

The Great Hope

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This little book summarizes Protestant beliefs.

Part 1

If you have ever wondered what Protestants believe, we have some recommended reading for you.

Perhaps Ellen White's greatest contribution to the Protestant Reformation was her five-volume set of books call The Conflict of the Ages. Volume 1 of the series is Patriarchs and Prophets. It can best be described as a commentary on the first half of the Old Testament. Volume 2, Prophets and Kings, covers the second half of the Old Testament. So, if you have tried reading the Old Testament, and found it confusing or irrelevant, as many people have, these are the two books for you. They present the Old Testament Bible stories in a clear and interesting way. They will give you a greater appreciation for the Old Testament by highlighting the Messianic prophecies that were fulfilled by Christ. After reading Patriarchs and Prophets and Prophets and Kings, you can read the Old Testament and you will discover treasures that you never knew existed in those pages.

Volume 3 of The Conflict of the Ages is titled Desire of Ages. It is a biography of Christ based on the first four books of the New Testament. Each of the Gospel writers emphasized different aspects of Christ's life. Matthew, writing for Jews, put more emphasis on genealogy and Messianic prophecies than did Luke, who was writing for a Gentile reader. John's Gospel is much more intellectual than Mark's, brief and to the point account. By combining all four, Ellen White gives a more complete picture of Jesus' life. Because it is so well referenced, you can use it as an index to the gospels.

Suppose you want to read the story of the woman at the well, but can't remember exactly where it is in the Bible. Looking at the chapter headings, you see that chapter 19 is titled, "At Jacob's Well." Turning to that chapter you see, "This chapter is based on John 4:1-42." This allows you to read John's account, and compare it to Ellen White's narrative, which reads more like a screen play than the Bible does.

Let's compare John 4:3-8 from the King James Version with the first two paragraphs in chapter 19 of the Desire of Ages. Here is the King James:

[Jesus] left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

Here is Ellen White:

On the way to Galilee Jesus passed through Samaria. It was noon when He reached the beautiful Vale of Shechem. At the opening of this valley was Jacob's well. Wearied with His journey, He sat down here to rest while His disciples went to buy food.

The Jews and the Samaritans were bitter enemies, and as far as possible avoided all dealing with each other. To trade with the Samaritans in case of necessity was indeed counted lawful by the rabbis; but all social intercourse with them was condemned. A Jew would not borrow from a Samaritan, nor receive a kindness, not even a morsel of bread or a cup of water. The disciples, in buying food, were acting in harmony with the custom of their nation. But beyond this they did not go. To ask a favor of the Samaritans, or in any way seek to benefit them, did not enter into the thought of even Christ's disciples.

So, there isn't any factual or doctrinal difference, but Ellen White tells the story augmented with useful information that makes the Gospel accounts more understandable and brings the Bible story to life.

Volume 4 of the Conflict of the Ages series, titled Acts of the Apostles, covers the remainder of the New Testament: that is, the book of Acts and the epistles. It is a history of the Apostolic church from the crucifixion of Christ until the death of the last apostle.

Volume 5, The Great Controversy, gives the history of the church from apostolic times to the present. It chronicles how the church drifted away from the Bible, and how the Protestant Reformation brought it back. It also examines the logical progression that current events might take, based on the all that history, and the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. It is an especially important book for us today, living just before the second coming of Jesus because it tells us what to expect, and how to react, to the events about to unfold.

So, these five books, read in conjunction with the Bible, are extremely valuable for understanding our Christian faith, and the times we are living in. These books can be read on-line at the WhiteEstate.org website, anonymously and without cost using any web browser, or downloaded for free into your E-book reader. You can also order them in printed form for a reasonable price from the Ellen White Estate.¹

As you can imagine, there is an awful lot of excellent information in these five books. Each book is nearly 700 pages long! It takes a substantial investment of time to read them all.

So, the Ellen White Estate has published a small paperback book titled The Great Hope, which is adapted from The Great Controversy. The author is listed as "E. G. White;" but that's like saying William Shakespeare is the author of the Cliff's Notes for Hamlet. Shakespeare wrote,

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis Nobler in the mind to suffer
The Slings and Arrows of outrageous Fortune,
Or to take Arms against a Sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them: to die, to sleep
No more; and by a sleep, to say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand Natural shocks
That Flesh is heir to?

Cliff's Notes say,

Hamlet considers suicide.

¹ <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/books.asp>

Yes, the meaning is accurately conveyed, but not with the power with which Shakespeare delivered it. But lots of college students read Cliff's Notes because it is so much quicker and easier to read.

