumstances taken into consideration, and the testimony presented full and complete, but it is also authentic and authoritative, and is accepted as such by the accused.

One more consideration may be pertinent. Is the presiding judge fair and impartial? Is He competent? Is He harsh and exacting, or does He tend toward mercy?

For certain reasons God the Father is not the judge, but has "committed all judgment unto the Son." John 5:22. See also Acts 10:42; 17:31. This is both interesting and important. The Father is competent, He is just, He is righteous. But He has never been identified with man as Jesus has; and this apparently is one reason for the selection of Christ as judge. The Father has given Christ "authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." Verse 27.

To be sure, the preceding paragraph must be understood in the light of the two judgments—the investigative and the executive. In the investigative judgment, which is going on now in the courts above, God the Father is the judge and Jesus Christ is our advocate. But in the executive judgment, which comes during the millennial period after Christ's second coming, Christ is the judge who metes out the sentences.

As man, Christ came to this world and "was in all points tempted like as we are;" hence He can "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Hebrews 4:15. In Christ we have One who understands all the sorrows and perplexities of man, because He has been a man Himself. He is of our flesh and blood; He is the Son of man, and is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." In all the universe there could be no one else so well fitted for the position of judge, and none other to whom we could so confidently commit our case.

But God has gone one step further in assuring men of a perfectly fair and sympathetic trial. While Christ is the chief presiding judge, He is not the only judge. Associated with Him on the bench are the saints of God, saved through grace. "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?" 1 Corinthians 6:2. "Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High." Daniel 7:22. And so Christ Himself stated of the twelve: "When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matthew 19:28.

These statements make clear the fact that the saints will have a part in the judgment. They will "judge the world." And even beyond the world will their jurisdiction extend. "Know you not that we shall judge angels?" 1 Corinthians 6:3. When the final assize is held, the saints will have a prominent part to play. Christ associates them with Himself. They hear all the evidence. They are made acquainted with all the circumstances. And when at last the irrevocable decree is pronounced, they are assured of its justice and are able to exclaim from a personal knowledge of the facts involved: "True and righteous are Thy judgments." Revelation 16:7; 19:2. And the angel of the waters confirms this opinion by saying, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and was, and shall be, because Thou hast judged thus." Revelation 16:5.

That Christ thus associates the saints with Himself in the judgment reveals one of the working principles of God's government that is very interesting indeed. God could do all the judging Himself were He so inclined. In a moment He could decide every case, and it would be a just decision. But God does not work that way. He always gives man something to do, thus making him a co-worker with Himself.

Christ may raise Lazarus from the dead. Man cannot do that, but man can roll away the stone that covers the grave.

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Hence Christ commands, "Take you away the stone." John 11:39. Lazarus is called to life, but the bandages are not removed. That man can do; hence Christ again commands, "Loose him, and let him go." Verse 44. The principle here seems to be this, Whatever man can do, let man do. What man cannot do, God will.

But there are other reasons for God's taking man into partnership. In the case of Lazarus here referred to, no doubt was ever afterward expressed by anyone as to the genuineness of the miracle. When those men loosed Lazarus from his grave clothes, when they actually untied the bands that held his hands and feet, and uncovered his face, they were confronted by a miracle other than that of raising a man from the dead. Had they not seen Lazarus come "forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes"? And how could a man walk when he was bound hand and foot? Yet they had seen him come forth. He had not walked. He could not, for he was bound. Yet he "came forth."

And they themselves had untied the bands; so they knew he had been bound. Here was indeed a miracle of which they never tired of telling. These Jews had had a part in this wonderful event, and that constituted them witnesses in its favor. All this testimony would have been lost, had they not been permitted to cooperate.

So in the judgment. God is abundantly able to do all that is to be done without our help. But it is better that we have a part in it. No question can then ever be raised as to God's justice. It is conceivable that some will be lost whom we rather expected would be saved. If we ourselves have heard the case, if we are, acquainted with all the circumstances, no doubt will ever arise in our minds as to the justice of the decision. That is forestalled by taking us into partnership. We need never be in doubt as to any decision. We know. We sat on the case.

It may be worth while to notice in passing that this principle is one of the things that will make life in the hereafter worth while. We shall not be mere spectators. We shall have a part in God's government and plan. Life would be unendurable were we forever to be "outsiders," or to be treated as children incapable of understanding or of having a part with God.

We are now ready for court to open. We have as presiding judge One who is competent and understanding. He has been

man Himself. He has stood before a corrupt human court, and been condemned to death on false testimony. He knows what it is to be arraigned before a weak or biased judge. He has been confronted with lying and suborned witnesses. He knows what it is to have His words given a perverted meaning and an unintended slant. And He is there to see that no such thing is done here, that absolute and impartial justice will be meted out. Associated with Him are the saints. They also have had an experience. They have been tempted, and have fallen.

They know the wiles of the evil one, and how craftily his snares have been laid. They have been saved by grace, and their hearts are filled with love and praise to God and with sympathy for those who at last are to be lost. From a court such as this we may expect not only fairness and justice, but also the assurance that the final decree will be in accord with their innate sense of right.

