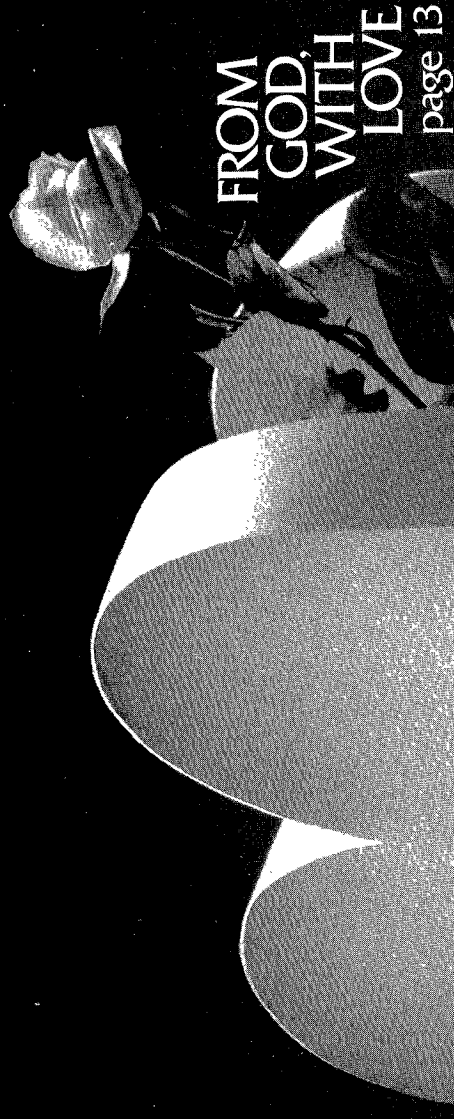


MINISTRY

A MAGAZINE FOR CLERGY



MARCH 1979



FROM
GOD,
WITH
LOVE
page 13

LETTERS

Disagrees but reads and enjoys

I have sent a separate letter to you disagreeing with your understanding of the Ten Commandments. However, overall I thoroughly enjoy MINISTRY and read it more completely than any other magazine I receive. Your articles on dispensationalism, archeology, science, and health have been extremely helpful.

Christian Church minister
California

Easier to talk

I have several relatives who are Seventh-day Adventists, and I find it much easier to talk to them with openness and understanding after reading MINISTRY. Thank you for the gift; I have gotten much from it.

United Church of
Christ minister
Illinois

On guard for heresy

When I first received your publication, I was on guard to watch for what might be considered heresy by Lutheran standards. To my surprise and pleasure, I find MINISTRY to be of a quality level certainly unexpected for the general Christian public. Continue the good scholarship. I often find myself thinking like MINISTRY.

Lutheran minister
North Carolina

A converted skeptic's testimony

Having received gift copies of your magazine every other month during 1978, I have decided that I want to become a regular subscriber.

Initially I was a bit skeptical about all those "letters" on page 2 that seemed like commercials. I did enjoy the articles, however, and their clear manner of presentation. My considered judgment is to want the paper regularly, so I guess this letter becomes another testimonial for page 2! The scholarship with simplicity and clarity (and also the practicality) of your magazine have convinced me.

United Church of
Canada minister
Ontario

We also have felt that the letters page sometimes sounds like a commercial. We do receive some letters that are not such glowing testimonials (see below), and we try to maintain a balanced cross section.—Editors.

MINISTRY burned

Please drop my name from your mailing list, as you are all wrong on your theology, and I only burn your paper after seeing your error. There are so many errors in MINISTRY that I haven't time to tell you of them, and no doubt you would not change your way of thinking anyway. So please do not send another magazine!

Christian pastor
California

Ripped and burned

I have been receiving your magazine, MINISTRY, and have ripped up and burned every copy sent me so far. I now ask that they be stopped.

Independent Christian minister
Illinois

And burned again

Please remove my name from your mailing list. I resent your publication coming to my home. Please believe me that any more copies I receive will be burned immediately.

Baptist minister
California

Biblical base

I deeply appreciate receiving MINISTRY. A Biblical base and an openness to the manifestations of God's Spirit characterize the journal. It is one of the finest Christian magazines I know.

United Methodist minister
New Hampshire

Dividing and uniting

I should like to thank you for sending MINISTRY to me. Since monks technically possess nothing in their own right, even if some items are in fact pretty much one's own (shoes, for instance), I should not have known of your magazine, nor read it, if you had not sent it to me. I read it with interest for the insight it offers into the two things that concern us all, namely, those things that divide us and those things that unite us. An instance of the former is to be found in the article dealing with papal primacy (November, 1978). The broader issue at stake is the role of the visible, institutional church in the economy of salvation. Is the church intrinsic, a channel of grace established by Jesus, or is it extrinsic to our salvation, a consequence rather than a

(LETTERS continued on page 30)

An outstretched hand

If you are receiving MINISTRY bimonthly without having paid for a subscription (perhaps this is your first copy), it is not a mistake.

We believe the time has come for Christians everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. Since 1928, MINISTRY has been tailored to meet the needs of Seventh-day Adventist church professionals. We now realize that we have been remiss in not becoming more involved

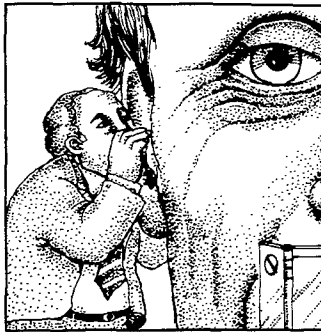
with clergy of all faiths, and believe that we have much in common with the entire Christian community. We want to share with you, therefore, our aspirations and faith in a way that we trust will provide inspiration and help for you, too.

We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. We'd like to send you, without charge, a number of issues on a bimonthly basis. Look over our shoulders, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you cannot use. If you have ministerial colleagues whom you feel would also enjoy this outreach, we are prepared to include them.—The Editors.

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Skeletons in the closet of our motivations

by John Lyons



BILL MOSKO

If we honestly face the skeletons in our motivational closet, we may have to admit that the hand that holds the hook is our own.

Pastor John Average stands before his congregation, expounding the virtues of a new program that he claims will bring fresh vitality to the church's soul-winning efforts. If Pastor Average does not believe that the program is indeed of God, if he has not prayed and prepared his own heart so that he is convinced this plan is God's will for the specific situation in his church, be assured that his new program will be a tremendous failure from its very inception.

External methods create suspicion of our motives. So it is for the well-being of ourselves and our congregations that we prayerfully examine our motives before presenting any program. Otherwise we are merely playing a game with the audience—"I'll hide the hook and bet you can't find it." Even fish are extremely hard to hook the second time. What can we expect of intelligent people except a skeptical smile when they see the same old hook so often? The bait may change, but the shape remains the same.

External pressures in the Lord's work are at times all too evident as a means of motivating to greater service. These pressures appear in various forms—a slick psychology barren of Christian principle, a manipulator using gimmicks to appeal to a human desire to be the greatest, required reports that create the suspicion that one is under surveillance.

As pastors, let us not be too hasty to point the accusing finger at higher administration. We, too, have goals for money and souls. A few skeletons might be found dangling in the secret closet of our own thoughts, and perhaps we are quick to slam shut the door lest the specter in the inner recesses convict us that we have used a few externals ourselves in motivating the saints to reach our goals.

Naturally any truehearted pastor wants to succeed in his work. He wants to see souls won to Christ and established in God's great family. He wants to see his church alive and excited about its God-given mission. If he has failed his Lord by stooping to illegitimate, external methods to attain an appearance of personal success, God will forgive him if he confesses his sin.

We need to be ever conscious that the internal pressure of the Holy Spirit is still God's method to motivate. This being the case, we must first bring our plans to the throne of grace for approval. There will be deletions, improvements, and reorganization, but the last state will be better than the first because they are now God's plans as well as ours. And when the final draft is brought before the congregation, they will forget about hooks, and sense that their pastor has been in consultation with the divine Administrator.

As pastors we need to remember that the flock of God deserves to be dealt with sympathetically and fairly, just as we feel administration should treat us. Our role as pastor includes leading and making suggestions, but to try to control every member by clever maneuvering is an offense. A church member recounting a request one pastor made of him recalled that before he could make a decision and reply, the pastor said, "Thank you," as if the member's consent had been obtained, then quickly walked away, no doubt feeling quite pleased with his accomplishment. The parishioner, however, viewed the disappearing pastor as a conniving tactician. The same church member later said, "One minister tries to make me a colporteur, another an evangelist, yet another a lay activities man."

Ellen White wrote, "God does not ex-

pect that with their different temperaments His people will each be prepared for any and every place. Let all remember that there are varied trusts. It is not the work of any man to prescribe the work of any other man contrary to his own convictions of duty. It is right to give counsel and suggest plans; but every man should be left free to seek direction from God, whose he is and whom he serves.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 334. “It is selfishness which leads persons to think that the particular part of the work in which they are engaged is the most important of all. It is selfishness also that prompts the feeling, on the part of the workers, that their judgment must be the most reliable and their methods of labor the best or that it is their privilege in any way to bind the conscience of another. . . . Let the minds of the people be directed to God. Leave Him a chance to work for those who love Him. Do not impose upon the people rules and regulations, which, if followed, would leave them as destitute of the Spirit of God as were the hills of Gilboa of dew or rain.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 727.

Do we not often develop carefully thought-out plans for the saints to follow in detail? Plans are needful. But we must be careful that we are not trying to foist a system upon a given personality that will bind his liberty of action with too many details. Many times our plans are simply an adapted analysis of successful methods used by another individual in some particular field of endeavor. We may learn a great deal from such an analysis, but we need not think that merely injecting the analysis into another personality will produce the same good results its originator had.

Pastors not only can generate external pressure on others, they are also on the receiving end of such pressures at times. “Go ye” is the command of Christ, and every pastor ought to feel the Spirit-inspired motivation to fulfill that command. Like brother Paul, we should feel an internal woe upon us if we preach not the gospel. God has given us our marching orders. Yet, strange to say, there is no other area where the pastor is liable to feel more external pressure, either from his congregation or from higher administration, than in the field of soul winning.

Obviously, not all external pressure is totally bad. If we are not heeding our Lord’s commission, administration is conscience-bound to inquire, “What is clogging the wheels in the army of salvation?” Like the law, which has no saving power whatever, yet serves a

useful function by reminding us of our duty, those who carry the oversight of God’s work may find it necessary to nudge us once in a while.

But even the highest administrative bodies in our ranks cannot be expected to be omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. They, too, are in the ongoing process of sanctification. Consequently, we might as well expect that a few unsanctified pressures will filter down upon us as we await the perfect day. Yet these unsanctified pressures can damage. They can become a temptation to the pastor to start operating on the external code, to fill his church with potential dropouts who are convinced but not converted—wet sinners who have been merely put under the water rather than baptized in heart. The minister’s heart fills with misgivings as he discovers through self-examination that administrative pressure was the catalyst that brought to view the skeleton in his own closet—success at any cost.

In our outreach for souls there is sometimes a pressure to make every pastor an evangelist. We are called “pastor-evangelists.” To some extent that title is a misnomer, for Ephesians 4:11 lists evangelism as a separate gift: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.”

Nonetheless, every pastor should be able to sound the clarion gospel call to sinners in at least some of the various avenues that are open to us—Bible studies, seminars, the written word, radio, TV, preaching, et cetera. But let us not assume that all are evangelists in the strict sense of the gift. Many capable and efficient ministers can deliver excellent discourses filled with spiritual food, but are simply not evangelistic in style and appeal. An evangelist must have a pronounced ability to couch profound truths in such clear language and with such sincere appeal that spiritual babes may understand and accept them. Babes must be gently led until they can partake of stronger meat without a digestive upset. But whether we are evangelists or not in the strict sense, whether we are under external pressure or not, we are still called to sound the trumpet to the best of our ability both in Zion and without the gates.


Administration is Heaven-bound to counsel, urge, instruct, and inspire to larger activities in the proclamation of the gospel commission—“Go ye.” And pastors, along with administrators, are counseled by straight testimony to weed out of our lives all externals that offend.

We must remain vigilant against an inordinate desire to be the highest man on the statistical totem pole.

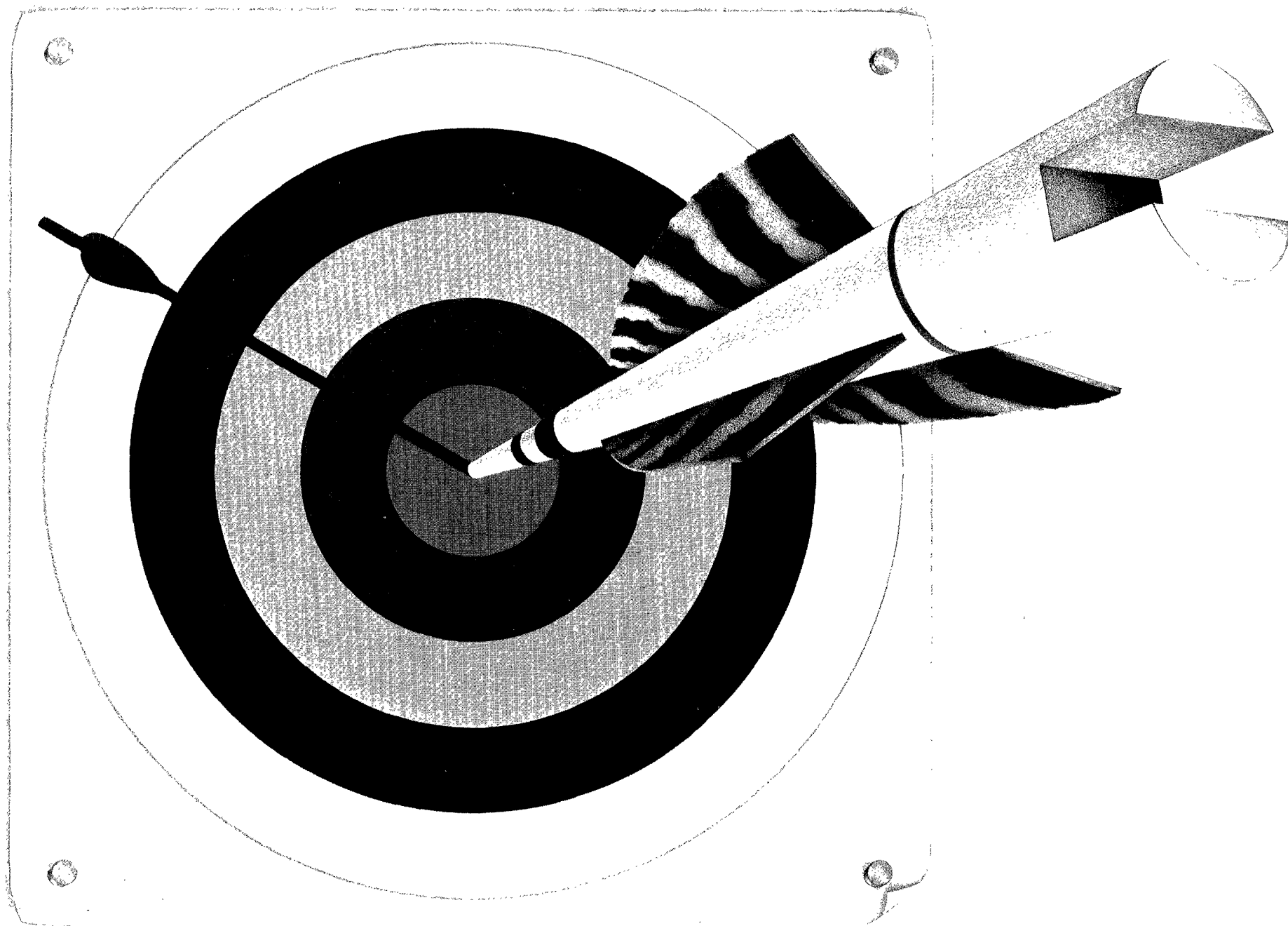
At times the pastor may feel as if he is being pressed into a mold by external forces. Likewise the church member may feel the same way because of pressure from us. Perhaps the massive number of working methods and Bible courses produced by the church speak of a desire for individuality. We want to operate as freely as possible. Without opposing essential guidelines and suggestions, we do not want to be hide-bound by details that are not of local choosing. We want to be able to choose from the suggested methods, Bible courses, and various details without feeling that we might arouse the antagonism of authority. And we want the liberty to decide locally whether a particular church within our district is in a state of readiness for a suggested program. What we desire for ourselves we must be willing to grant freely to our church members.

Inspired counsel has said, “But let none become shadows of some other man. Let them not become mere machines, to grind out certain subjects by human dictation. No sermon is to be planned out for them to preach where they go. Let them seek to be taught by God through the Holy Spirit. Let them seek help through prayer and the diligent study of God’s word. If they do this, He who calls them to labor in the gospel will make it evident that they are chosen vessels. He will give them words to speak to the people.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 415.