In the same way, The Great Hope is a short, simple paraphrase of basic Protestant beliefs, which is so generic that it could be a summary of practically any conservative Protestant writer's book, not necessarily The Great Controversy. Its value is that, for a hurried modern reader, it presents a basic outline of fundamental Protestant beliefs without delving too deeply into the Biblical basis for those beliefs. So, if you don't know anything about basic Christianity, or you want to simply review the foundation for your Christian faith, this is the book for you.

One of our listeners purchased a case of these books and donated them to us to give away, while supplies last. If you want one, just write to us and ask for one. Our address is, The Word With Us, P.O. Box 716, Ridgecrest, CA 93556. We will give you that address again later in the broadcast.

But now we will take a short break, and when we come back, we will briefly review this paraphrase of Protestant beliefs.

[music – "Lift Up the Trumpet"]

Part 2

In the first segment, we told you about a little book called, The Great Hope, which is an outline of basic Christian beliefs. One of our listeners has donated a case of these paperback books to us to give away. We will tell you how to get one later in this broadcast. But first, let me walk you through the book so you can decide if you want one or not.

Chapter 1 is titled, "Why is there Suffering?" It addresses a question that many people have. If God is good, why does He allow suffering? This question has to be answered in a larger context. It is like asking, "If a dentist wants to relieve your pain, why does he hurt you by pulling your tooth?" You have to look at the big picture and realize the momentary pain of having your tooth pulled will eliminate the much greater pain of having a broken and infected tooth remain in your mouth. Chapter 1 explains the big picture of the origin of sin, how it results in suffering, and explains why God reluctantly has to allow sin to run its course.

Here is a short excerpt from Chapter 1.

Many see the work of evil, with its pain and loss, and question how this can exist under the rulership of One who is infinite in wisdom, power, and love. Those who are inclined to doubt take this as an excuse for rejecting the words of the Bible. Tradition and wrong interpretations have clouded the Bible's teaching about God's character, the nature of His government, and the principles of how He deals with sin.

... God takes no pleasure in forced allegiance, and He grants everyone freedom of will, so that they can choose to serve Him voluntarily.

But one of God's created beings chose to misuse this freedom. Sin originated with an angel who, next to Christ, had been the being God honored the most. Before his fall, Lucifer was chief of the covering cherubs, holy and pure. ... Coveting the honor that the Father had given His Son, this prince of angels wanted the power that was Christ's alone to use.

Thus began the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan for rulership of the universe. Suffering is the result of being caught in the crossfire of this cosmic struggle.

Chapter 2 is titled, “Hope for Triumph Over Evil.” It begins by explaining the first Messianic prophecy in the Bible—specifically, Genesis 3:15.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

This hostility between Satan and the human race is why we are constantly assaulted by evil. 1 Peter 5:8 warns us,

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

And Paul said in Ephesians 6:11,

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Chapter 2 explains the plan of salvation, tells of the work of guardian angels, and warns,

None are in greater danger than those who deny that the devil and his angels exist. Many accept their suggestions while they think they are following their own wisdom. As we approach the end of time, when Satan will work with his greatest power to deceive, he spreads everywhere the belief that he does not exist. It is his policy to conceal himself and his way of working.

This leads naturally into Chapter 3 which is titled, “Dangerous Seductions.” It explains how Satan tries to win the battle with Christ by leading men into sin. It encourages the reader to be aware of these temptations so as not to fall prey to Satan.

Let’s take another short break to put on the armor of God before we continue with our review of this little book, The Great Hope.

[music – “Armor of God”]

Part 3

We’ve been talking about a little book called The Great Hope, which is a summary of Protestant doctrines, which we will be giving away as long as supplies last. The first three chapters set the stage by explaining that suffering is the result of Satan’s rebellion against God, and Satan’s continuing efforts to lead people into sin through clever deception.

Chapter 4 is titled, “Everlasting Life.” It exposes Satan’s first lie, recorded in Genesis 3 verse 4.

“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman.

The Bible clearly teaches that eternal life comes only to those who take part in the first resurrection. But Satan wants people to believe that they will live forever. Satan inspired the Greek myth about death, which is summarized in Edith Hamilton's classic book, Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes.

THE UNDERWORLD

The kingdom of the dead was ruled by one of the twelve great Olympians, Hades or Pluto, and his Queen, Persephone. It is often called by his name, Hades. It lies, the Iliad says, beneath the secret places of the earth. In the Odyssey, the way to it leads over the edge of the world across Ocean. In later poets there are various entrances to it from the earth through caverns and beside deep lakes.

Tartarus and Erebus are sometimes two divisions of the underworld, Tartarus the deeper of the two, the prison of the Sons of Earth; Erebus where the dead pass as soon as they die. Often, however, there is no distinction between the two, and either is used, especially Tartarus, as a name for the entire region.