We have noticed before that justice demands that any punishment meted out shall be proportionate to the crime. . . . (Therefore) man is to be judged "according to his works;" "according to his ways;" "according to the fruit of his doings;" "according to his deeds;" "according as his work shall be." Matthew 16: 27; Jeremiah 17:10; 32:19; Romans 2:6; Revelation 22:12. Hence, "that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." Luke 12:47, 48. This seems right and in accordance with ordinary rules of justice. The application of this principle would, of course, preclude any wholesale condemnation of souls to the tortures of hell. It would, however, call, for careful investigation that exact justice be done.

The gospel offers men life. "I am come," Christ says, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10. This is the very essence of the message from heaven. God "gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

When men reject this offer, they reject Heaven's choicest gift. To be deprived of life is the greatest punishment that can come to anyone, for with life goes everything else. And it is to save men from perishing that God sent His Son. Those who do

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A True Christmas Story

by Bill Eichner

A long time ago a little boy was born to a very poor family. The father and mother were so much unlike each other, in almost every way, one wonders how they ever got together in the first place. Their union was not made in heaven by any means. Nevertheless, their joining produced this little one. They were so poor all they could afford was a piece of property with an old chicken house on it which they converted into a home of sorts. But, we're getting ahead of our story here for this predated the little one of which we speak by nearly a year. The father and mother had a tough time the first year of their marriage, especially during that first winter. One could see the outdoors between the plain board siding. They insulated from the weather with newspaper tacked to the inside wall. About the only furniture they had was a bed, table and chairs and an old wood-burning cook stove in the middle of the larger of two rooms that served for both heating and cooking.

Now if you think that this is a story of some third world country you'd be wrong, for this story took place in the good old USA. They had snow that first winter, a couple of feet, and the father came down with pneumonia. What kept him alive was only by way of a miracle from heaven. The mother herself was not all that healthy either, for that matter. After all, what health factors could be in place for such living quarters?

Surprisingly, Joey was born into the family healthy and with all his fingers and toes. So much for the toxic air and environmental folks! As the lad grew, the family's life became better with time. They were never to become the upper crust of society or even on par with middle class folks but they made do. It is not so much of this world's goods that are important as is the connection a person has with their Creator.

So, how could this narrative have anything to do with Christmas you may ask. I promise, we'll get there.

This mother had a Christian background whereas the father did not have much in the way of Christian training. Hence, the unlike part mentioned. Let's call the mother Patricia and the father Donald to protect their real identities. Even though Don and Pat saw things differently, that didn't mean they disagreed in every aspect of life's journey. They both loved the little boy, Joey. The one thing they taught Joey was to be

responsible. He was given chores from his earliest years. This was to make him succeed in life, not in ways often seen by the world but, more importantly, in maintaining his integrity. One point remembered by Joey was when his father gave his word. A handshake was better than any contract given under oath or written by a president.

The seasons came and went, years rolled on, with the eventual culmination of Joey coming to adulthood. Now, with the years slipping up on Don, he eventually retired and reconsidered Christianity, becoming a good one in his later years. Pat wanted more than anything to see all her children in heaven and her last request was that Joe would influence his two younger brothers and two older half-brothers to regain their earlier Christian experiences. They had since left Christianity to wander in the world. Perhaps the more difficult experiences Joe endured in childhood were at least in part responsible for his unmovable stand in character development.

This may seem all mundane and disconnected. These points are not as unimportant as they may seem though and we'll return to an earlier time in a few moments. In the meantime, I want you to think about a couple of things. Why do we get so caught up in life we forget the more important parts? What could be more important than eternity? First of all, do you see the underlying theme? Difficult times often bring the best out in people. Second, what is the most important point in this narrative to you? Just think on it for a moment.

Christmas was a family time, not so much about getting presents, but more about what you could give to others. Maybe, doing a little more to help mother with the dishes, or dad by chopping more wood than usual. It's the little things that accumulate. When Joey was ten years old his first of two younger brothers was born, with a second brother born when he was twelve. By this time, Pat's life was one of illness. Don was struggling with multiple jobs to make ends meet. Joey found himself in an adult role of caring for his younger brothers, doing much of the house cleaning and cooking while trying to maintain his education. So, you can see why Christmas was not one filled with presents.

On one of the more memorable Christmases, Joey received a toy train set. Things had improved a bit and money was a little less tight. A cat by the name of Crybaby (his real name) had come to live with the family. As Joey set up the train set, an

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Holiday Presents

by E. G. White

The holidays are approaching. In view of this fact, it will be well to consider how much money is expended yearly in making presents to those who have no need of them. The habits of custom are so strong that to withhold gifts from our friends on these occasions would seem to us almost a neglect of them. But let us remember that our kind heavenly Benefactor has claims upon us far superior to those of any earthly friend. Shall we not, during the coming holidays, present our offerings to God? Even the children may participate in this work. Clothing and other useful articles may be given to the worthy poor, and thus a work may be done for the Master.

Let us remember that Christmas is celebrated in commemoration of the birth of the world's Redeemer. . . .

