Horace Lorenzo Hastings was a fifth-generation preacher, second-generation Adventist preacher, and an author of numerous books and hundreds of biblical tracts. He was born on November 23, 1831, in Blandford, Massachusetts.

Originally a Methodist, Hastings accepted the Second Advent message at twelve years of age, experiencing the Great Disappointment in 1844 and becoming an evangelist in 1848 while still a teenager. His father, King Hastings, had been a Millerite preacher. Hastings was persuaded by George Storrs’ literature to accept the biblical teaching regarding the unconscious state in death. In 1852, he joined the staff of *The Second Advent Watchman*, launching his lifelong career of writing and publishing. In 1853 and 1855, Hastings published pamphlets on the state of the dead. He believed that “this world is destined to be melted and purified by fire” but will “be restored…and made glorious by the power of God.”

Hastings did not join the sabbatarian Adventists, but they respected him and regularly promoted his books and tracts in the *Review* from 1854 to 1860. Unlike Ellen White’s 1858 book with “great controversy” in its subtitle, Hastings’ 1858 *Great Controversy between God and Man* was written to “show that a controversy has subsisted between God and Man from the beginning, and is to continue to the coming of Christ” when “the open and daring enemies of” God “will be swept from the world.”

In 1860, Hastings was elected president of the Christian Publication Society and the Christian Association, a position he resigned as a staunch non-sectarian when the name “Advent Christian” was adopted. His motto was, “No creed but the Bible, no master but Christ, no name but Christian.”

In 1865, Hastings founded the Scriptural Tract Repository in Boston and, in January 1866, began publishing the monthly periodical *The Christian*. He wrote a frequently quoted and adapted passage that appeared under the heading, “The greatest want of this age is men,” in a tract entitled “Sold Cheap,” advertised in the *Review* in 1866. Ellen White later condensed the passage into the much more succinct, inspiring paragraph on page 57 of the book *Education* (1903) that begins: “The greatest want of the world….”

In the 1870s, Hastings’ wife began a ministry in the war-torn South, and Hastings supported her by bringing literature and needed supplies. Hastings’ publishing operation burned to the ground in 1872, leaving him with debts he constantly struggled to repay. Though *The Christian* reached a circulation of 35,000 by 1876, it “carried no paid advertising,” and, “by May 1885, Hastings found himself over ten thousand dollars in debt.”

Hastings’ contributions to the cause of Christ include his evangelistic preaching, his 52 books, 450 hymn poems, and more than one hundred tons of tracts. He was best known for his poem “Shall We Meet Beyond the River?” and his Anti-Infidel Library of tracts. His book, *The Inspiration of the Bible, or, Will the Old Book Stand?* was translated into eighteen languages and sold nearly three million copies.

Hastings lived in Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island. He died at Goshen, Massachusetts on October 21, 1899.
SOURCES


“Books Received.” *ARH*, August 21, 1866.


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NOTES


2. The *Review* advertised Hastings’s 24-page tract, “The State of the Dead,” taken from Milton’s prose on the state of the dead in *Paradise Lost*, along with others of his books and tracts, in the December 26, 1854, and July 31, 1856, issues. It mentioned and advertised Hastings’s monthly paper, *The Christian*, in the following issues: February 20, 1866; January 29, 1867; February 19, 1867; November 12, 1867; and April 17, 1883; and his book *Signs of the Times* in the May 6, 1873, issue. It also published the tract “The Three Worlds” in the November 14 and November 21, 1854, issues; and Hastings’s article, “What Manner of Persons Ought We to Be?” in the November 14, 1865, issue. Uriah Smith reviewed Hastings’s 167-page book, *The Great Controversy Between God and Man* (“Book Notice,” March 18, 1858, 144) and advertised the book along with other books and tracts from the February 17, 1859, through November 6, 1860, issues.


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