In Homer the underworld is vague, a shadowy place inhabited by shadows. Nothing is real there. The ghosts' existence, if it can be called that, is like a miserable dream. The later poets define the world of the dead more and more clearly as the place where the wicked are punished and the good rewarded. In the Roman poet Virgil this idea is presented in great detail as in no Greek poet. All the torments of the one class and the joys of the other are described at length. Virgil too is the only poet who gives clearly the geography of the underworld. The path down it leads to where Acheron, the river of woe, pours into Cocytus, the river of lamentation. An aged boatman named Charon ferries the souls of the dead across the water to the farther bank, where stands the adamantine gate to Tartarus (the name Virgil prefers). Charon will receive into his boat only the souls of those upon whose lips the passage of money was placed when they died and who were duly buried.

On guard before the gate sits Cerberus, the three-headed, dragon-tailed dog, who permits all spirits to enter, but none to return. On his arrival each one is brought before three judges, Rhadamanthus, Minos, and Aeacus, who pass sentence and send the wicked to everlasting torment and the good to a place of blessedness called the Elysian Fields.

Three other rivers, beside Acheron and Cocytus, separate the underworld from the world above; Phlegethon, the river of fire; Styx, the river of the unbreakable oath by which the gods swear; and Lethe, the river of forgetfulness.

Somewhere in this vast region is Pluto's palace, but beyond saying that it is many-gated and crowded with innumerable guests, no writer describes it. Around it are wide wastes, wan and cold, and meadows of asphodel, presumably strange, pallid, ghostly flowers. We do not know anything more about it. The poets did not care to linger in that gloom-hidden abode. ²

When they conquered the Greeks, the Romans adopted Greek mythology simply by giving the Greek gods Roman names. The Greek god Hades, the god of the underworld was renamed Pluto. During the dark ages, when the Roman Catholic Church made so many compromises with pagan beliefs, the church adopted the Roman mythology about death, and changed the names again.

Romans believed Charon took the souls of the dead to the adamantine gate where Cerberus was the gatekeeper. So, the Church taught that angels took the dead to the Pearly gates where Saint Peter is the gatekeeper.

² Edith Hamilton, 1942, **Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes**, http://www.all-art.org/world_literature/hamilton1.htm

Romans believed that, after passing through Erebus, judges would send the wicked to everlasting torment and the good to a place of blessedness called the Elysian Fields. Consequently, the Church taught that, before getting through the Pearly Gates, Christians had to pass through a place like Erebus called “Purgatory,” where they were purged of their sins with torment proportional to their transgressions before getting into heaven. The people who weren’t members of the church went straight to a Tartarus-like place called “Hell,” where Satan ruled instead of Pluto, causing them to suffer eternal torment.

Romans believed that Charon would only let them into the Elysian Fields if the dead person paid the price of admission and was properly buried. That made it easy for Roman Christians to accept the notion that one has to pay the Church and be buried in the churchyard to get to Heaven.

The Roman Catholic belief about what happens after death is nothing more than Roman mythology with the names changed.

By accepting Satan’s lie that the wicked live in torment in Purgatory or Hell, the church was able to sell indulgences for sin. An indulgence wasn’t exactly, a “Get Out of Jail Free” card; it was more like a “Get Out of Hell For a Fee” card. This un-Biblical notion of purgatory, enabled the church to blackmail people into buying forgiveness. This un-Biblical doctrine about the state of the dead is the main thing that led Martin Luther to begin the Protestant Reformation.

The notion of eternal torment in Hell is still used by some denominations as a way to coerce church members to contribute to the church and be on their best behavior. Supporting the church and living a righteous life are both very good things; but that doesn’t justify blackmail. Furthermore, this false teaching about Hell leads people to adopt an unflattering, and untrue, opinion about the character of God.

That’s why chapter 4 of [The Great Hope](#) explains what the Bible really teaches about death and resurrection.

Let’s take another break now, as Mike Miller sings about the Midnight Cry.

[music - Mike Miller. “Midnight Cry”]

Part 4

Before the break we heard how Chapter 4 of [The Great Hope](#) exposed one of two dangerous deceptions Satan perpetrated on Christians by introducing the Greek myth about death into the Christian church during the dark ages.

Chapter 5 is titled, “False Hope.” It explores another Satanic deception based on Satan’s lie about the immortality of the soul. When people believe that their dead loved ones are not sleeping until the resurrection, but are alive and watching them from heaven, it makes it possible for them to believe that they might be able to contact their dead friends and relatives. This makes them susceptible to lies told them by spiritual mediums. At best, these mediums are crooked charlatans taking advantage of gullible people. At worse, these mediums are agents of Satan, giving their clients unholy messages.