God would be glorified by his children should they enjoy a plain, simple diet, and use the means entrusted to them in bringing to his treasury offerings, small and great, to be used in sending the light of truth to souls that are in the darkness of error. The hearts of the widow and fatherless may be made to rejoice because of gifts which will add to their comfort and satisfy their hunger.

Let all who profess to believe the present truth calculate how much they spend yearly, and especially upon the recurrence of the annual holidays, for the gratification of selfish and unholy desires, how much in the indulgence of appetite, and how much to compete with others in unchristian display. Sum up the means thus spent all needlessly, and then estimate how much might be saved as consecrated gifts to God's cause without injury to soul or body. Mites and more liberal gifts may be brought in, according to the ability of the giver, to aid in lifting debts from churches which have been dedicated to God. Then there are missionaries to be sent into new fields, and others to be supported in their respective fields of labor. These missionaries have to practice the strictest economy, even denying themselves the very things you enjoy daily, and which you consider the necessities of life. They enjoy few luxuries.

If, after prayerful consideration of this matter, you are not moved to prompt and zealous action, we shall know that . . . you have lost sight of the sacrifice Jesus has made for you that



you might be blessed with the gift of eternal life. Said Christ, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Self-denial is a mark of Christianity. To offer to God gifts that have cost us something, a sacrifice that we shall ask him to use to advance his cause in the earth, will be pleasing to him. . . .

It would be well pleasing to God if extra ornaments, twice so explicitly forbidden in the word of God, were laid off. Now is a favorable opportunity to present these as offerings to God. They may be sold for something, and the money thus received may be used to advance the precious cause of truth. Let the wearing of useless trimmings and adornments be discarded. Extravagance should never be indulged in to gratify our pride. Our dress may be of good quality, made up with plainness and simplicity, for durability rather than for display. Our appetites must also be brought into subjection, and not gratified to our injury. The question should come home to every heart, "How much owest thou unto my Lord?" He has granted us privileges and blessings without number; and now should not the bands of selfishness be broken and removed from us, and the just claims of God and humanity be met? . . .

Deeds of love and charity done to the suffering are as though done to himself. RH November 21, 1878, Selected

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not accept Him will eventually perish.

The life we here live is given us that we may decide whether we care to live on and become partakers of the more abundant life that Christ came to give or whether we do not care to make the effort to comply with the conditions of eternal life. We get a little taste of life here, and realize by contrast what it might be if sin and sorrow were excluded. Do we care for life? There are many pleasant things here—love, friendship, and social adventure. There are also many unpleasant things—sorrow, pain, and disappointment. God offers to take out of life all that offends, and to fill it full of good things far beyond our powers even to comprehend, and asks us if we will accept such an offer. There are certain conditions attached to it, but only such as are necessary in the very nature of the case. Will we comply with these conditions? Those who do, receive eternal life.

The judgment of which we speak concerns those who have rejected God's offer of life. They have in reality already settled their own cases. Life has been offered them. They have rejected it. They have judged themselves "unworthy of everlasting life." Acts 13:46. They have come short, they have sinned, and they are now about to receive the wages of sin, death. Romans 6:23.

In speaking of the final punishment of the wicked as being death, we are well aware that some punishment must precede the final sentence. There must be consideration given to the deeds done in the body, and just deserts must be administered. He who knowingly has done wickedly must be beaten with "many stripes." He who unwittingly did evil will escape with "few stripes." In the end, however,—and here is where we must disagree with those who believe in endless punishment, "the wages of sin is death," death eternal and everlasting. This is at once the hardest, the most merciful, and the most just, sentence. To this particular phase of the subject we shall now give our attention.

A CHRISTMAS STORY

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idea presented itself. Why not dress Crybaby up in his clothes with his little bonnet on and place him in the middle of the circular track so he could see the train run around the track. Actually, it was an ingenious idea which proved to bring hours of entertainment for them both. The train would circle around Crybaby and he would occasionally be able to derail the caboose, bringing delight and laughter to Joey and a sort of dancing routine from Crybaby. Then the whole process would start all over again.

Another Christmas found Joey and Don returning home from an errand. The day had been dark, rainy and dreary. The sun had set and it was getting dark and foggy so Don turned on the car's fog lights. Back then, yellow lights could be attached to the car, reasoning that they would better penetrate the fog for better visibility. Actually, it worked reasonably well. Then the heavy rain turned to snow falling so hard one could hardly see, adding greatly to their traveling time. It was slow going, but Don was happy he had put on his sawdust snow tires. Eventually, they did arrive home before Pat had dinner on the table, where they all sat down for a simple but wonderful Christmas Eve supper. After supper, the family gathered around for opening presents. Mostly, there were clothes for the boys with Don and Pat exchanging some little gift. It's not the expense put forth, but instead, the intention in the heart of the giver.

How many remember the little things anymore? Is Christmas about getting or is it more about giving? Have we, as a society, forgotten what is really important? Is there anything in these accounts that moved you? How close are you to your family, really? Do you remember when your father and mother were living? If you still have them, cherish them. If you have fallen away from your first love with Jesus, come back. Some of the accounts here may be remembered by a few. If you have forgotten, please reach out to that special person, a brother or sister to start your journey of returning home.