Perhaps at times the pastor feels caught in the crush at the bottom of the administrative pile. Yet we must settle the matter in our hearts that God has given us our commission. We must not brood over the presence of external pressures or be mastered by the ill feelings that such tactics might engender. We must be ever sure that by the grace of God our methods of motivation are Christ-centered, Spirit-filled, and sincere. We must be about our Father’s business. The King is coming!

Our work is not destined to fizzle out in a whimper because of un-Christlike methods of working. It will close in glorious triumph through the internal work of the Holy Spirit. The hallelujah chorus of victory can even now be heard increasing in volume. 

John A. Lyons is pastor of the New Minas Seventh-day Adventist church in New Minas, Nova Scotia, Canada.



"Be ye therefore perfect"

God does not ask the impossible;
we can attain the required perfection.

by Wayne Willey

Spiritual frustration, discouragement, and despair have their beginnings in the great disparity between what we know we ought to be and what we really are. The greatest struggle in the Christian life is the attempt to reconcile the perceived deformity of our sinful nature with the required perfection of the character of God Himself.

"Be ye therefore perfect," the Saviour said, "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). But our problem is that we do not know how. We are told, "Try harder; let go and let God; let Jesus come into your heart and live in you." So we try—and fail. We try—and fail again, until we fail even to try, crying out in despair, "It's hopeless! I can never be perfect!" Yet even in our despair the words continue to ring in our ears, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Does God require an unattainable perfection? Is there a solution to this paradox? God's Word, rightly understood, presents an attainable perfection as the divine requirement for His people.

When we turn to the Scriptures we find that the inspired writers used the original Greek or Hebrew words that are translated "perfect" in the common version almost eight hundred times throughout the Bible. Yet only 120 times are these words translated as "perfect" in the King James Version. Such translations as "complete," "finished," "whole," or "mature" account for the majority of occurrences. These words, then, may be considered as synonyms of the word "perfect."

As we examine the sixty-eight texts of the Old Testament in which the word "perfect" does appear, we discover that in more than half of these texts the synonyms "whole" or "complete" can be substituted with no substantial change of meaning. For example, the restoration of the temple was "perfected" (completed) by the workmen under the direction of

King Joash and the High Priest Jehoiada (see 2 Chron. 24:13, 14). David hated "with perfect [complete] hatred" those who rebelled against God and exhorted his son Solomon to serve God "with a perfect [complete or whole] heart and with a willing mind" (see Ps. 139:22; 1 Chron. 28:9). Hezekiah pleaded for God's mercy, after the prophet told him he had a fatal illness, because "I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect [complete or whole] heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight" (Isa. 38:3).

When we turn to the New Testament, we discover that we can likewise substitute "whole" or "complete" in most of the fifty-nine texts where "perfect" appears in the King James Version, with no substantial change of meaning. Jesus told the young man who felt something missing in his life how he could be "perfect," or complete (see Matt. 19:20, 21). The apostle Paul contrasts the partial and the "perfect" (whole or complete) in his great treatise on love (see 1 Cor. 13:10).

Such an understanding of how the Biblical writers used the words translated "perfect" helps us answer the question How can I become a perfect Christian? How can I become complete or whole?

We recognize that we are incomplete, because we so miserably fall short of God's ideal for us. The problem is not to recognize that we need to be perfect; the problem is to know how to attain that perfection we so desperately need. We know that the divine law admits of only one standard—total obedience without a single failing or imperfection (see James 2:10; Gal. 3:10, 12). In the light of such a standard, not only do we recognize that we have failed to fulfill God's ideal but we see that of ourselves we are utterly incapable of reaching the absolute perfection demanded by the standard (see Rom. 7:14-25; Jer. 13:23).

The very first step, then, is to stop striving for perfection in our own strength and to admit that of ourselves we are helpless to bring about any change in our life. Thus we are freed to look for perfection from some source other than our own efforts. That Source, the Scriptures plainly declare, is Jesus Christ our Saviour. "This man [Jesus], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; . . . for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:12-14). The word "perfected" used here is the verb form of the very same word translated "perfect" in Matthew 5:48. The Bible teaches an attainable perfection, not in the sense that we may reach it by striving, but that God bestows upon each one who accepts His Son as Saviour the perfect life and death and character of Jesus.

"If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "He [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (chap. 5:1). "By him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13:39). "Ye are complete in him [Jesus]" (Col. 2:10).

The apostle Paul recognizes the believer's completeness in Christ when he addresses the justified believers at Corinth as "them that are perfect" (1 Cor. 2:6). Writing to the Philippian Christians, he admonishes "as many as be perfect" not to count themselves as having arrived at the goal, but forgetting the past they are to press on (see Phil. 3:13-15).

Thus we see that perfection comes to

“Perfection comes to us who believe as a gift by which we receive the complete and sinless life of Christ.”

us who believe as a gift by which we receive the complete and sinless life of Christ. Our perfection is the perfection of Him “who did no sin” (1 Peter 2:22). We are then able to bring to the judgment bar of God the complete or perfect works required by divine justice, and the works we bring are the works done by Christ as man’s substitute and surety. We bring these works in faith, believing God’s promise to accept us because of them. Throughout our lives as Christians we must continue to bring *Christ’s* works as our only complete satisfaction of the claims of the law, because our own best works are ever stained and soiled (see Isa. 64:6). Our lack of complete knowledge and the sinfulness of our human nature make perfection of action unattainable to us apart from Christ. We can never become perfect or complete on the basis of our own works because our works are never complete. Therefore, we are complete or perfect only in Christ.

Yet as we study the scriptures dealing with perfection we often see a contrast drawn between actions and intentions or purposes. King Amaziah did what was “right in the sight of the Lord,” but, unlike David, he did not serve God “with a perfect heart” (see 2 Kings 14:3; 2 Chron. 25:2). Other statements of Scripture also highlight this contrast. Noah was called perfect, though he later sinned and brought shame on himself (see Gen. 6:9; 9:20-24). David’s heart is called perfect, though his actions were not perfect (see 1 Kings 15:3, 5; 1 Sam. 13:14). Solomon called the hearts of the people of Israel perfect “at this day” when the Temple was dedicated (see 1

Kings 8:61). Yet in a short span of time Solomon would lead these same people into idolatry and immorality.

The Scriptures thus indicate that a man’s intentions and purposes may be in harmony with God’s will for his life, while his actions are imperfect. Intentions can be complete at every stage of a person’s development in knowledge and action. This completeness of purpose is our response to God’s declaration that we are complete in Christ. The Scriptures often call it “holiness,” or wholeheartedness toward God. Such an attitude is the complete commitment of the will to serve God; it is loving God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind (see Matt. 22:37) because of the revelation of His love for you. This, by God’s grace, is attainable perfection. No matter where we may be in knowledge or understanding, we can will to serve God with our whole hearts.

Such a wholeness of purpose or commitment will inevitably be revealed in willing obedience to what we know to be the will of God, even though our obedience, of itself, will never be able to satisfy the standards of divine justice. Our actions can be considered only as outward indications of the inward attitude of commitment to the revealed will of God. Actions are the fruit on the tree of holiness.


The wholly committed believer will not knowingly choose to sin. Indeed, a willful choice to sin would be a rejection of the perfection provided by the living and dying of Jesus. We would then have no perfection either of action or purpose; we would be incomplete again. In order for us to regain our former experi-

ence it would be necessary for us to recognize our need, confess our incompleteness, and then by faith reclaim the completeness found only in Christ.

In every period of history God’s people have had perfection. By faith they have claimed the perfection of action found only in the life of Christ. In response to the wholeness He provides, they have committed themselves wholly to serve God with willing minds. Those who have died in such a faith relationship are beyond the power of Satan. With their lives finished and their relationship to God secure to the very end, there is no possibility of change. Their commitment has been sealed for eternity.

The good news is that we do not have to wait until some future time for that perfection. We can have it today—both perfection of action and perfection of purpose. But we can have it only in relationship to Christ; we are complete only in Him. His life and death, credited to us, is our only hope of ever being able to meet the requirements of the divine law, today or in the future.

One point of uncertainty remains: Will we continue in that completeness? Will we choose to remain willing servants of God no matter what the circumstances may be?

By God’s grace we may. “For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12). 

Wayne Willey is pastor of the New London, Connecticut, Seventh-day Adventist church.

“God sets before His servants no rule of this kind, ‘Be as good as you can,’ but this, ‘Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ Hath any man ever attained to it? Truly we have not, but for all that, every Christian man aims at it. I would far rather my child had a perfect copy to write by, though he might never write equal to it, than that he should have an imperfect copy set before him, because then he would never make a good writer at all. Our heavenly Father has given us the perfect image of Christ to be an example, His perfect law to be our rule, and it is for us to aim at this

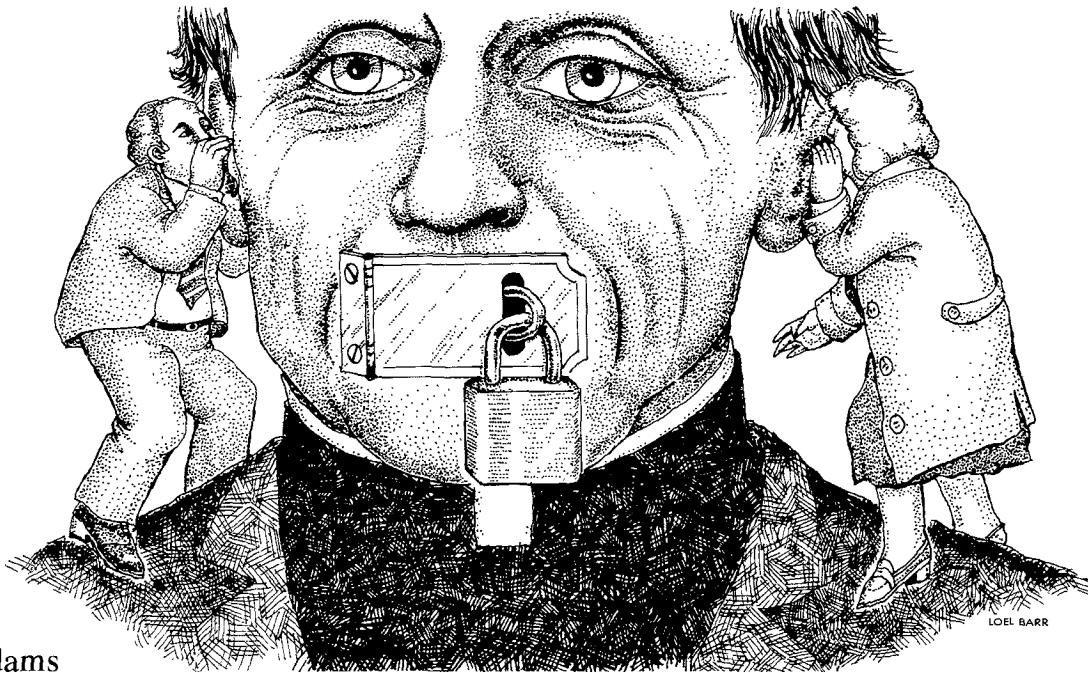
perfection in the power of the Holy Spirit, and, like Abram, to fall upon our faces in shame and confusion of face, when we recollect how far we have come short of it. Perfection is what we wish for, pant after, and shall at the last obtain. We do not want to have the law toned down to our weakness. Blessed be God, we delight in the perfection of that law . . . Brethren, here is the model of the consecrated life. Do you not long to attain to it? . . . For oh, how far short we have come of this! . . .

Great holiness must spring from great faith. Faith is the root, obedience the branch; and if the root decays, the

branch cannot flourish. Ask to know that Christ is yours and that you are His; for here you will find a fountain to water your consecration and make it yield fruit to Christ’s service. . . .

“Beloved believer, sinner as thou art, backslider as thou art, still believe in Jesus, let not a sense of sin weaken thy faith in Him. . . . Cling to that cross still: the more furious the storm the more need of the life-buoy. Never leave it, but make your hold the firmer. Confide alone in the virtue of that precious blood, for thus only will you slay your sins and advance in holiness.”—Charles H. Spurgeon.

Can you keep a secret?



by Roy Adams

Pastor Jones has hit upon just the illustration he needs for a particular point in his sermon. "I wish you could have seen the distraught look on that poor mother's face as she sat in my office telling me about her daughter's attempted suicide," he says. "This young lady's trouble began when she was a teen-ager. Against her parents' urgings, she fell in with the wrong crowd in school. She became pregnant and had an abortion. Later she went into a state of deep depression. That poor mother came to me deeply disturbed, not only because of what was happening to her daughter but also because of what might happen to the family if word got out. Her husband is one of the pillars in their church and well known in their community."


As the pastor continues to relate his story during the divine worship hour, the heretofore drowsy congregation are all ears. Their attention leads him to feel that he is scoring points, and perhaps he is, but unfortunately at the expense of the poor mother's confidence. True, he might be two thousand miles from the family in question. But what he doesn't know is that in his congregation is a very alert busybody who is vaguely acquainted with the case, waiting for just the information he is supplying in order to piece together a juicy story for the

after-church meeting of the Character Defamation League.

Senator Sam Ervin, of Watergate fame, smarting over embarrassing leaks from his Senate committee, complained, "Some people can't keep anything in their heads without having it come out of their mouth!" Senator Sam's words are all too true. The minister, of all professionals, has a most solemn duty to guard that which has been communicated to him in the strictest confidence. Yet our people (although titillated at our disclosures) are often shocked at the freedom with which some of us members of the clergy discuss obviously confidential matters.

Upon reflection, some of us may find that we have been remiss in this area and that a major reorientation is necessary. Changes such as the following may be required: (1) We will have to find matters other than the private affairs of our counselees to discuss with our spouse. We may have to tactfully make our wife or husband aware that certain areas of our work must remain in our minds alone. On the other hand, our spouse may find it necessary to remind us by saying (also as tactfully as possible), "Really, dear, should I be hearing this?" (2) We will have to be willing to forfeit some of our most "juicy" sermon illustrations in order to protect confidential-

ity. (3) In the unusual event that a counselee's experience has the potential of serving the spiritual needs of a wider constituency, we will have to train ourselves to seek permission and to be certain that such permission is granted willingly before using such experiences for illustrative purposes. (4) We may have to bypass our secretaries or church clerks when correspondence on highly sensitive matters is involved, typing or writing such letters by hand ourselves in order to protect the counselee. Of course, the average minister does not have (and should not have) extensive correspondence of this type.

Although the wise pastor will encourage his people to confide in God, there will always be those who need a human arm, if only for a time. The person who has reached the point where he feels he must pour out his private affairs into human ears is already badly hurt. To betray his confidence is to subject him to further injury. But to keep his secrets between himself and you alone is to manufacture a bond of trust that will enable you to help him. The pastor who knows when *not* to talk has a priceless asset. 

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Non-participation in the World Council of Churches does not stem from sectarianism or lack of brotherly love.

Why Adventists don't join the WCC

by Jean Zurcher



For some years representatives of the Adventist Church have been meeting regularly with members of the World Council of Churches in various countries and on different levels. I took part in a series of dialogs at the headquarters of the WCC in Geneva, from 1965 to 1973. Two reports of these meetings were published in *The Ecumenical Review* (April, 1970, and April, 1972), in addition to a well-documented article, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church" (January, 1967).

During these dialogs, as in other meetings of a similar nature, I was asked why the Adventist Church is not a member of the World Council of Churches. Some questioners attributed our absence to a lack of brotherly love or to simple sectarianism. However, the reasons are to be found elsewhere, and they go far deeper. As we shall see, they are of a historical, doctrinal, political, and prophetic character.

The historical reason

Actually, the Advent Movement, since its origin and by its very nature, has been animated by an ecumenical spirit. Not only is the Adventist message characterized by its universality, as is everything connected with the gospel, but the Adventist Church itself is keenly aware of its duty to preach "the everlasting gospel . . . unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6). After a century and a half of such preaching millions on all continents and of all races have become fraternally united in one faith and one hope.

Nevertheless, the Adventist Church cannot be said to be in competition with the contemporary ecumenical movement. It has neither the objectives of the World Council of Churches, nor the mainsprings that govern its actions. The Council is working essentially for the unity of all churches, on the basis of a minimal creed acceptable to everyone. The Adventist Church seeks to bring about the unity of believers in a community of faith and hope, itself committed to Bible teaching.

In the early days of the nineteenth century, students of the Bible in various countries began a detailed study of the prophecies. They soon concluded that the glorious advent of Jesus was imminent. Under the influence of this interpretation of Biblical prophecy, there grew up, during the first half of the

nineteenth century, a worldwide interdenominational movement usually called the Advent Awakening.