The spirit you contact may appear to be your saintly grandmother; but it is really an evil angel pretending to be your grandmother. This imposter may tell you many comforting things to gain your trust; but it isn’t your grandmother. Don’t believe her when she tells you what you want to hear. It is an evil spirit giving you false hope. Your grandmother is sleeping in the grave until the resurrection.

But you don't have to go to a medium to get false hope. Satan has many other agents, posing as righteous people, telling you that God's laws no longer apply. They make intellectual arguments justifying abortion, homosexuality, heterosexual sex outside marriage, or other sins. False hope is false. It leads you to make bad decisions that you will later regret.

Chapter 6 is titled, "True Peace." If you have Jesus in your heart, you have true peace, and won't be seduced by false hope. Chapter 6 tells you about true peace, and how to obtain it for yourself. Peace comes from the assurance of God's forgiveness.

The law shows us our sin, but it provides no remedy. It declares that death is the reward of the transgressor. Only the gospel of Christ can free us from the condemnation or defilement of sin. We must have repentance toward God, whose law we have broken, and faith in Christ, our atoning sacrifice. In this way we receive forgiveness for "the sins that were previously committed" and become children of God.

Chapter 7 is titled, "Our Only Safeguard." The only thing that can protect us from the deceptions of Satan is the truth that is found in the Bible. If we prayerfully study the Bible, and ask for the Holy Spirit to give us understanding of the doctrines contained therein, we will have the knowledge and power to withstand Satan's deceptions.

But, we must be aware that Satan's deceptions are very powerful, and he will attempt to make true Christians to appear to be enemies of God.

God points His followers to the Bible as their safeguard against the deceptive power of evil spirits. Satan uses every possible way to prevent people from gaining a knowledge of the Bible. At every revival of God's work, his activity becomes more intense. We will soon see a final struggle against Christ and His followers begin. The counterfeit will resemble the truth so closely that it will be impossible to tell the difference between them except by the Scriptures.

Those who try to obey all of God's commandments will be opposed and mocked. To endure the trial, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word.

Chapter 8 is titled, "In Defense of the Truth." Many of Satan's lies are firmly established in today's culture. It will be difficult to stand for the truth in our society. Chapter 8 emphasizes the importance of staying true to God.

Chapter 9 is titled, "Real Hope." It tells where in the Bible you can find the verses that promise the real hope of Jesus' second coming. These verses give you the strength to stand in defense of the truth so that you can find true peace.

Chapter 10 is titled, "The Great Rescue." It describes what will happen at the second coming, so you will know what to expect.

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." [John 14:1-3]

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18]

Finally, Chapter 11 describes the “Victory of Love.” Chapter 1 began with the cause of suffering in the world, so the book ends with the end of suffering. It tells what we can expect for all eternity, after the second coming of Christ.

We hope this summary of The Great Hope has peaked your interest in this little book. If you would like us to send you this book for free, get a pencil and paper ready, we will tell you, right after this musical reminder of God’s compassion.

[music – Dave Pogge, “Compassion”]

Part 5

In the first four segments of this broadcast, we’ve told you about some books that explain basic Protestant doctrines. In particular, we gave a chapter by chapter review of a book called, The Great Hope. One of our listeners bought a case of these books and donated them to us to give away, as long as supplies last. If you would like one, please write to The Word With Us at P.O. Box 716, Ridgecrest, CA 93555, or contact KRSF through the KRSF.NET website. The book is free; but if you would like to support The Word With Us and radio station KRSF, we would appreciate it if you enclose a check payable to Radio 74 Internationale.

We also told you about the five volume Conflict of the Ages series. Volume 1, Patriarch and Prophets, deals with the first half of the Old Testament. Volume 2, Prophets and Kings, discusses the second half of the Old Testament. Volume 3, Desire of Ages, deals with the first part of the New Testament, specifically the life and teaching of Christ. Volume 4, Acts of the Apostles, covers the rest of the New Testament. Finally, Volume 5, The Great Controversy, is a history of the world from a Christian perspective from the time of the apostles up to the present as it has fulfilled Bible prophecy, and a discussion of the Biblical prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled. These books can be read on-line anonymously, without charge, or purchased in printed form, from the <http://www.whiteestate.org/> website.

As always, a transcript of this program, and mp3 files of each segment, can be found on our website, <http://krsf.net/>. Just go to the program archives, and look for the links to this week’s program titled, “The Great Hope.”

The Programs page also contains a program schedule, so you can find out when your favorite programs are broadcast each week, and it also contains the text of the current local public service announcements that we broadcast at the top of each hour, and after The Word With Us.

We hope you will check out our website, KRSF.NET, to learn more about Radio Seventy-four Internationale, and how you can support us.

Let’s close our broadcast now as Becky Richardson sings, Side by Side.

[music – Becky Richardson, “Side by Side”]