From 1830 onward the movement grew rapidly, especially in the United States, through the work of hundreds of ministers. William Miller and Josiah Litch, the first a Baptist and the second a Methodist, were perhaps the most well known. Thousands from all denominations joined this early Advent movement, certain that Jesus was going to return on October 22, 1844, as had been announced by the preachers through a wrong interpretation of Daniel 8:14.

Obviously the disappointment that followed was great, and most early Adventists left the ranks of the movement. Only a small number of believers resolutely maintained hope in the soon return of Jesus. However, after restudying the prophecies, they determined that "the hour of his judgment" (Rev. 14:7), rather than "the day and the hour" of Christ's return, was foretold. Soon to follow this event, however, would be the coming in glory of the Son of man (Dan. 7:9-14, 26, 27). It was to proclaim this message that God had raised up the worldwide movement.

Thus the Adventist Church, which grew from this small core of Advent believers, has the certainty of having been raised up by God at a predetermined time and for a specific mission, just as have other churches in past centuries. This message, clearly defined in the prophecy of Revelation 14:6-12, does not allow for geographical restrictions or denominational barriers. On the contrary, it is a worldwide mission, which Jesus spoke of in His prophetic discourse: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (Matt. 24:14).

The Advent message has now been proclaimed for more than a century. Today it is being preached in nearly every country and in more than a thousand languages and dialects. But, of course, the prophetic task entrusted to the Adventist Church has not yet been completed, and therefore there is no question of its being abandoned.

It is precisely the requirements of this task that do not permit the Adventist Church to subscribe to the principles governing the reciprocal relations among members of the World Council. To do so would be to renounce its mission to evangelize the world. It must be added, however, that this attitude does not ex-

clude a degree of cooperation in well-defined areas, as we shall see, and it certainly does not rule out brotherly relations with the representatives of other churches whenever circumstances permit. (It should be added, the Adventist concept of mission does *not* include the belief that men can obtain salvation only through the Seventh-day Adventist Church!)

The doctrinal reason

At first sight, one would think that there should not be any theological difficulties, as the World Council of Churches does not regard the doctrinal particularities of each church as having importance. Indeed, it is well known that the Council does not discriminate on doctrinal grounds. Each member is left free to believe and practice Christianity in the way he thinks best. To become a member of the WCC, the only requirement is to sign a minimum profession of faith, which recognizes "the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures." The Council could hardly be more broadminded or offer easier conditions in its aim to end the scandal of a divided Christendom.

The Adventist Church has the same opinion of the division of the Christian world. Not only does it regard it as a scandal but it considers this division to be the reason for the confusion about the elementary truths of the gospel. Also, the Adventist Church holds that it is the duty of all Christians to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," as the apostle Paul writes (Eph. 4:3). Unity is essential to the Christian life and witness—the reason Jesus made it the subject of His last prayer.

That prayer is well known because it constitutes the Biblical basis of ecumenical theology, and is the basic text used by the World Council of Churches to support its call to unite: "That they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21).

The Adventist Church does not question the principle of unity, but rather its form and the manner in which it is achieved. The unity Jesus desired certainly does not contain any mystery; sound exegesis should allow everyone to understand its nature. However, as Dr. Lukas Viser, secretary of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, notes: "The division

amongst us is so far-reaching that it affects even our respective ideas of unity."—*Le Semeur Vaudois*, Jan. 18, 1964.

To examine Jesus' prayer even casually is to conclude that Jesus was not praying especially for some organization, nor even for an ecclesiastical group. The subject is not the unity of churches but rather the unity that must exist first of all between Jesus and His disciples, and then between the disciples themselves. The text also shows that this unity can be achieved only by a communion of heart and mind, following the example of Jesus' communion with His Father. This unity is above all "unity of the Spirit," a "unity of the faith" (Eph. 4:3, 13).

The means by which the spiritual communion of all believers is attained is also indicated by Jesus in His prayer for unity: "They have kept thy word" (John 17:6). In fidelity to Scripture can be found the basis of all real Christian unity—to which should be added immediately another point of Jesus' prayer, too often neglected: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (verse 17). As the branches are joined to the vine, Jesus explained, so can the disciple be joined to Christ, if the Saviour's words abide in him (chap. 15:7). "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (chap. 8:31, 32).

Thus Jesus' prayer for unity itself gives sufficient explanation of why the Adventist Church could never be satisfied with an organizational unity that does not directly involve each of its members. Along with Emil Brunner, we believe that "a real *Ekklesia* cannot be built up from twenty institutional churches. Christian communion can develop only from a personal knowledge of Christ, which at the same time implies willingness to be in communion with Him."—*Malentendu de l'Eglise*, p. 169, footnote.

For the same reason, the Adventist Church attaches great importance to the Bible, acknowledging it to be the Word of God and the sole criterion of truth. Without a standard of reference, and with no objective truths accepted by all, Christians cannot help but be carried about by all the winds of doctrine, in spite of their churches' highest intentions. That is why the Adventist Church could not consent to a unity that was not

“Unity can be achieved only by a communion of heart and mind following the example of Jesus.”

based solely on the Bible and which did not embody all its teachings. For did not Jesus give the command to “teach all nations . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19, 20)?

Here is found the basis for the Adventist conviction that it must uphold the points of doctrine peculiar to it. For what distinguishes the Adventist message is not what it has in common theologically with other churches, but rather what sets it apart and gives it its reason for existence. Therefore the Adventist Church cannot support the spirit that prevails in the ecumenical movement.

The political reason

During the past few years the clear political commitment of the World Council of Churches has intensified, asserting itself more and more openly—to the concern even of certain of its members. But it is not my purpose here to explain this trend, and even less to criticize it. Let me only outline why the Adventist Church is not free to join any religious organization whose aim, declared or otherwise, is to play a socio-political role of the type engaged in by the World Council of Churches.

Since its origin, the Adventist Church has zealously defended separation of church and state, on the basis of Jesus’ well-known command: “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (chap. 22:21). Other passages in the New Testament teach that all civil powers are instituted by God to direct the kingdoms of this world, just as it has been given to the church to control the affairs of God’s kingdom (Rom. 13:1-7). Not that the civil power and the religious authority are opposed, but that they are *separated*.

The example of Jesus is sufficient illustration of this principle. Never at any time during His ministry did Jesus succumb to the temptation to take political action, in spite of the repeated demands made by His followers. Jesus categorically refused the political power that was offered Him; likewise He rejected all recourse to violence. He did not contest the authority of the Roman governor, and Pilate declared Him innocent of all the political accusations brought against Him. Jesus did accept the title “king,” but He stated immediately after: “My-

kingdom is not of this world. . . . To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:36, 37).

To the teaching of Christ and the apostles must be added the tragic lessons of twenty centuries of Christian disrespect for separation of church and state. In their determination to force the consciences of Christians in the first centuries, the Roman emperors unleashed ten major persecutions. It was no different when the bishops of Rome succeeded the emperors. By their control over the political organization of Europe, the popes ensured the triumph of the Roman Catholic Church. Both by direct and indirect use of political force and influence the church imposed unity of belief for nearly twelve centuries.

It was the French Revolution that put an end to papal control over the European monarchs, to the church’s domination of the states, and, as a consequence, to the persecutions and wars of religion. It was the Revolution, too, that inaugurated an era of constitutional regimes, in which separation of church and state gradually was accepted as a fundamental principle, essential to the guarantee of religious liberty. The principle was not admitted without a struggle, but it represents one of the greatest victories of modern political revolutions.

The position of the Adventist Church on separation of church and state has been stated many times through the years. Typical is this affirmation by the delegates to the General Conference session in 1948: “We believe in civil government as divinely ordained to protect men in the enjoyment of their natural rights, and to rule in civil things, and that in this realm it is entitled to the respectful and willing obedience of all. . . . We believe that all legislation which unites church and state is subversive of human rights, potentially persecuting in character, and opposed to the best interests of the church and of the state; and therefore, that it is not within the province of human government to enact such legislation. We believe it to be our duty to use every lawful and honorable means to prevent the enactment of legislation which tends to unite church and state, and to oppose every movement toward such union, that all may enjoy the inestimable blessing of religious liberty . . .”

Following this preliminary statement is a series of resolutions, the following of which relate to relations between the church and the state:

“WHEREAS, The state should never invade the distinctive realm of the church to affect in any way the complete freedom of conscience, or the right to profess, practice, and promulgate religious beliefs; and the church should never invade the distinctive realm of the state,

“We recommend, 1. That we, the representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in biennial Autumn Council assembled, reaffirm our full belief in the historic doctrine of the separation of church and state, and our resolute purpose as a church to maintain that doctrine unimpaired in our relations with all earthly governments, remembering always that the trend toward union may be gradual and subtle.”

Another resolution dealing with the Adventist Church’s loyalty toward all governments is expressed as follows:

“WHEREAS, Governments have been set up among men, under God, to regulate human relationships (Rom. 13:1-3; 1 Peter 2:13-17); and,

“WHEREAS, Civil government includes the exercise of the police powers inherent in sovereignty, to prevent whatever may jeopardize the health, morals, safety and general welfare of society;

“We recommend, That we reaffirm our loyalty to civil government, pledging our sincere obedience to its laws, and praying for the peace of the country and for all those in authority. That we reaffirm, however, at the same time, our inalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience and to promulgate our religious beliefs among all men (Acts 5:29; Mk. 16:15).” (See “Church and State,” *SDA Encyclopedia*, Commentary Reference Series, vol. 10, pp. 256-259.)

As we can see, then, separation of church and state is a strongly held belief of the Adventist Church. Therefore, there never could be any question of associating with a religious organization whose social and political involvement with the state denies the integrity of this principle. ■

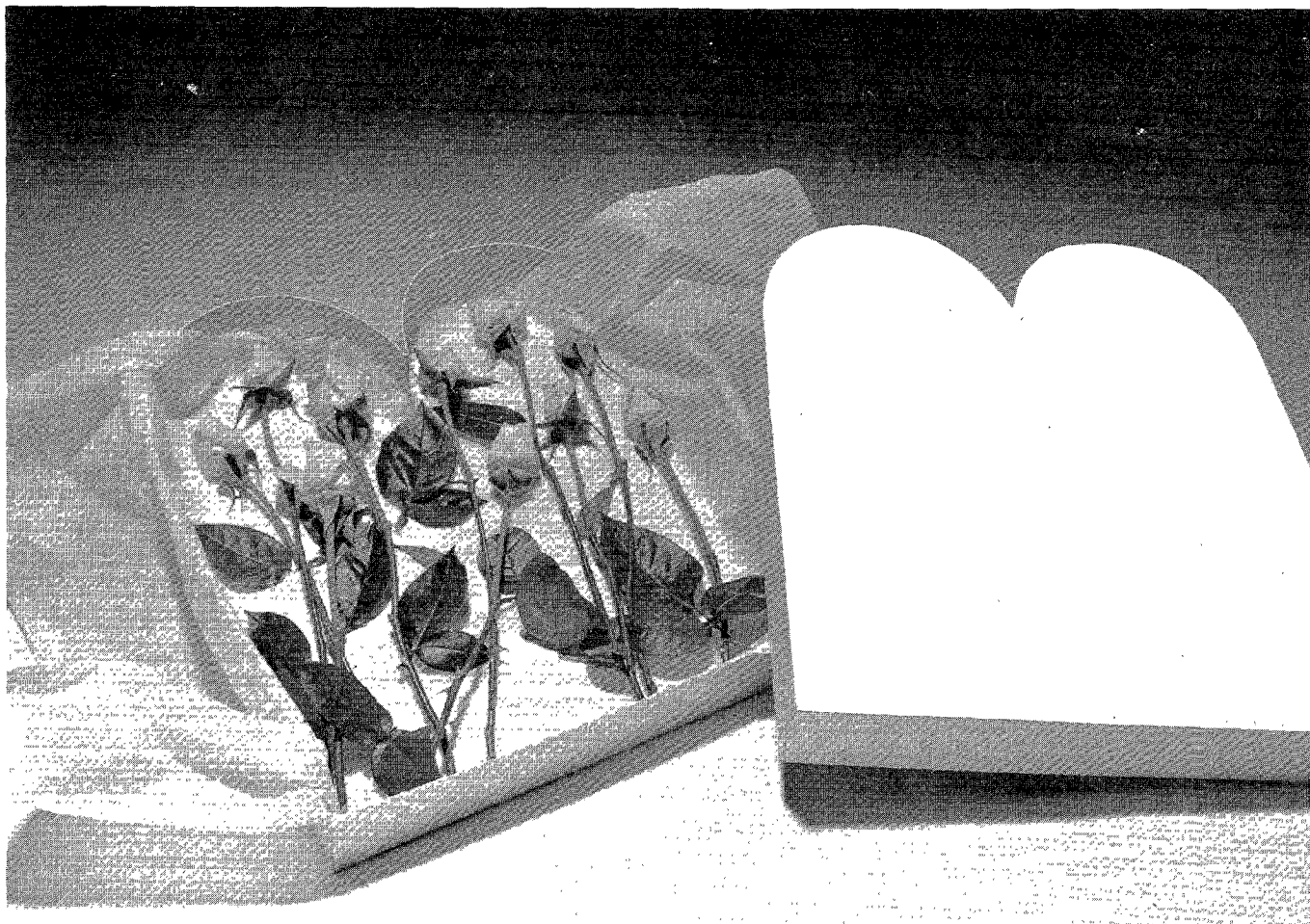
(To be concluded)

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Finding love through law

When viewed correctly, God's law is not restrictive; it portrays life as the glorious thing God intended it to be.

by James Coffin



The law of God isn't a very popular topic these days. In fact, modern man seems to have a basic dislike for any highly defined code of behavior. Yesterday's norms are considered too restrictive; today each person prefers to do his own thing. Even many Christians, basking in the warmth of God's free grace, think that any mention of God's law smacks of legalism. To them the law seems cold and impersonal. Furthermore, Biblical higher critics maintain that Moses only edited and restructured an ethical code that had long been in existence in ancient Babylon.

In contrast to the above-mentioned

attitudes, the psalmist David loved God's law. He took great delight in it (Ps. 119:70, 77, 97). Far from finding it a negative list of don'ts, he perceived what God was actually trying to communicate through the law. And he couldn't contain his enthusiasm. David saw what James later pointed out, that the law of God is not just a legal demand but, when seen in its proper perspective, a "law of liberty" (James 1:25). As to the law's origin, the Bible is explicit: God wrote the Ten Commandments with His own finger (Ex. 31:18).

It is deeply significant that God chose to write the law Himself. Generally it

has been God's custom to communicate His will to an individual, who in turn communicates it to the people. When the message has thus been channeled through the human agent (although it is nonetheless a message from God), it inevitably bears the stamp not only of the messenger's individuality but also of his cultural background.

In at least two instances God chose to reveal Himself directly, bypassing the human agent: when giving the Ten Commandments, and in the incarnation of Christ. In the giving of the law He made a verbal statement about His character. In the Incarnation He actually became

“It is deeply significant that God chose to write the law Himself.”

the human agent, not only making statements about the character of God, but acting it out as well. If we find Christ tender and loving and the law harsh and exacting, we need to reevaluate our understanding of the law, for Christ and the law were given to reveal the same thing.

Often we fail to realize that God gave the Decalogue to a *saved* people—a people whom He had delivered from bondage, not because of their own intrinsic goodness, but because of His great love and grace. Jesus asked in the New Testament that the recipient of His salvation should respond by keeping His commandments; in the Old Testament He requested the same love response from those delivered from the bondage of Egypt. If a commandment was broken in either Old or New Testament times, forgiveness was *freely* granted.

Works played no part. When the sinner accepted on faith God's promise to forgive, and gave evidence of his faith by confession and the slaying of the symbolic sacrificial lamb, he was completely forgiven. It is only in this context of grace that the commandments can be properly understood.

The Decalogue (as found in Exodus 20:3-17) begins with the words: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” God seems to have a way of beginning with the obvious and progressing to the less apparent. In Hebrews 11:6 He employs a similar sequence in pointing out that to please God we must first believe that He exists. Such simple statements concerning the existence and primacy of God may seem elementary and unnecessary. But the millions who worship a multitude of deities, not to mention those who reject the idea of deity altogether, are ample evidence of the need of such statements. If there is indeed one all-powerful God who is infinite and transcendent, then humanity's only claim to infinitude and transcendence is necessarily dependent upon its relationship to Him. Nonexistent gods can do nothing to help us attain higher levels of existence.

Having focused our attention on Him-

self as the only true and infinite God, the Lord requests that we not limit in any way His magnitude. In one sense, if we limit God we limit ourselves, for we limit the heights toward which we can aspire. For this reason we are asked to not objectify that which defies form. We may think it helpful to have a tangible aid in directing our thoughts toward God, but no man-made object can ever capture correctly or completely the greatness and goodness of God. Whatever we construct must remain infinitely inferior to the Creator Himself. And as we continually gaze upon our own construction, our concept of God inevitably becomes dwarfed.

The latter part of the commandment points out that the real consequences of objectifying God may not be readily apparent. But three or four generations after such a practice is begun, we see that the object is no longer viewed as a mere aid to worship—a means to an end—it has become an end in itself.

Limiting God can happen in subtle ways. It may be through statues and icons that capture our aesthetic imagination but offer only a finite scope for reflection upon the One who is infinite. Ritual and liturgy may present an unbalanced emphasis, thus limiting our perception of certain aspects of God's character. The pictures that present Christ as weak and effeminate may cause us to turn away in disgust, preventing us from seeing His true character. Or, as the third commandment points out, even our words can keep us from recognizing the absolute greatness of God.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” Apparently our words may play a more significant part in our conceptualization of God than we have supposed. The man who calls upon God with an oath every time something goes wrong is limiting his concept of God. As the law of “impression through expression” works in his life, God becomes relegated to lower and still lower levels. The way we use the name of God in worship affects our concept of His character. The flippant reference to the

Divine in our secular conversation leaves its mark upon us. In the second and third commandments God is attempting to shield us from a dwarfed concept of Him, which inevitably leads to a dwarfed concept of man.

God thus focuses our attention on Himself as the only true God, and warns us of the pitfalls of limiting His greatness. But we have yet to catch a glimpse of the magnitude of His greatness. It is the fourth commandment that affords us a view of the majesty and power of God.

Here we see a God who is so powerful that He need only speak and a world is born. He need only touch and inanimate dust becomes living, pulsating, human flesh. But more overwhelming still, He invites us weekly to revel in His glory, that He in turn might share Himself with us in a unique and creative way.

God never intended the Sabbath to be a burden to man. Rather, He planned a joyous celebration, a loving reunion between the Creator and the created. In a special way God makes Himself available to us during the Sabbath hours so that we may enjoy total spiritual involvement with Him. Obviously, such a depth of involvement presupposes our full attention. God asks that we not be preoccupied with the humdrum monotony of our daily routine. Correctly viewed, our ordinary activities are infinitely insignificant in comparison with the joyous fulfillment that God wants us to experience on this special day.

God reminds us each Sabbath of His infinite creative power. He reminds us that we were created in His image, and therefore we also have infinite potential for expansion. If God could accomplish such a colossal achievement as the creation of a world in just six days, surely He can enable us to achieve the heights for which we were created.

The Sabbath is the summit from which the landscape of God's universe can be seen to have no permanently limiting horizons. It is the pinnacle from which all previous admonition appears in perspective. God is infinite, and man—when he reaches out in grateful acknowledge-

"If we find Christ tender and loving and the law harsh and exacting, we need to reevaluate our understanding of the law."

ment to grasp the outstretched hand of God—shares in His infinity.

From such a vantage point the previous commands of God acquire a significance and clarity unseen before. The foothills that lie at the base of this tremendous promontory afford only hazy views of a segment of God's greatness. But from the vantage point of the Sabbath we can see the utter futility of trying to portray Him through representative objects. We stand amazed that we could ever lightly employ words about God. The majesty suggested in this commandment shows words to be hopelessly inadequate. We become aware that the first three commandments have been but safeguards to ensure that we have the pleasure of this one uninhibited look at God. Having gained insight into our relationship to God, we can look intelligently at man and our relationship to one another.

Despite what has been said in the Bible, in one sense we know very little about God. However, we do know of a certainty that He loves. If the Bible says anything, it says that God loves us—loves us with a love that defies human comprehension. We also know that God's love is manifested through acts of creation. And more than that, because He loves, He allows created beings to share in creative activity. God asks that we love, so that love might lead to creativity, and that our love might allow others the right to fulfill their creative potential. By so living we are but following the example of Him in whose image we are created.

Man expresses himself in varied creative roles. But the epitome of creativity, which personifies all creative potential, is the experience of parenthood. A child who does not have a deep appreciation of his origin will fail to comprehend his loving and creative role as a human. It is imperative that he realize that he is the product of a love relationship that reached its fruition in the creative act leading to his birth. Having such insight into his own identity, he should then act accordingly. Being the product of love,

he must respond with love. That is the essence of the fifth commandment.

It is interesting that only two of the Ten Commandments are positive—the fourth and the fifth. All the others are stated negatively. But in these two we are asked to "remember" and to "honor." God is here dramatically illustrating that we must remember our origin: first, we are from God Himself; second, we are from our earthly parents. Then we are to honor those origins by fulfilling the role intrinsic to our design.

Commandments four and five concern institutions that antedate the Fall. In fact, they are the only institutions that bear the stamp of Edenic splendor. These two commandments are to be enjoyed in their fullness; the others are but safeguards to ensure that we not fail of *complete* enjoyment.

As we have noted, man's purpose for existence is to love. Love leads to creative activity. And love allows creative fulfillment in others. The last five commandments provide a rational and structured warning against a hierarchy of pitfalls that by their very nature contravene these principles. It is not without significance that killing heads the list.

Killing is the most unloving act available to man, and also the most uncreative. It is the opposite of creation. It robs its victim of all creative potential by robbing him of existence. Killing is diametrically opposed to man's purpose for living, so it ranks first on God's list of proscribed behavior.

Moving through this great revelation of God's will, we come to the command against adultery. The adulterer does not deprive his fellow participant of life. But he does adulterate—dilute—what should be the most beautiful and rewarding creative experience in which mankind can engage. The sin of adultery is in not loving adequately, not experiencing the fullness of creativity to be found in the marriage union, and preventing the other person from attaining that same fullness of experience.

We come to the area of theft. Love is not selfish, but stealing is. Stealing is

terribly unimaginative, uncreative. To steal is to drop from the creative realm to the realm of the material. What is more, the innocent victim is distracted from any creative pursuit that he may be following, and is likewise dragged down to the material realm. Again, such activity stands in stark contrast to the beautiful purpose for which we were created.

We come next to more subtle forms of failure in creative loving. It may seem a small thing to tell lies about our associates. It certainly doesn't carry the stigma of, say, murder. But it certainly isn't an expression of love. It certainly isn't creative. And, like stealing, it distracts the victim from creative pursuits and forces him down to the mundane reality of saving his reputation.

The most subtle weakness—and the most widespread—is coveting. It seems so harmless to look and dream. But coveting is like cancer. It slowly eats away at us, preventing us from getting on with the joyous experience of living. Instead of expanding the time and talents that we already have, we stagnate. We fail to develop our potential because we fail to recognize it as potential. And in a subtle way we deprive the person whose possessions or abilities we covet of the depth of friendship with us he or she might like to develop. Once again we see that violating the commandment prevents us from loving, creating, and allowing to create.

Having thus viewed God's law, we see that it is not restrictive. As James points out, it is a law of liberty. As we note the amazing logic in its progression of thought, we cannot doubt that it was designed by an intelligence far surpassing our own. But most of all, we cannot fail to see the concern, the love, and the grace of God. Instead of being in contrast to Jesus, it makes Him all the more attractive. And beyond all else, it portrays life as the glorious thing that God originally intended it to be. ■

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Laodicea— the self-satisfied church



by Orley Berg

About forty miles southeast of Philadelphia is the site of Laodicea, last of the seven churches to which the letters of Revelation were addressed. The road today passes through valleys and undulating hills that must have looked much the same in John's day as they do in ours. It is not difficult to envision oneself back in the early centuries, for customs, too, have changed very little. Herds of goats frequently block the road or scamper to roadside knolls. Farmers with their donkeys move leisurely beside carts carrying farm crops to the village market. In Roman times this rich farming country contributed to Laodicea's wealth.

Passing through the little village of Denizli, the present-day traveler approaches the mound on which ancient Laodicea stood. The city was one of sixteen founded by Seleucus I Nicator, a

general of Alexander the Great, and formed an important part of the Seleucid Empire. Like Thyatira, it served as a guardian of the ancient trade routes, and as such was a city of considerable commercial importance.

Although the area has not been extensively excavated, gaping ruins on the site date to Roman times. In its heyday Laodicea boasted two theaters and a stadium, usually thronged with pleasure seekers, for the city was noted for its wealth and luxury. The old Roman theater lies in the hollow of the city mound, its rows of stone benches grown over with grass and weeds.

The Saviour's accusations against the Laodicean church are based on prominent characteristics of the city and its people. He declares, "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17). Laodicea

was a tremendously wealthy city, and as such developed a remarkable self-sufficiency. In A.D. 60 the city was hit by a devastating earthquake, but in her fierce independence she refused the financial aid voted her by the Roman senate, preferring instead to rebuild with her own resources. This self-sufficient attitude obviously pervaded the church as well, for the Saviour urges the members there to recognize their spiritual poverty and buy of Him the true gold.

An important factor in Laodicea's monetary success was her manufacturing industry, a chief product of which was garments made of an unusual black wool for which the city became famous. These garments were exported to all parts of the Mediterranean world. Romans normally wore the white toga, symbol of victory and high honor, but in Laodicea the local black garments were

universally worn. Thus the Saviour counsels the church there to obtain from Him "white raiment" to cover their unperceived nakedness. The perfect character of Jesus, symbolized in Scripture by a spotless robe, is no doubt here intended.

Among the scattered remains still visible at the site of Laodicea are those of the luxurious Roman baths in which the affluent lounged at their ease in the lukewarm water. Laodicea's water supply came by aqueduct from springs six miles away at the neighboring city of Hierapolis. Remnants of the ancient aqueduct, including the pipes that carried the warm water, still stand.

The message to the church of Laodicea is most critical of her lukewarm condition. These words become even more significant as we turn to Laodicea's sister city, Hierapolis. Here the waters of the Lycus River tributaries still leave limestone deposits that have the appearance of a frozen cascade in which the foaming waters have been suddenly petrified. In ancient times these warm mineral springs gave rise to a world-famous medical school at Laodicea. Associated with the school was a temple dedicated to a Greek god of medicine called the "Great Physician." It was this school that developed the famous Phrygian eyepowder, known throughout the ancient world. Made of dried mud from the thermal springs, and then emulsified with mineral oils and chemicals, the concoction dried into a fine powder. A healing poultice for the eyes was made of this powder mixed with water. Thousands in ancient times journeyed to this resort to be benefited by the eyesalve, the mineral waters, and the hot and lukewarm baths.

When we consider Laodicea's wealth, the black-garment industry, and the famous ointment for the eyes, we cannot fail to see the significance of Jesus' letter to the church members in that city. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with

eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (verses 15-18).

Laodicea's sister city, Hierapolis, is today, as anciently, a pleasure resort where modern hotels cater to tourists from distant lands. They come to relax in swimming pools of the famous lukewarm mineral water. The water is also used for drinking, although the first impulse is to spew it out because of its nauseating taste and temperature, reminding the visitor of the Saviour's words "Because thou art lukewarm . . . I will spue thee out of my mouth" (verse 16).

The traveler to Hierapolis today finds a number of ruins from Roman times. Fronting the old Roman road is the massive arch of Domitian, who reigned from A.D. 81 to 96. It was this emperor who banished the beloved John to Patmos. John was released only after Domitian's death.

On a hill above the town are excavated remnants of an old church that was constructed over the traditional site of the tomb of Philip, one of the original twelve apostles of the New Testament church. According to generally accepted tradition, Philip labored in upper Asia and in A.D. 54 was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified at Hierapolis.

In its prophetic sense, the letter to the Laodiceans takes us into the final period of the church, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries or the period following the great awakening. It is God's last love letter to the church—His final appeal. Therefore it should be a message of special interest and concern to the church today, particularly to those who serve as its spiritual leaders.


The description given of Laodicea by the Master is that of a church that has lost its spirit and passion. Prosperity and materialism have robbed it of its fervor. It can boast of organization; it has all the machinery of religion and goes through the exercises of worship, but it has lost its vital connection with the Source of all power. And saddest of all is the fact that the church is unaware of her loss. She complacently considers herself rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing. Yet in reality she is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Like Samson, who after being shorn of his hair "wist not that the Lord was departed from him" (Judges 16:20), so the Laodicean church does not recognize the absence of God.

The Great Physician, who has diagnosed Laodicea's condition, prescribes

the cure. Her perishable, paltry wealth must be exchanged for the gold of faith and love. Her self-righteous rags must give way to the garment of Christ's righteousness woven in the loom of heaven without one thread of human devising. Her vaunted eyesalve must be given up for the ointment of the Spirit's clear spiritual perception so that she may see herself as she really is.

Many commentators have pointed out that although the Saviour's sternest rebukes and condemnation are directed to Laodicea, so also does He reserve for her the most glorious and precious promises given to any of the seven churches. God's last message to the church is not primarily one of condemnation, but of love. He wounds that He might heal. He rebukes and chastens in order to bring His people to repentance.

The Saviour closes: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). The gracious invitation is perhaps best illustrated in Holman Hunt's immortal painting, "The Light of the World." The original, dating back to 1853, can be seen today in Keble College, Oxford, while a considerably larger copy completed by Hunt in 1893 stands today in St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Hunt graphically pictures Jesus in a night scene with a lighted lantern in His left hand, knocking with His right hand on a door representing the human heart. Jesus does not force an entrance; He simply stands and knocks and pleads. He will enter only if the door is opened, and this the occupant must do. Each must make a definite, conscious decision to act, for the door will not open of itself. To open the door means to welcome Jesus in as Saviour and Lord of the life. This is what Jesus invites each Laodicean to do.

To those who respond by letting Him in, the promise is, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (verse 21). Thus will God have a people upon earth prepared to enter His glorious kingdom at His coming. 

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Orley Berg is an executive editor of MINISTRY.

Yom Kippur and judgment day

by Desmond Ford

The most solemn occasion in Israel's prophetic calendar was Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement. Other holy days in the Jewish ceremonial year included feasting; but this convocation was the annual official fast. No work was to be done on this “sabbath of sabbaths.” Instead men “afflicted their souls” by penitential prayer, believing that on that day Heaven was investigating their lives prior to the decision of the judgment for life or death.¹

The Day of Atonement was a sealing time. “May God Almighty seal you to a new year” was a common Jewish greeting as Yom Kippur dawned. Not only was it at the beginning of the new year, which came nine days earlier, but this special ceremony also marked the ushering in of the jubilee every half century. It also was the precursor of the Feast of Tabernacles, the feast marked by unparalleled rejoicing. Once the solemnities of the Day of Atonement were over, all was unexcelled joy and happiness.

Another unique feature of Yom Kippur was the scapegoat. The original Hebrew term refers to Azazel, a recognized name for Satan, the chief of the demons. This identification is strengthened by the fact that only “when Aaron . . . finished making expiation for the sanctuary” (Lev. 16:20, N.E.B.) did the goat for Azazel figure in the ritual. It was not slain but sent into the wilderness, which was regarded as the dwelling place of wicked spirits. As the Israelites watched the scapegoat disappear from the camp into the desert, they believed that their sins were no more. It had been demonstrated in figure that Satan, not God, was the instigator of all evil, pain, and death.

Scripture devotes more space to the Day of Atonement than to the record of Creation. Of the uses of the key term “atonement” in connection with the tabernacle, more than half occur in Leviticus, and the largest cluster of these are found in the sixteenth chapter—the chapter describing the ritual for Yom Kippur. Repeatedly we read that the

atonement was made “because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel.” The altar of the courtyard, the holy place, the Most Holy, and all the people were on that day “cleansed” from the guilt resulting from “all their sins.” (See Lev. 16:16, 19, 33, 34.)

Never was there a better parable of the great judgment day than on this occasion. For one time during the year the whole of Israel ceased all worldly activities to stand penitentially before the Most High. Their only hope lay in the blood sprinkled by the priest, their representative and mediator. Any who did not join in fasting and prayer were “cut off,” and as the goats for Jehovah and Azazel became the center of attention, all the worshipers asked themselves, “To which of these opposing supernatural powers am I reckoned as joined this day?” Would one be accounted among “the seed of the woman” or “the seed of the serpent”? Was one to be numbered with Abel, or with Cain; with those who call on the name of the Lord, or those who by their lives despise Him? Each worshiper, though standing in a great assembly, found himself alone as he pondered whether he would be sealed for life or for death.

In only one other place in Scripture do we find the key terms of the Day of Atonement all linked together—sins, transgressions, iniquities, atonement, sanctuary, Most Holy Place—and that is in the book of Daniel. This apocalyptic book is preeminently a book of judgment, with each chapter revealing God judging wickedness and rewarding righteousness, punishing the proud and vindicating those who worship in true humility. Central to Daniel's presentation, both in its narrative portions (chaps. 1:1, 2; 5:2, 3, 5) and in its chief prophecies (chaps. 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; 11:31; 12:11), is the theme of the sanctuary. Actually, the sanctuary is under discussion in this book even where it is not immediately discerned. For example, the tests regarding worship mentioned in chapters three and six, as well as the onslaught on

“the times and the law” (chap. 7:25, R.S.V.), concern that holy law of God, the center of the entire sanctuary ritual. Likewise, although the tenth chapter does not mention the sanctuary by name, it is present in the trouble the Israelites were having over the rebuilding of the Temple at the time of their restoration. Daniel is fasting and praying, according to chapter ten, because of the hindrances to the restoration of the sanctuary being encountered by the returned exiles. Similarly the prophet's prayer in the ninth chapter is an impassioned plea that Jehovah will cause His face “to shine upon . . . [His] sanctuary that is desolate” (verse 17).

It is in this book also that we read the promise of the cleansing, or vindicating, of the sanctuary. Daniel 8:14, which contains this promise, is undoubtedly the key verse of the book, the climax of the symbolism given in vision to Daniel.² Certain rabbis rendered the concept expressed in Daniel 8:14 as “then shall atonement be made for the sanctuary.”³ The Hebrew verb translated “cleansed” in the King James Version, and “justified,” “vindicated,” “restored,” and “made victorious” in other versions, sets forth what many commentators on Daniel have acknowledged to be the theme of the book—vindication, both of Jehovah and of His worship and worshipers.⁴ Daniel 8:14 is the only verse of the book that contains the actual word, though the idea is found in every chapter. Some, in translating the book of Daniel, have deemed it appropriate to use the term even where the Hebrew word is not present.⁵

How interesting it is to discover that the only time Christ put His finger on a specific Old Testament passage and instructed His people to understand it was with reference to this passage of Daniel 8:13, 14. (See Matthew 24:15, which paraphrases Daniel 8:13 and 9:24-27.) Paul and John, also, in their setting forth of eschatological matters, draw from the same passage. (See 2 Thess. 2:3, 4; Rev. 11:2). The same two New Testament

“The only time Christ put His finger on a specific Old Testament passage and instructed His people to understand it was with reference to Daniel 8:13, 14.”

writers draw on Day of Atonement imagery in speaking of justification (which is, in a sense, an anticipation of the last judgment, bestowing upon the believer God's verdict of ultimate acceptance because of Christ's shed blood), and the judgment itself (which is the ratification of justification and which is conditional on perseverance). (See Romans 3:25, which in the original Greek refers to the mercy seat prominent in the Day of Atonement ritual, and Revelation 11:19; 15:5; 8:1-4; 20:1-3, which also draw heavily on the imagery of Yom Kippur.)

Immediately following the prophetic chain of symbols concerning Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Antichrist comes Daniel 7:9-13, describing the opening of heavenly records and the divine court sitting in judgment. Similarly Daniel 8:14 comes in an identically corresponding position following references to Babylon (verse 1), Medo-Persia (verses 3, 20), Greece (verses 5, 21), Rome, and Antichrist (expressed by a symbol similar to the little horn representing Antichrist in chapter seven; see verses 9-13 and 23-25, and compare with verse 23 the prophecy regarding Rome in Deuteronomy 28:49, 50). *Thus the cleansing of the sanctuary, or its vindication, set forth in Daniel 8:14 parallels the judgment scene of Daniel 7:9-13.* Similarly the very last verse of Daniel, which alludes to the “days” of Daniel 8:14, and which is the climax of Gabriel's explanation of the Daniel 8 vision, also speaks of the judgment at the end of time when the righteous will receive their allotted destiny. Many commentators have seen in Daniel 12:13 (as also in Daniel 12:1, which refers again to the heavenly records) a reference to the last judgment. (Compare the wording of Psalm 1:5.)

Although in Daniel 8:16 Gabriel was instructed to make Daniel understand the vision concerning the sanctuary, he did not complete that commission in his initial visit. As recorded in Daniel 9:22-24, his next visit was intended to give further light on what had hitherto been

left unexplained—the nature of the cleansing of the sanctuary. Thus he admonishes the prophet to consider what is called preeminently and repeatedly in Daniel “the vision,” namely the vision of Daniel 8. (Compare Daniel 8:26; 10:1, 14.)

Let us turn to Gabriel's continuing explanation of Daniel 8:14: “I have now come out to give you wisdom and understanding. . . . Consider the word and understand the vision. Seventy weeks of years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place” (Dan. 9:22-24, R.S.V.).

This, with the inclusion of verse 26, which was the term for the sanctuary as a whole, is the only passage in the Bible that incorporates in one place all the key terms of the Day of Atonement described in Leviticus 16—sins, transgressions, iniquities, atonement, Most Holy Place. Other passages of the Word at times use as many as three of these together (such as Psalm 51:1-3, a Day of Atonement prayer) but only Daniel 9:22-26 has such complete linkage with the central ritual of the Jewish tabernacle and its description in Leviticus.

At this point a question immediately occurs to Bible students: Does not Daniel 9:22-26 point to the atonement on Calvary rather than to the great judgment day? Certainly the cross of Christ is in focus here, but because Christ Himself could quote from Daniel 9:24-27 in connection with the end of the world (see Mark 13:14), we must also inquire whether the atoning work of Christ at the first advent is the only thing in view in Daniel 9:22-26.

The key lies in the fact that the Old Testament views the kingdom of God as a single event. The prophets did not distinguish clearly between the first and second advents. Even the New Testament itself sets forth Christ's first coming as the manifestation and arrival of

the kingdom of heaven. Scholars these days are familiar with such language as inaugurated eschatology (the first advent) and consummated eschatology (the Second Advent). Daniel 9:22-26, like a photograph revealing a double exposure, sums up the atoning work of Christ as it was fulfilled at the cross and as it is also fulfilled in our High Priest's final work of atonement in the judgment.⁶ Only as a result of the latter will sin actually become no more, transgression and iniquity be finished, and everlasting righteousness without a remaining vestige of evil be ultimately established. Simultaneously all prophetic vision will have been sealed by its fulfillment, and the dwelling place of God will be set up in the midst of redeemed Israel as typified by the anointing of the tabernacle in the long ago.⁷ Concerning all these glorious things we shall say more in our next article.

¹ Leviticus 23:32 speaks of a sabbath rest much stricter than was required on other ceremonial sabbaths. See also verses 25-31 of the same chapter. Jewish writers from ancient times saw in the day a mirror of the last judgment.

² “Hereafter, all is explanation. . . . In the third vision the imagery is laid aside. . . . The fourth vision, the last and longest of them all, drops the symbolism entirely.”—S. B. Frost, *Old Testament Apocalyptic—Its Origin and Growth*, p. 183.

³ Calvin's *Commentary on Daniel* says concerning Daniel 8:14: “Some translate it—‘then the sanctuary shall be expiated.’”—Volume 2, p. 110.

⁴ See, for example, E. Heaton, *Daniel*, pages 35, 195, 197, 212. Cf. R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 781.

⁵ See K. Taylor, *The Living Bible*, Daniel 7:22.

⁶ See such commentators as Leupold, Keil, Kliefoth, et cetera. James Barr, writing on Daniel in the revised Peake's *Commentary*, says the reference of Daniel 9:24 is to “the eradication of sin, the completion of atonement, the establishment of an everlasting right order and a holy sanctuary.” Fausset, a more conservative writer, speaks similarly. See James F. Barr, *Commentary*, on Daniel 9:24-27.

⁷ Keil, Fausset, et cetera, recognize in the final promise of Daniel 9:24 the antitype of the original sanctuary anointing, namely the presence of God forever among His people. Thus the New Testament, a perfect cube, is described in terms reminiscent of the Holy of Holies, where dwelled the Shekinah.

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FROM THE EDITORS

Creation and the Cults. What is missing in the current practice of Christianity to cause bizarre groups to flourish?

In our first segment on this subject, we examined the current proliferation of bizarre cults, and the potentially negative reaction to religion in general caused by such atrocities as Jonestown. We dealt with three major characteristics that should distinguish authentic historical Christianity from the cults—motivation by love rather than force, reliance on the authority of Scripture, and acceptance of the centrality and deity of Christ.

In this article, we focus our attention on just one major doctrine of Christianity that makes the church a bulwark of strength and stability when believed and taught. A major question raised by the episode at Jonestown is that of the existence of evil and the companion question of evolutionism versus creationism. Current liberal thinking, based on the inevitable results of belief in evolution, is that there is no such thing as sin and certainly no father of sin, or devil. Just leave man alone and let him revert to natural goodness, and everything will be all right, we've been told. But at Jonestown it didn't work that way—the evil and the devil came through in a tragic demonstration of what is wrong with a philosophy of life that displaces the Creator as the originator and sustainer of man's existence.

Until the past hundred years or so, Christianity was virtually in complete agreement on man's origin. Almost without exception, they held that the opening chapters of Genesis presented a literal account of God, through divine fiat, creating our world and man. Human beings, made in the image of God, were seen as the most noble example of His creative power. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, emerging science dazzled the public mind and began playing an increasingly important role in influencing society. As the evolutionary theory developed, Christianity's desire to maintain intellectual respectability gradually led to a patchwork of varying accommodations between Scripture and evolutionary theory. Many felt that the Biblical doctrine of Creation could not stand against the impressive array of charts, diagrams, fossils, and reasonings that seemed to teach otherwise.

Today, not only the cults but major segments of Christianity are diluting and compromising the Creation doctrine by

believing that man owes his existence, not to the spoken word of a divine Creator, but to a God-inspired and/or God-directed random act of cosmic chance. Theistic evolution, deistic evolution, and progressive creationism are examples of the various creation models that are believed and promoted by some Christian thinkers and groups.

Since a person's philosophy and belief regarding the origin of the earth and man directly influences his value system and life style, the doctrine of Creation, as taught by the Scriptures, is of ultimate importance. The moment a person gives up the concept of a supernatural Being who brought man into existence by supernatural means, he is robbed of a personal sense of belonging and security, and is left to drift blindly along the pathway of doubt and confusion. Martin Marty, professor of religious history at the University of Chicago, is quite correct in attributing the growth of cults to the frustrations of rootless people. This age truly is a rootless age, desperately searching for its "roots." People everywhere seem to be without a sense of direction or responsibility, and are turning to authoritarian and senseless dogmas and cultism in a desperate attempt to find some security and release from fear.

God at least must have thought the scriptural doctrine of origins basic to man's security and stability, for He started the Bible with the words "In the beginning God created . . ." The first two chapters of Genesis are not where they are by accident. The Designer placed them there for a purpose. Destroy this concept, this majestic truth of creation, and multitudes are led to believe that desire is the highest law, license is liberty, and man's accountability is only to himself.

We believe that the greatest single reason for our world's present chaotic condition is man's failure to sense his responsibility to God. And what system of belief, which is taught in nearly every public school from Tokyo to Tallahassee, has done more than the evolutionary theory to bring about this attitude?

After all, if man exists on earth as the result of an inexplicable process of accidental events—that is, if he just happened—then life really doesn't have ultimate meaning. It is, as Shakespeare

expressed it, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." If such a world view is correct, is it any wonder that freakish violence has become increasingly commonplace, that survival by fair means or foul (whether in business or on the freeway or in politics) has become the name of the game? Is it any wonder that conventional standards of morality are increasingly flouted? Why not, if there is no rational foundation for value judgments?

Nor is it any wonder that in such a climate, cults offering stability within the group have flourished. Insulated by the subculture of the cult from the meaninglessness of the world at large, followers find their longing for a sense of purpose fulfilled in the authority and goals of the organization. Unfortunately, most simply trade one form of unreality for another, and mindless tragedies such as Jonestown are the result.

The historic position of the church is that back of man's existence is the divine Creator. Man is not a pawn of capricious events beyond his control. Instead, he is part and parcel of a grand design—temporarily flawed, but ultimately triumphant. Far from being an orphan in the vast reaches of an uncaring universe, he is the special object of God's redemptive love and concern. What meaning and purpose this concept gives to life! What an answer to the cults and to the emptiness of society! God made man and has a plan for his life!

The doctrine of Creation is the foundation principle of all life, physical and spiritual. It is the foundation stone upon which all else is built. Note carefully the first chapter of Genesis, where the action of God is emphasized. There is no hint of any evolutionary processes. There is no allusion to any elements of the heavens or the earth that came into existence by accident and continued to evolve by some unknown, unsponsored means. Verse after verse in this first chapter declares that "God created," "the spirit of God moved," "God said," "God divided," "God called," "God blessed," and "God saw." How significant it is that the opening chapters of Scripture reveal God taking action. It is God who is creating; it is God who is making; it is God who is doing. God wanted man never to forget that important principle.

It seems significant to us that the same

chapters of Genesis that bring so clearly to light God's creative activity in producing man also speak of the Sabbath as a sacred day commemorating the Creatorship of God. Centuries later God saw fit to remind man again of this important connection. In the heart of His ten-commandment law He instructed, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Ex. 20:8-11).

Is it a coincidence that the same society that has so largely turned from God as Creator has likewise largely forgotten the day He ordained to fasten their attention weekly on His creative power? We think not.

As one reads through Scripture, he will note that the significant difference between the true God and all the false gods is His creative power. The argument for God's supremacy is consistently based upon His creative power. "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things" (Isa. 40:25, 26). In considering the similarities between God and His creatures, His capacity to create stands out as unique and different.

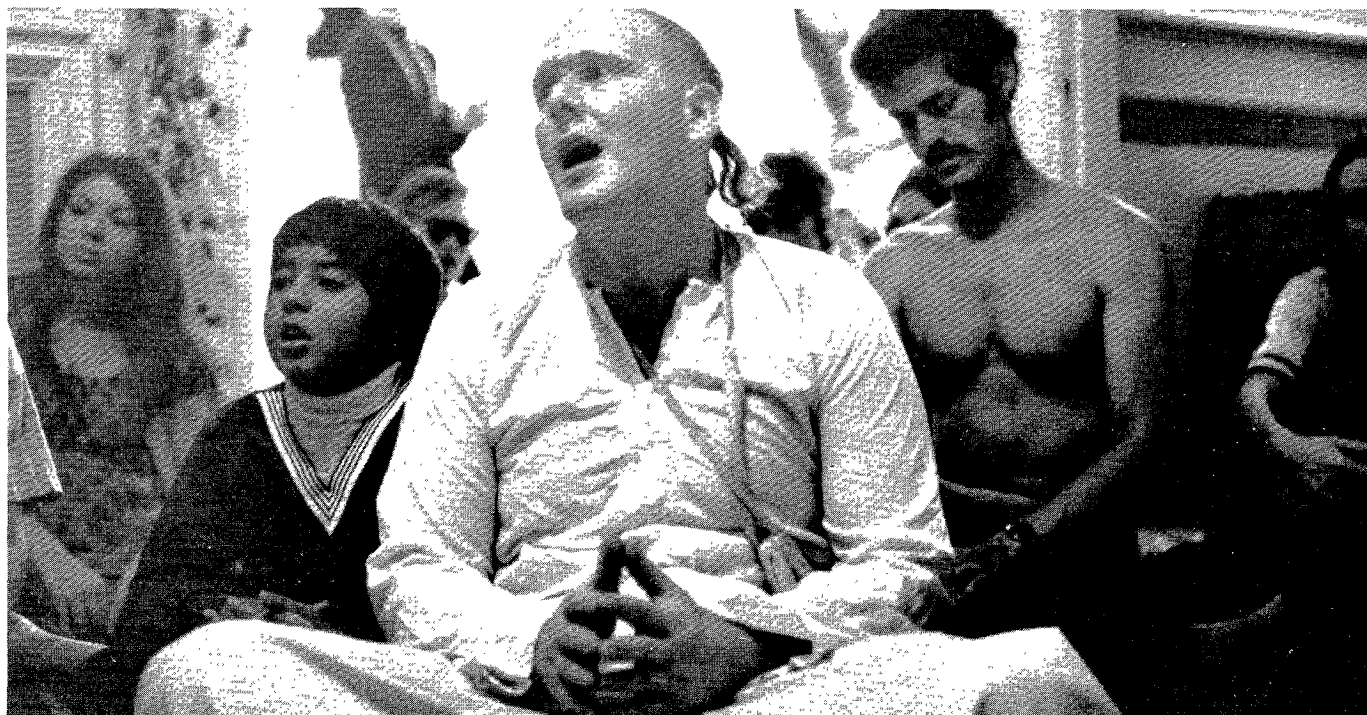
Science discovers; it never creates! Man may reason, develop, invent, and accomplish amazing feats, but these are only shadows of God's image. Man may be able to split an atom, but he cannot create one. To command into existence something from nothing is one ability that God has never shared. For man to explain how God produced even a one-cell amoeba would be a thousand times more difficult than for an ant to solve the secrets of the atomic bomb. All man can do is accept God's power and creative ability by faith. What a tragedy, then, that man, in his rebellious state, boldly takes a blasphemous attitude that the Bible is incomprehensible, and proceeds to fill libraries with books describing how life began, leaving God completely out of the picture.

God is the source not only of man's physical existence but of his spiritual life as well. To restore the image of God in man through the new-birth experience is a work of creation. The apostle Paul recognized that David's words, "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Ps. 51:10), were more than mere poetry. Paul himself echoed David's thought in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation" (R.S.V.). This is a work that no finite man can do. Only the God who formed man of the dust of the ground can say, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Eze. 36:26).

The Bible opens with the proclamation of God's creative power at the beginning of the earth. The predictive words of Revelation 14:7 give evidence likewise that in the final days of earth's history a sweeping announcement will go "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (verse 6) to "fear God, and give glory to him; . . . and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." This command is designed to counteract the prevailing conditions on earth so vividly described by Paul in Romans 1:21-28: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. . . . [They] changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator. . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind."

What a marvelous thing it would be if churches could recapture their former unity on this basic doctrine of Creation, and give a clear, concerted call to the world's inhabitants to worship God as the Creator! If the churches would unite solidly on this one grand doctrine, what a force for stability it would prove to be! What tremendous improvement we would see in the aimless social conditions so prevalent in our world!

(To be continued.)



SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Syntropy and Entropy. Why does continued use wear out a machine, but strengthen and build up a living body? Scientists differ.

Creationsists have often discussed the principle of increasing entropy (the second law of thermodynamics, or the pervasive tendency for organized forms of matter to disintegrate gradually into lower and lower levels of organization). A city, if it were deserted, would eventually disintegrate. The metal in the city would rust, the mortar in the buildings would crack, the wood would rot, et cetera. In time, less and less differentiation would exist until, if the area were a closed system (no new energy was brought in to rebuild the city), all the molecules would be evenly distributed within a given area. Diffusion—the tendency for molecules to distribute themselves throughout an area—would occur.

For example, if a bottle of perfume is opened up in a sealed room, the perfume molecules, although at first concentrated in the bottle, will gradually spread outward from the bottle until the number of molecules per cubic centimeter found in the perfume bottle also will be found in all the areas of the room itself (Anthony, 1963, pp. 35, 36). Likewise, diffusion always results, if enough time elapses, in an even scattering of solute particles among solvent molecules. Given enough time, even solid objects break down and diffuse. Rocks, land, and other solid objects are worn down by the movement of water, solid particles are moved by wind and by the growth of plants, to name a few of the more common methods.

Entropy also applies to energy. Energy diffuses until it is equally dispersed. For example, if a hot piece of metal is dropped into a bucket of water, in time it will lose its heat to the water until the water becomes the same temperature as that inside the room. The room, in turn, loses its heat to the outside rooms (McCormick, 1965, pp. 288, 289). This diffusion would theoretically continue until the energy is equally dispersed throughout the universe. Even in energy transformations directed by man, some energy is forever lost. As in all energy transformations, there is a "tendency for some of the energy to be transformed to nonreversible heat energy" (Morris, 1963, p. 33).

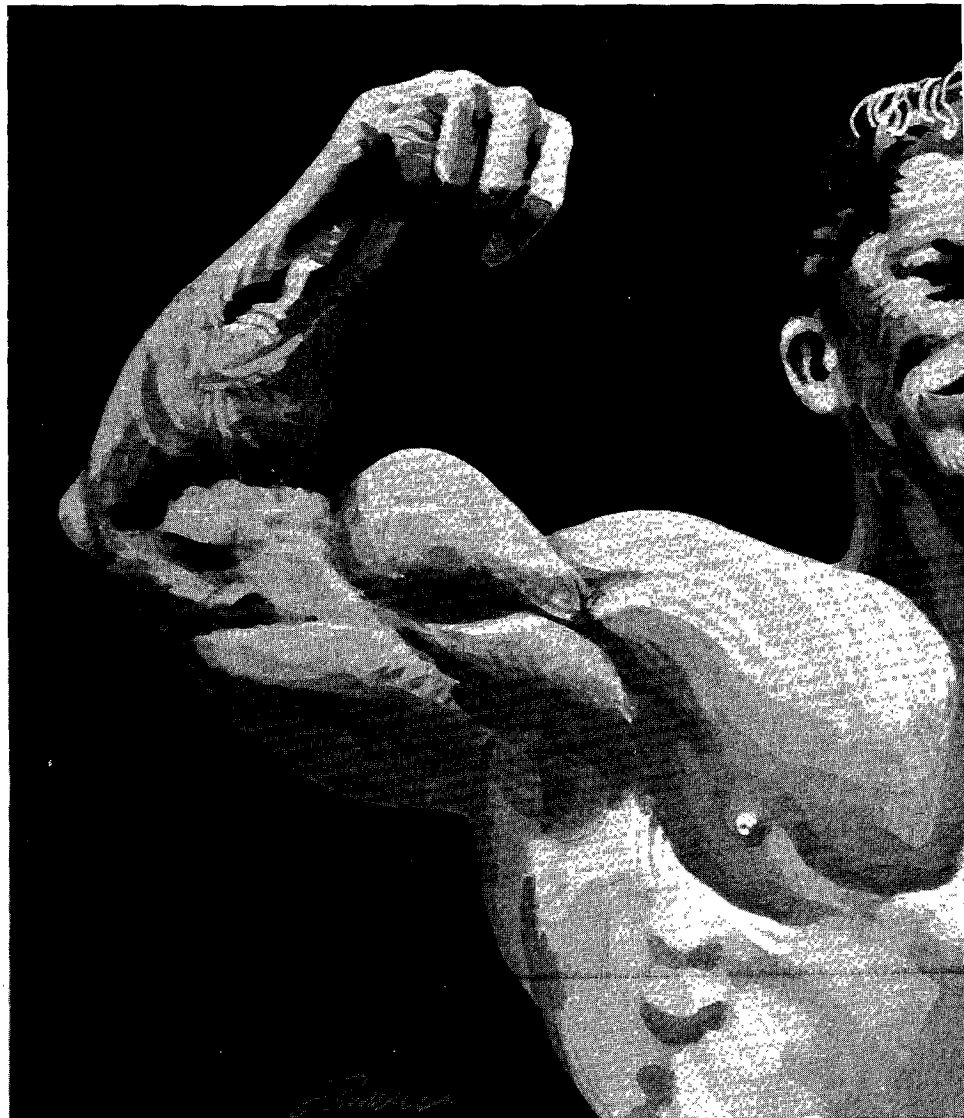
However, in the life process we commonly find what seems to be a decrease of entropy occurring. Living organisms

by Jerry Bergman

cause increased organization, both in their own world and sometimes even in the world around them, reducing diffusion and in essence working to oppose the universal tendency toward energy and matter equilibrium. On the basis of the evolutionary hypotheses it is then postulated that a process of self-transformation has occurred, resulting in the conversion of a primordial disordered state, via increasing complexity, to a highly ordered state, and eventually the evolution from amoeba to mammal, and from mammal to man.

A main difference between amoeba and man is increased complexity, requiring some mechanism to counteract the second law of thermodynamics. In other words, there must exist something, a "force," to counteract the universal movement toward equal distribution of all matter and energy.

One attempt to deal with this was proposed by Albert Szent-Gyorgyi. Szent-Gyorgyi, an eminent scientist born in Hungary in 1893, was educated at the University of Budapest and at Cambridge. He has the unique distinction of being awarded two Nobel prizes for his scientific research (1937 and 1955).



JACK PARQUE

Szent-Gyorgyi is now the director of research at the Institute for Muscle Research in Massachusetts and has written a number of books on his research.

Szent-Gyorgyi postulates that there exists what he calls the "principle" of *syntropy*, or "negative entropy." Realizing that entropy is a universal force that causes organized forms to disintegrate gradually into lower and lower levels of organization, he pictures the world as, in essence, a great machine running down and wearing out. The concept of syntropy postulates the existence of the opposite force, a force that causes living things to reach "higher and higher levels of organization, order and dynamic harmony" (Vargiu, 1977, p. 14). The basic problem as stated by Szent-Gyorgyi is "that there is some basic difference between the living and

nonliving . . . as scientists we cannot believe the laws of the universe could lose their validity at the surface of our skin," pointing out that the law of entropy, for some reason, seems not to prevail in living systems.

Although entropy is increasing, another force obviously is also operating. Thus we have the problem of the tendency for the world to disintegrate gradually into lower and lower levels of organization and the converse fact that "putting things together in a meaningful way . . . is one of the basic features of nature" (page 19). The contrast between entropy in the nonliving world and syntropy in the living world is discussed by Szent-Gyorgyi as follows:

"Inanimate nature stops at the low-level organization of simple molecules. But living systems go on and combine

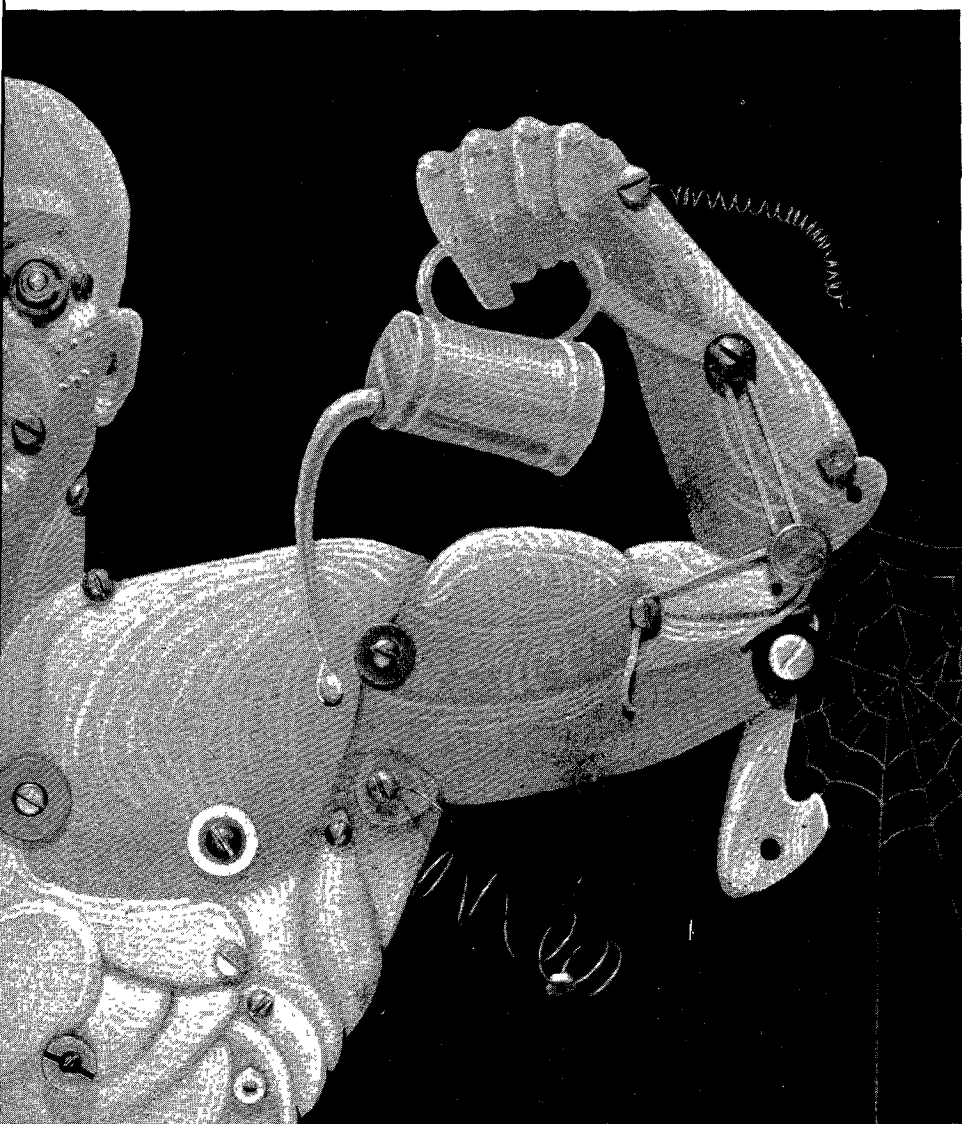
molecules to form macromolecules, macromolecules to form organelles (such as nuclei, mitochondria, chloroplasts, ribosomes, and membranes), and eventually put these all together to form 'higher organisms' and increasingly more complex individuals . . . at every step, new, more complex and subtle qualities are created, and so in the end we are faced with properties which have no parallel in the inanimate world."—Pages 15, 16.

In postulating his theory of syntropy, Szent-Gyorgyi, perhaps unintentionally, brings forth one of the strongest arguments for creationism—the fact that a body organ is useless until it is completely perfected. The hypothesized law of "survival of the fittest" would generally select against any mutations until a large number of mutations have already occurred to produce a complete and functional structure, after which natural selection would then theoretically select for the organism with the completed organ. This difficulty is summed up by Szent-Gyorgyi:

"'Herring gulls' have a red patch on their beak. This red patch has an important meaning, for the gull feeds its babies by going out fishing and swallowing the fish it has caught. Then, on coming home, the hungry baby gull knocks at the red spot. This elicits a reflex of regurgitation in Mamma, and the baby takes the fish from her gullet. All this may sound very simple, but it involves a whole series of most complicated chain reactions with a horribly complex underlying nervous mechanism of the knocking baby and that of the regurgitating mother. All this had to be developed simultaneously, which, as a random mutation, has the probability of zero. I am unable to approach this problem without supposing an innate 'drive' in living matter to perfect itself."—Pages 18, 19.

Syntropy is similar to earlier theories that have been termed "vitalism" (Morris, 1966, p. 34, and Szent-Gyorgyi, 1977, p. 19). Consequently Szent-Gyorgyi's theory has been criticized as being little more than a variation of vitalism.

All nonliving "organisms" wear away until they "break" through use, called "normal wear." A new car progressively wears out, and eventually the car has to be replaced. Even if a car is not used, it rusts, rots, and decays from just sitting. The use of any mechanical unit causes the unit's eventual destruction. But use of living organisms, in time, causes them (unless other factors, as illness, intervene) to *build up*, to become stronger (DeVries, 1970), actually to improve



themselves as the physical-fitness advocates today have abundantly stressed. Inactivity, though, causes organisms to decay, tear down, and in time "break down." If an arm were put in a plaster cast for several years, it would "wither away," becoming thin, emaciated, weak, and useless. One of the major problems for living organisms is, not activity, but inactivity. The aging process is a different factor, evidently the accumulations of misuse, disease, stress, et cetera. Activity, in most cases, slows down the normal aging process. Thus use *tears down* nonlife, but *builds up* life.

Szent-Gyorgyi states he plans to spend the rest of his life working on the above problem, because he feels, in essence, the present evolutionary mechanism is inadequate, i.e.: "Most biological reactions are chain reactions. To interact in a chain, these precisely built molecules must fit together most precisely, as the cogwheels of a Swiss watch do. But if this is so, then how can such a system develop at all? For if any one of the specific cogwheels in these chains is changed, then the whole system must simply become inoperative. Saying it can be improved by random mutation of one link . . . [is] like saying you could improve a Swiss watch by dropping it and thus bending one of its wheels or axles. To get a better watch, all the wheels must be changed simultaneously to make a good fit again."—Page 18.

Thus the problem. The solution Szent-Gyorgyi proposes (for which there is little direct empirical evidence) is that there must be an "innate force" in all living things that functions to improve the organism. However, Szent-Gyorgyi's concept of syntropy could just as logically and effectively be replaced by the creation hypothesis.

The concept of syntropy, while helping explain some of the serious gaps in the theory of evolution, is still an appeal to a "natural" physical entity to explain the living world. If syntropy exists, it would seem possible to locate the organ or structures that cause syntropy to occur. The mechanism could be a single organ in the body similar to the hypothalamus, which directs body activity in a unified fashion, or it could be found in each individual cell. If it exists in individual cells, there likewise must be some outside mechanism of the cells to coordinate this "drive to perfect itself" and make the body cells cooperate together. Otherwise individual cells would strive independently to perfect themselves,

evolving in different directions, and in time causing disharmony and dysfunction in the organism.

The most important problem, though, is accounting for the cause of origin of this hypothesized drive. Can a "natural" means be found to explain the existence of this drive in all organisms as hypothesized? Could the natural-selection hypothesis account for it? Is it hypothesized that all organisms have the syntropy mechanism? If it were clearly beneficial, presumably evolution would consistently select against those organisms lacking syntropy. Yet if an animal or a plant is fully adapted to its environ-

The need to develop a concept such as syntropy clearly illustrates that scientists realize that there are serious problems with the theory of evolution that are often ignored.

ment there would be no need for syntropy (i.e., it would be needed only until the organism reached a high level of adaptation). Beyond this it would seem that the drive would, if it continued to make changes, cause the organism, in time, to become less adapted to the environment. Once adaptation is achieved, the drive must somehow stop, or risk doing harm to the organism, as environmental changes would require very limited readaptation. Since most low-level organisms are highly adapted to their environment, we could ask, What causes some organisms to continue to "try to perfect themselves" so that they reach much higher levels of development? Do all animals seek to change in the direction of man?

Any drive to perfect an organism would not produce results in a single organism, but would express itself only through a number of generations. Since this would not confer any survival ben-

efits to the individual organism, the evolutionary theory would dictate that it would not confer any advantage, and thus could not generally have a selection advantage. The drive would have to cause a change primarily in the gametes or sex cells. Changes in the gametes could not be accomplished unless such changes would benefit a possible future organism. The drive is toward improvement, not random changes. How could the structure that is responsible for syntropy know specifically what changes to make to improve the whole organism? Does this structure experiment by trial and error, and if so, what process of feedback does it utilize?

Syntropy clearly helps to account for a number of realities the evolutionary hypothesis cannot explain, but, as noted above, there are a number of serious questions that mitigate against the theory. At present, the concept of syntropy is primarily metaphysical, similar to Freud's ego, id, and superego constructs. Significantly, though, the need to develop a concept such as syntropy clearly illustrates that scientists realize that there are serious problems with the theory of evolution, problems that are often ignored. The recognized need for the syntropy concept illustrates that the difficulties that have been stressed by creationists for some time are increasingly being recognized by evolutionists in the various evolutionary schools of thought. And once a serious examination of these problems is undertaken, scientists may begin to search for concepts that fit the facts much more adequately than the evolutionary hypothesis. ■

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HEALTH AND RELIGION

Ministerial Burnout. This affliction of the "Bionic Minister" can be avoided by taking some common-sense precautions. Here's how.

by William Rabor

He was a colleague in the ministry whom everyone described as a human dynamo—certainly one of the hardest-working men we knew. He seemed to thrive on work, driving himself constantly toward new goals, new projects, new horizons. And then one day he simply found himself unable to function ministerially. It became necessary to seek medical attention, including psychotherapy. At the age of 42, he had burned himself out physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Because we are ministers of the gospel, some of us get the idea that we are somehow invulnerable to the kind of breakdown my friend experienced. We are doing the Lord's work, we reason, and therefore are immune to the ills that afflict ordinary mortals. Yet ministerial activity is often accompanied by a high degree of stress, which can prove overwhelming and take a terrible toll. Although called of God, we are, like other professionals, susceptible to what has been termed "burnout."

Boston University professor LeRoy Spaniol describes burnout as "a sense of dead-endedness, a feeling that you have nowhere to go, that nothing new is happening." Not infrequently it is accompanied by such psychosomatic complaints as insomnia, excessive fatigue, or severe headaches. In some cases it may actually take the form of some kind of emotional collapse. According to Professor Spaniol, burnout occurs in those people who ignore their own needs by trying to live a Spartan existence.

How can you avoid ministerial burnout? First, stop trying to be the "bionic minister." Remember that you are human and can accomplish only so much in the lifetime God has given you. Be realistic in setting goals and objectives for your ministry. Keep in mind that

despite all indications to the contrary your church will go on after you are dead.

Second, make time for yourself. Even Jesus scheduled periods of time when He could be alone for prayer and undoubtedly just to relax. Each week try to build into your schedule one day with no professional duties. If that is impossible, try to find at least part of a day. Periodically break out of the grind.

Exercise is an excellent means of relieving tension and stress. More and more ministers are turning to jogging or some other form of active exercise as a means of combating the effects of work pressures. One colleague has been jogging for the past year and says that he feels ten years younger. I honestly have to admit that he looks it!

Try to find someone with whom you can share the frustrations that come with ministry. Ventilate your feelings by discussing them with that person instead

of allowing them to build up inside. Pastors minister to hundreds of people, but who ministers to the pastor? Who is the pastor's pastor? Many clergy are forming support groups that meet periodically not only for relaxation but to talk over problems, goals, attitudes, and personal feelings related to ministry. If the people in the group are willing to be honest and open with one another, they can provide excellent opportunities for emotional release and personal growth. The group to which I belong provides me a forum to let off steam, to share ideas, and to build friendships.

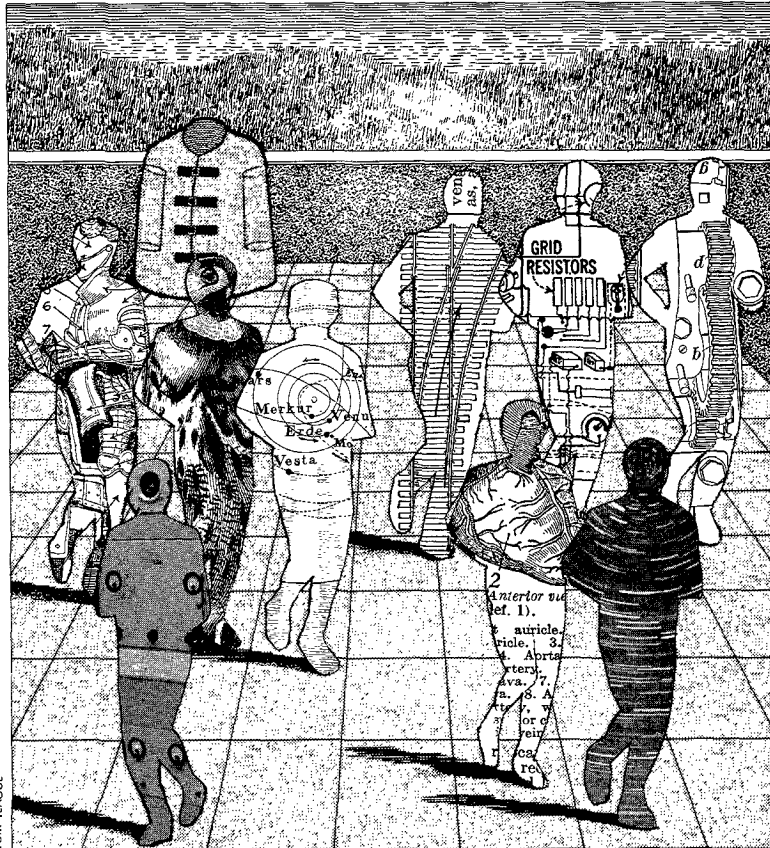
Finally, learn to relax and appreciate each day. The evidence from Scripture is that Christ Himself, despite His intensity of purpose, deeply enjoyed life. He appreciated a good meal, the beauty of nature, a quiet walk alone. He knew the

importance of inner serenity and how to relax. This is one area of imitating the Master that we often forget or simply ignore, especially as the pace of our ministry accelerates and we strive harder to accomplish even more. We may actually become so busy doing God's work that He can't even get our attention!

We may be God's ambassadors, but we are also human beings with very real needs and limitations. Unless we pay some attention to those needs and take care of ourselves in some fashion, ministerial burnout is always a possibility. A sound mind in a sound body makes for a sound ministry, enabling us to serve God longer and more effectively.

Perhaps if my colleague, the human dynamo, had read this article a few years ago, he would still be pastoring today.

William Rabor is an associate pastor in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gaylord, Michigan.



Counseling the Family in Crisis. In times of severe conflict, people often turn first to the pastor. What can you do?

by Clifford D. Achord

When something goes wrong in a family, where can people turn for help?

A few years ago an acquaintance of my wife called her on the telephone and asked, "Will you raise my daughter after I'm gone?" My wife gave her a few reassuring words, then hung up and rushed across town to the woman's house. She found her on the floor with a loaded pistol in her hand. My wife took the gun away gently and asked whether she might drive her to the local hospital. The woman indignantly refused and said she would see her pastor. So my wife called the pastor and stayed until he arrived.

What would you do if you were that pastor?

People often turn to the church pastor instead of other professionals because they think they know him better. Thus he is often at the "front line" of crisis-intervention systems of the community. Not every case that comes to him for help is as direct as this suicide case, of course. Sometimes children from dysfunctional homes will signal their distress with "acting out" behavior at school. If the pastor is called in on such a problem, he should look at the family situation before disciplining the child. It might be the youngster's indirect way of crying out for help.

Counsel in family-crisis situations is difficult even for trained professionals, but here are some suggestions that may help you when your turn comes.

Reach the people as quickly as possible when you become aware of an impending crisis. In such a situation, every day may seem like a lifetime to the people caught in the conflict, and delay may add complications.

Include as many members of the family as possible in the counseling sessions. It is sometimes difficult for you to get all the family members to participate in analyzing and solving the problem, but it is also unlikely you will make progress unless all are included. In a marriage crisis, if you see one spouse only, you may make the problem worse, because the two will make even less effort to communicate while you are a factor.

Focus only on the immediate crisis. Many people have chronic conflicts that have been troubling them for years. When a crisis arises, focus only on the



critical event and their emotional responses to the immediate problem. Don't try to solve everything at once; leave the historical problems out of the picture.

Be a neutral part in the conflict. It may be very easy for you to identify one person in the dispute, or side with one faction. Some might expect you to take a judgmental attitude toward the "sinful" member of the family, but don't do so; try to be neutral and listen to both sides.

Be a facilitator to help a family resolve its own conflicts, rather than an authoritative giver of advice. If you take an authoritarian position, the family situation may stabilize more quickly, but when the next problem arises, they will be after your advice again. You should

help them learn to solve their own problems.

Become a team player on a community mental-health team. Get acquainted with professionally trained social workers, marriage and family counselors, and psychologists and psychiatrists. If you have questions about how these people handle spiritual issues in their counseling, ask them directly and openly. You may then relate confidently to mental-health workers who appreciate the spiritual and subcultural concerns of your parishioners. Recognize the difference between pastoral and psychological counseling. Most people who contact a pastor expect spiritual or pastoral counseling. Family crises are usually psychosocial in nature and have a spiritual component. When a serious intrapsychic or interpersonal crisis is exploding, the person or family may need a professionally trained mental-health worker, as well as the support of the pastor. Mental-health workers and pastor ought to be able to work together better than they do, to provide the best possible assistance to people.

Be supportive, not critical. A person in crisis needs hope and love. The pastor can provide warmth and affection perhaps more than any other person in a crisis, and can help his people experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit and the assurance of justification by grace. These can be very important to the success of family counseling.

When a family crisis erupts, it is sometimes already past hope for salvage. Much crisis counseling, therefore, comes "too little and too late." Even experienced crisis counselors recognize that perhaps half the families they see can never be stabilized really satisfactorily. Whatever comes of family conflicts, however, the pastor can help each member of the family to realize that the love of Christ is eternal; and they can always put their hope and trust in Him.

Recommended reading: Robert Carkuff and C. Truax, *Toward Effective Counseling and Psychotherapy* (New York: Aldine-Atherton, 1967); Howard J. Parod, *Crisis Intervention: Selected Readings* (New York: Family Service Association of America, 1965).

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BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY

How the Experts Missed It. The search for Biblical Debir is among the most interesting "detective stories" of modern archeology.

The search for Biblical Debir is one of the most interesting "detective stories" of modern archeological research.

The first step in seeking to identify a Biblical town is to search, not in the ground, but in the Scriptures. In the Bible the archeologist learns that Debir was one of the pre-Israelite cities occupied by the Anakims, along with Hebron and Anab in the hill country of Judah (Joshua 11:21). The conquest of southern Canaan is depicted as following a particular sequence—first Makkedah, then Libnah and Lachish, followed by Hebron and finally Debir (chap. 10:28-41). This account, along with Joshua 12:13, indicates that we are dealing with a Canaanite city-state of the late Bronze Age.

Othniel, son of Kenaz, conquered Debir (chap. 15:15-19; Judges 1:11-15) and was awarded Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, as his wife. Achsah said to her father, "Since you have set me in the land of the Negeb, give me also springs [*gulloth*] of water" (see Joshua 15:19; Judges 1:15). Debir was thus located in a zone where the topographical characteristics were like those of the Negeb, and the city itself evidently lacked sufficient water sources of its own.

The Scriptures locate Debir in the first hill country district of Judah (Joshua 15:49) in association with ten other towns, at least five of which (Jattir, Socoh, Anab, Eshtemoa, and Anim) have positive identifications. All five lie in the southernmost zone of the Judean hills. Joshua 15 is the most magnificent geographical text in the Bible, and the presence of Debir in chapter 15:49 is crucial. The town must be sought in the hill country south of Hebron.

The modern search for Debir began on the right foot. C. R. Conder, of the British Survey of Western Palestine, took the Biblical data seriously and thus identified Debir with the town of Dha-heriyeh, the most important village in the hill country south of Hebron. But after World War I, W. F. Albright conducted some excavations at that site and found that the late Bronze Age was entirely missing. Thus was born the myth that no Canaanite occupation existed in the hill country south of Hebron.

Since the hill country is separated from the Shephelah (lowland) by a long

by Anson F. Rainey

valley of Senonian chalk in which are numerous water sources, several major Canaanite sites grew up there in ancient times. Albright turned his attention to these and soon settled on Tell Beit Mirsim as his candidate for Debir.

During the late 1920's and early 1930's Albright conducted several excavation campaigns at Tell Beit Mirsim. During the years, he developed his theory identifying Tell Beit Mirsim with Biblical Debir. At first it was only a working hypothesis, then it became a probability, and finally it became "virtually certain."

The finished theory ran something like this: Debir was a Canaanite city, but we know from archeological research that no such city existed in the hill country south of Hebron. Therefore, Debir must be sought in the valley at the western flank of the hill country. Tell Beit Mirsim is the most impressive of the three sites in the southern part of this valley (an opinion open to challenge). The various strata uncovered at Tell Beit Mirsim correspond to the period in which Debir was known to have existed (this detail is not too relevant if the written sources are at variance). Therefore, Tell Beit Mirsim must be Debir.

If so, then Debir must have been an administrative center placed where three districts of Judah converge—the southern hill country, the Negeb, and the southern Shephelah. Such an administrative center is entirely foreign to Joshua 15 and other Biblical texts.

Most German scholars continued to accept the Biblical statements indicating that Debir was in the hill country, but each time they proposed a new site it was examined and found to be lacking the requisite late Bronze Age pottery.

In 1954 Kurt Galling sought to identify Debir with Khirbet Rabud, a very large site on an imposing hill beside the Hebron-Beersheba road. But because he could not produce any potsherds from the Canaanite period, no one took him seriously. When H. Donner made public the presence of abundant Israelite sherds and one fragment from a Cypriot "milk bowl" (a vessel typical of the late Bronze Age), his statement passed almost unnoticed.

After the June, 1967, war, an Israeli survey team headed by Moshe Kokhavy

soon discovered large quantities of this pottery, most of which came from the ancient cemetery beside Khirbet Rabud! Kokhavy and his team also mapped the remains of an impressive Israelite wall at Khirbet Rabud.

Under the auspices of the Tel Aviv University and the American Institute for Holy Land Studies, Kokhavy undertook excavations in 1968 and 1969 that clearly established Canaanite occupation. Rich finds from the Israelite period were also discovered. In a nearby ravine two wells were found that the Arabs call the upper and lower wells, names strikingly similar to the Biblical "upper and lower springs" of the Achsah narrative! Khirbet Rabud has no natural water source of its own.

The late Professor Albright refused to accept the new identification. His further objections led Kokhavy to another startling discovery. The three districts in the southern hill country, as defined by Joshua 15:48-57, conformed to the watersheds between the drainage systems in the area! The streams encompassed by the towns in verses 48 to 51 all flow southward; those in verses 52 to 54 run westward; those in verses 55 to 57 run eastward.

Because the hills in this region are formed of a rock that disintegrates into a very poor soil, the richest earth is found in the creek beds, brought down from the Hebron hills. Therefore, farming is done mostly in the stream beds in a manner identical to the "Negeb agriculture" farther south.

No wonder Achsah said, "You have placed me in Negeb land." So, besides the recovery of a lost Biblical city, we now can understand the organization of a part of Judah in relation to the ecological pattern.

The search for Biblical Debir illustrates that when archeological data is related to what is found in the Bible, the Biblical evidence must be primary. ■

Anson F. Rainey, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages at Tel Aviv University at Ramat Avin, Israel. He translated the book *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography* by the Israeli archeologist Yohanan Aharoni from Hebrew in 1967. He also edited and translated the Armana tablets, numbers 359-379.

SHEPHERDESS

Real Christians. A pile of dirt and a friend at the right time help a pastor's wife to understand what being a Christian really means.

*Dear Shepherdess: How eagerly we look forward to spring! I was interested in some springtime reflections from our wives in various places. Norma Jean Seal Sahlin writes, "Recently I reveled in the bright sunshine. (Yes, the sun *did* shine for a few days somewhere in Pennsylvania!) A friend laughed with me. Six hours later I was complaining loudly about the cold and the failure (for the tenth time) of my trusty Pinto. My friend laughed again. "I thought this was the day you were going to dance on the lawn to celebrate spring!" After shelling out \$53 for a battery, I thought about what had happened. As long as everything was all right, my mood was happy. But if one thing went wrong, my whole day was spoiled. I was dismayed at how much I let the negative affect me. By the*

way, spring is coming. The sun now reaches our dining-room window. Since this room faces west, that's a sure sign.

Phyllis Escobar says, "Spring in Hawaii, the Paradise of the Pacific, is truly a blessed time of year. I didn't know there would be a difference in seasons when I first moved here, but many of the trees are sprouting new leaves and blossoms that soon will bear fruit or colorful flowers. As I see the dead, brown leaves of my avocado tree fall, and the new ones burst forth, I am reminded of the second coming of Christ. Even our bodies will be changed, never to die again!"

As my own springtime reflection, I would like to share a verse that appeared in a card sent me by Pastor and Mrs. Pinkney during a trying hour in my life.

"There is nothing in life God ever asks us to bear

That we can't soar above on wings of prayer,

And in looking back over the storm you passed through,

You'll find you gained strength and new courage, too."

—Helen Steiner Rice

Charlotte Erickson, a minister's wife and a mother who lives in Lincoln, Nebraska, tells this month of an experience she had in sharing real Christian togetherness. As you read it, may her concluding purpose become yours. And as springtime returns to our restless world, may all of us bask in the sunshine of our heavenly Father's love and guidance. With love, Kay.

Real Christians

by Charlotte Erickson

I looked in despair at the mound of black dirt in our driveway. How in the world could I ever handle it all by myself?

An unusually wet spring and several heavy downpours had caused water to begin coming into the basement of our new house. After assessing the situation, our builder decided the problem could be solved by putting more dirt around the foundation. He even volunteered to bring a free truckload of dirt and leave it in our driveway.

The day the dirt arrived, more rain was in the forecast. My minister husband was out of town and would not be back for several days. Therefore, since I wanted neither more water in the basement nor a driveway full of black mud to be tracked into the house by two children and a cocker spaniel, I knew it was up to me to get the dirt where it belonged, even though I was still recovering from major surgery.

After hauling only two wheelbarrows full of damp dirt up the slope to the side of our house, I had had enough. Exhausted and discouraged, I threw down the shovel, went back into the house,

and collapsed onto the sofa. "The basement can just float away," I sighed. "I'm too tired to move another inch!"

A few minutes later a knock at the back door brought me to my weary feet. It was a next-door neighbor and close friend. She had known about the water in the basement and had seen the truckload of dirt in the driveway. She also knew my husband was away.

"Give up or just resting?" she asked.

"I gave up," I groaned.

"Don't give up. I just dug these dirty jeans out of the hamper and I'm all set to help you."

"Oh, Sharon," I complained. "I just can't push that wheelbarrow up the hill one more time!"

"Come on," she urged with a smile, "you help me get the dirt into the wheelbarrow and I'll push it up the hill. We've got to get it done before it rains."

With renewed courage, I donned my muddy sneakers and gloves, and together we tackled the seemingly impossible task. I knew Sharon grew tired of hauling load after load of dirt, but not once did she complain. Instead she laughed and joked about how "quickly time flies when you're having fun" and how she wouldn't have to do her exercises that night!

With the dirt firmly packed around the house at last, we rested in her kitchen while our children played. A few hours later it began to rain, but I could relax in the knowledge that the work had gotten done in time.

Later as I recounted the incident to my husband, he said, "Sharon's a real Christian, isn't she?"

Yes, I thought to myself. A real Christian.

Sharon goes to mass on Sunday morning while I go to the Seventh-day Adventist services on Saturday. Sharon and I see many religious points differently. Yet I thought of all the times she had helped me—taking care of my children; looking after our yard when we were away; just listening when I was lonely and needed someone to talk to. Yes, Sharon is certainly a real Christian.

Then I wondered about myself. I'm a minister's wife, but do my neighbors consider me a *Christian*? Am I someone they can turn to for help? I hoped so. I had tried to be, but now I determined to try even harder.

When we move away from this neighborhood, I want the people on my street to be able to say, "Those Seventh-day Adventists are really Christians, aren't they?"



Prayers from the parsonage

by Cherry B. Habenicht

Our home looked so cozy those short, gray days of winter. Eating steaming oatmeal in the dim dawn, I didn't notice spatters on the kitchen walls. I could watch sifted snow without thinking of washing windows. In the pink-and-blue dusk I'd draw the curtains, light a candle, and never see fingerprints on the table edge.

But today! Lord, what a dazzling day You sent today! Sunshine flooded every room, revealing all the smudges and blemishes my lick-and-a-promise cleaning had left untouched.

I saw oil specks on the refrigerator, dust puffs under the bed, and cobwebs in the hanging lamp. I wanted to wipe top shelves, scrub woodwork, and polish furniture in a spring-cleaning frenzy.

Thank You, Lord, for that brilliant sun, inspiring me even as it ruthlessly

penetrates.

Is that how I appear in Your sight? Have I been lulled into the false assurance that my life looks "pretty good"? It's so easy to think that pesky little habits are under control, but when the Light of the world beams into all the crooks and crevices, I see the truth.

"Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Ps. 19:12). Please, God, let there be no dusty corners in my heart.

channel of our unmerited rebirth? As an example of those things uniting us, I must cite Earl Radmacher's article on the problem of faith and reason. I think I could subscribe to every word of it. I am deeply grateful to a man who, I assume, takes the Scriptures as his rule of faith and has the wisdom and courage to remind us that the Scriptures themselves demand the submission and the service of our minds as well as of our hearts.

Roman Catholic priest
Rhode Island

Fills a need

Since it has been my privilege to receive MINISTRY, I have frequently found the contents to be material not supplied in the various religious periodicals I now receive. I have found it to be very edifying—the kind of reading that is much desired by the clergy today. I look forward to each issue.

Independent Bible minister
South Carolina

Centrality of the Scriptures

Your article on the centrality of the Holy Scriptures (November, 1978) was a fine and welcome piece. I hope that many clergy will read and heed it. I was particularly happy to see the full use of the Old Testament in the article as a means of bringing to light the riches of the New Testament. The point that private study of the Scriptures by the preacher is the

key to proper ministry is very well taken.

Episcopal minister
California

Bias in ascribing motives

Isn't it interesting how we applaud the truly spiritual values motivating the teachings of those with whom we agree, but on those points where there is a difference in viewpoint from our own we assume, not theological, but less noble motives? I refer to "The Recovery of Adult Baptism" (September, 1978), in which the author says, "However, after 1525, . . . Luther . . . had changed after submitting the Reformation church to the protection and support of the civil authorities, and thereby compromising some of the basic tenets of evangelical Protestantism." Lutherans (and Luther) have Biblical and theological reasons for upholding God's grace in holy baptism.

Lutheran minister
Illinois

Enriching of study

I have found MINISTRY to be extremely well written and Biblically sound. Thank you for enriching my Biblical studies by your magazine.

Independent Christian minister
Minnesota

Sage counsel

Thanks to Chaplain F. Allen Sackett for his excellent article on

hospital ministry (November, 1978). I wish all of the pastors who visit our hospital would follow his sage counsel.

United Methodist
Hospital chaplain
Wisconsin

Refreshed

As a young pastor I cannot always afford to subscribe to the journals I feel would be helpful to me. Thus I have been refreshed by your direct mailing of MINISTRY without cost. I hope you continue this procedure.

Lutheran pastor
Minnesota

Thank Heaven!

MINISTRY is great and so is its ministry to those of us fortunate enough to receive it. I don't know how my name got on your mailing list, but I thank Heaven it did. You have added to my understanding with material that continues to prove beneficial to me as I minister to the needs of a small but wonderful parish.

United Methodist minister
Georgia

Objective articles

I am very pleased to find such useful and objective articles being made available to clergy of all denominations. I want very much to continue receiving your publication.

Roman Catholic priest
Michigan

Ministers' tour to Bible lands

September 10-27, 1979

- ★ Eighteen days that will add a significant new dimension to your ministry.
- ★ Experienced guides, who know what your interests are.
- ★ Wonderful fellowship with ministers of all faiths.
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- ★ Egypt, with additional flights to Luxor and Karnak.
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SHOP TALK

Seminars for March and April

MINISTRY magazine professional growth seminars continue to meet with much excitement among clergy of all faiths. If you have not yet found one close enough to make attendance possible, try the following list! Clergy in the locale of the seminar should receive an invitation in the mail; but just in case you miss getting yours, we are listing upcoming seminars by city, together with a local phone contact for early registration or additional information. Remember, each seminar is absolutely without cost to you.

March 5 Chicago, Illinois R. H. Ammons (312) 485-1200	April 16 Atlanta, Georgia Roy Caughron (404) 629-7951
March 12 Charleston, West Virginia Wayne Coulter (304) 422-4581	April 17 Chattanooga, Tennessee Roy Caughron (404) 629-7951
March 14 Hagerstown, Maryland George Digel (301) 461-9100	April 23 Houston, Texas Charles J. Griffin (817) 921-6181
March 15 Salisbury, Maryland George Digel (301) 461-9100	April 24 San Antonio, Texas Charles J. Griffin (817) 921-6181
March 19 Kansas City, Kansas Jerry Johnson (913) 478-4726	April 25 Portland, Maine D. J. Sandstrom (207) 797-3760
April 2 Milwaukee, Wisconsin Wesley Jaster (608) 241-5235	April 26 Manchester, New Hampshire D. J. Sandstrom (207) 797-3760
April 3 Indianapolis, Indiana Lester Carney (317) 844-6201	April 30 Syracuse, New York C. W. Skantz (315) 469-6921

Relics of the past

The world's most important Biblical artifacts

- ▶ Follow Dr. Siegfried H. Horn, noted archeologist, on an armchair tour of the world's great museums.
- ▶ Become familiar with the important monuments and objects of antiquity that shed light on the Bible—learn what they mean and where they are located.
- ▶ Become acquainted with museums in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East.
- ▶ Have invaluable reference material for that once-in-a-lifetime trip to Bible lands.

In this special sixteen-page booklet, prepared at the request of the editors of MINISTRY, Dr. Horn describes the important Biblical artifacts that repose in the major museums of the world. The well-known and the not-so-well-known antiquities are all here, from the Rosetta Stone and the Cyrus Cylinder to lesser manuscripts and sculpture. Not only does Dr. Horn explain their significance to Bible history and the authenticity of the Scripture text, but he tells how and where to find them, sometimes even pinpointing the precise location within a particular museum. Arranged geographically, the material takes the reader on a tour of the institutions of the United States,

England, France, Germany, Italy, Rome, Israel, Jordan, and many other countries where major Biblical artifacts are to be found. Eleven detailed photographs complement the text.

Now this wealth of material can be yours for only \$1. Since only 5,000 have been printed, you will need to order promptly, to avoid disappointment. Use the coupon below or simply write.

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Problems?

Minor problems can be the most annoying and distracting, easy to put off; and the longer they're put off, the harder it is to muster any action on them. *And they grow.* Here are three ways to tackle such problems:

1. If you're constantly behind and overwhelmed by deadlines, that's not a minor problem, but it's often treated like one. Take one day to pick out just one or two items that *must* be done and put everything else aside. List the deadlines you can put off and the tasks you can get rid of. It's like pausing to write out a budget; you'll always find more resources than you thought you had.

2. Set aside a specific meeting time each week to identify nagging and unsolved problems. Once problems have been identified, people can be assigned to tend to them.

3. Nagging, ongoing problems and minor pieces of unfinished business are a leading sign of the need for delegation. If you can, find ways to take such problems off your back and give them to other people. The fact that you don't get them done suggests that you might be better off without them. (From *Executives' Digest*, April, 1978).

Prayer circle

You can create a closer tie between yourself and your parishioners by a simple, rotating prayer circle. Here is how it works:

Divide your church-membership list into family units (including single adults) if it is not already in that form, and assign a particular week to each unit. During that week, you and your family will be praying in your own home devotions for the family listed. Send a letter a few days ahead to let the family know that during the coming week you will be praying especially for them by name. These letters may be standardized and sent routinely by your secretary according to the list, or even better, you may add a personalized paragraph in the body of the letter dealing with specific items in that family's experience. In small- and medium-size churches the entire membership can be covered during the course of a year at the rate of a family each week.

One pastor who followed this plan reported that a large number of his congregation told him their special prayer week came at a time when they faced unusual problems or decisions, although the schedule had been made months before.

RECOMMENDED READING

WHAT ABOUT LIFE AFTER LIFE? Leo R. Van Dolson, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C. 20012, 1978, 32 pages, 75 cents.

After hearing himself pronounced dead, a man feels himself moving rapidly through a long, dark tunnel. Then he realizes that he is outside his own physical body, looking at it as though he were a spectator, watching the activities of the doctors around it. Such experiences are being increasingly repeated and reported. Does this describe the perceptions of a person after he is truly dead?

Leo Van Dolson, editor of *Life & Health*, deals with this important question in a way that gives scientific as well as Biblical answers.

J. R. Spangler

THEOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY: BASIC BOOKS FOR THE MINISTER'S LIBRARY, Sakae Kubo, ed., Seminary Student Forum, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1977, 57 pages, \$2.98.

In 1970 Dr. Sakae Kubo, Charles Sandefur, and Jim Walters edited the first theological bibliography issued by the Andrews University Student Forum. The present work is edited by Dr. Kubo, who until his recent appointment as head of the theology department of Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington, was Seminary librarian and also a professor at Andrews University Theological Seminary. Dr. Kubo's dual experience as a teacher and librarian increases the value of a work such as this bibliography. The faculty of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary also assisted in its preparation.

The bibliography is divided into the following general subject categories:

Bible, Old Testament, New Testament, Church and Ministry, Church History, Mission Studies, Theology and Christian Philosophy. Under these general categories are more than 100 subcategories. The present book has about twice as many references as the 1970 volume. Most of the entries carry explanatory notes providing information not usually contained in a bibliographic entry.

Ministers, teachers, and students will find this work helpful, particularly those who do not have access to a major library. The editor also gives addresses of several book dealers who handle out-of-print books.

Nikolaus Satelmajer

DANIEL, Desmond Ford, Southern Publishing Association, Nashville, Tennessee 37202, 1978, 309 pages, \$6.95, paperback.

In the words of F. F. Bruce, who wrote the foreword to this commentary, "it is in the context of the whole Christian Bible and in the light of its New Testament development that Dr. Ford views and expounds the message of Daniel."

And in Ford's own words, "Because of the widespread malaise resulting from the current disease of meaninglessness, many twentieth-century theologians have turned again to the study of apocalyptic—that type of prophecy found in Daniel and Revelation which claims to set forth in symbols the divine plan for the world."

In turning to the study of apocalyptic, Ford has produced a detailed and scholarly (yet lucid and readable) commentary on Daniel's fascinating imagery. The first seventy pages deal with such introductory items as the literary structure of the book, its date, principles

of prophetic interpretation, and the use of the Old Testament in the New.

The author takes the position that Daniel was written in the sixth century B.C. by the prophet whose name the book bears. In so doing, he says, "we stand where Christ and the New Testament writers stood."

Ford summarizes his hermeneutical principles as essentially grammatico-historical exegesis—the traditional approach of and following the Reformation. Yet he is free to admit elements of truth in all the contemporary systems of interpretation, preterism, futurism, historicism, et cetera.

B. Russell Holt

THEISTIC EVOLUTION, Bert Thompson, Lambert Book House, Box 4007, Shreveport, Louisiana 71104, 1977, 235 pages, \$4.95, paperback.

Theistic Evolution aims to provide a collection of views and comments that will serve as a reference book on the subject in light of the increasing acceptance of theistic evolution among Christians.

By his comments and through his selection of quotations, the author expresses the viewpoint of a creation of the entire universe within six consecutive twenty-four-hour days and a verbal inspiration of the entire content of the Bible. Strongly worded, emotional language and lengthy quotations from secondary sources, many of which are not suitable as scholarly reference material, characterize the text.

The reader will find a thorough exploration of Scripture-based arguments against theistic evolution, including a detailed treatment of the contradictions between the Creation-week sequence and

the standard sequence assumed for evolutionary development. Dr. Thompson has made an important contribution by selecting statements of opinion concerning theistic evolution from prominent nontheistic evolutionists. He gives an extensive treatment of the day-age theory for the days of Genesis 1, a moderate but effective treatment of the theory that there were long ages between the first and second verses of Genesis 1, and a brief discussion of the view most commonly known as progressive creation.

The reader may not find all the arguments against theistic evolution presented in this book to be fully satisfactory, but he will have convenient access to the opinions on the subject that characterize conservative literature.

R. H. Brown

MINISTRY

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