

MINISTRY

A MAGAZINE FOR CLERGY



JULY 1978



**DISPENSATIONALISM:
RIGHTLY
DIVIDING
THE
WORD?**
page 4

LETTERS

Fed spiritually

I am impressed after reading MINISTRY. We do not have such a publication exclusively for clergy in the Episcopal Church. The excellent articles fed me spiritually and intellectually, going right to the heart of the issue involved and staying there without apology.

Episcopal minister
Connecticut

Common problems

I have found MINISTRY very interesting and helpful in dealing with some problems that are common to both of us. I was especially impressed with how James Londis got hold of the task of the ministry. I have shared it with our people in our own newsletter. Hope that didn't violate a copyright requirement.

United Methodist minister
Texas

Sharing and growing

Your church is to be commended for providing an edifying and useful magazine to those of us on your mailing list. I hope that we readers prove ourselves worthy of your efforts and concern.

Independent Episcopal minister
Washington

Reassuring

Edward E. Zinke's article, "What About Form Criticism?" (January, 1978), and the earlier "A Conservative Approach to Theology" I value for my own use. I felt somehow reassured about the direction of my own thinking on the interpretation of Scripture.

Minister
Connecticut

Closet Catholics?

In the light of the article "What Does God's Grace Do?" (March, 1978), the title page of the article is interesting. It reads: "A genuine experience of sanctification is impossible without a correct understanding of this topic."

I am amazed at such words from

an eminent Protestant scholar. Is anything *impossible* to God? Moreover, does the statement really mean that a genuine experience of sanctification is *impossible* without (the human work of) a correct understanding of this topic? Perhaps there is something to the Catholic exposition of grace after all! Do I detect a "closet Catholic" in your ranks?

Catholic priest
Nebraska

The sentence you quote is actually an editorial addition, since the MINISTRY staff routinely provides titles, subtitles, et cetera. To that extent Author Raoul Dederen is absolved of responsibility. However, the statement is abstracted from the closing paragraphs of his article and, we felt, does not misrepresent the thought there.

Obviously, the whole human response to God is predicated on understanding enough of Him and His truth to enable one to respond. In this context, understanding itself should not be considered a human work in the sense of a meritorious act. The thought we intended to convey was that incorrect or inadequate concepts of God's grace will inevitably affect a person's experience of that grace.—Editors.

Article insights sorely needed

I noted an advertisement in MINISTRY for a set of 500 slides on the seven churches of Revelation. I would like to have additional information on these and their cost. I appreciated especially the article "When Should a Church Discipline Members?" (March, 1978). Dr. Beach's insights are sorely needed today.

Baptist minister
South Carolina

Special interest

I read your March, 1978, article "Ephesus—the Desirable Church" with great interest, and enjoyed the many pictures and explanations. Since my wife and I just returned from Israel and Turkey, your article

had a special interest to us. We would like to have more information on your slide set on the seven churches of Revelation.

Baptist minister
Colorado

Hooked

Needless to say, when I first received MINISTRY I had a "ho-hum" attitude toward it. However, after reading and rereading the timely articles, I became interested. It was not until I received the March copy that I knew I was hooked.

Church of the Comforter pastor
Illinois

Anxious to read

The new issue of MINISTRY has just arrived, and I am anxious to read it. Your editorial staff does a very commendable job with this publication, producing a fine magazine. When my subscription expires on the complimentary mailing, I will be interested in renewing.

United Methodist minister
Florida

Geared to functioning minister

I would like to thank the Adventist Church for MINISTRY. In browsing through the gift copy, I find it to be very informative as well as spiritually motivating, and I wish to commend you for the production of such fine reading material geared to the functioning minister.

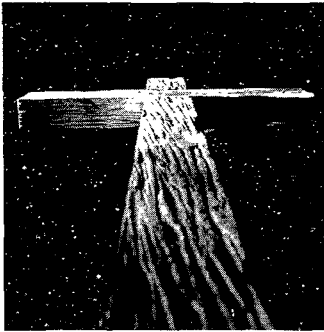
Christian minister
New Mexico

Health for clergy

I find your magazine very helpful, especially in the area of the health of the clergy. MINISTRY stresses things that most clergy whom I know tend to neglect in their everyday lives, because of demands by others on their time and energy. Please keep such articles coming at us, because if we don't take care of our own bodies, we won't be much help to others concerning their souls.

Episcopal minister
Oregon

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Dispensationalism: rightly dividing the Word?



Many evangelical Christians dismiss this system of interpreting Scripture as lacking Biblical support.

by Don F. Neufeld

Dispensationalism is a system of Bible interpretation that divides human history—past, present, and future—into seven periods: 1. Innocency, beginning with Creation and ending with the expulsion from Eden. 2. Conscience, ending with the judgment of the Flood. 3. Human Government, the period of racial testing ending with the confusion of tongues. 4. Promise. From the promise of Abraham to the law (Ex. 19:8). 5. Law. Sinai to Calvary. 6. Grace. Death of Christ to the final great apostasy. 7. Kingdom. The ultimate reign of Christ (C. I. Scofield,

Reference Bible, p. 5.). Scofield defines a dispensation as “a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.”—*Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

According to S. P. Tregelles, the scholar famous for his study of the Greek New Testament, dispensationalism originated in an “utterance” by means of tongues in Edward Irving’s church in England. He says, “It was from that supposed revelation that the modern doctrine and the modern phraseology respecting it [dispensationalism]

arose. It came not from Holy Scripture, but from that which falsely pretended to be the Spirit of God.”—Quoted in George Eldon Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, p. 41.

Tregelles could speak from firsthand knowledge. Dispensationalism arose in the Brethren movement, of which he was a member in its early days. In 1827, J. N. Darby joined the fellowship and became a leader in the movement in the area of prophetic interpretation, so that dispensationalism is sometimes called “Darbyism.”

However, C. I. Scofield’s *Refer-*

ence Bible probably has done more than any other agency to popularize dispensationalist views. The first edition of the *Reference Bible* was published in 1909, a revised edition appeared in 1917, and in 1967 *The New Scofield Reference Bible* was introduced, representing further revision. On the editorial committee of the 1967 revision, chaired by E. Schyler English, were scholars such as Frank E. Gaebelein, headmaster emeritus, The Stony Brook School; Charles L. Feinberg, dean, Talbot Theological Seminary; Allan A. MacRae, president, Faith Theological Seminary; Wilbur M. Smith, editor, *Peloubet's Select Notes*; and John F. Walvoord, president, Dallas Theological Seminary.

Since its beginning 150 years ago, dispensationalism has spread rapidly, until today millions of Christians espouse it. It is taught in most of the Bible schools throughout the land, where thousands of young people receive their religious training. In fact, according to George Eldon Ladd, "So deeply entrenched has it [dispensationalism] become that many pastors and Christian leaders have been led to assume that this teaching has been an essential doctrine in the history of the Church extending back to apostolic times and has prevailed widely in all ages among believers who have had a sincere love for the Word of God and who have cherished the Blessed Hope of Christ's return."—*Ibid.*, p. 9.

In their partitioning of the Scriptures, dispensationalists apply not only most of the Old Testament to the Israelites only but the Gospels as well. In other words, according to dispensationalists, Jesus' teachings were not directed toward the Christian church but toward the Jews, since Jesus lived and taught under the dispensation of law. Though Scofield admits that the Sermon on the Mount has "beautiful moral application to the Christian," he insists its immediate application is to Jews. Thus Scofield allows for no continuity between the Old Testament be-

liever in God and the New Testament church. Only when one gets to the Epistles does he have the Bible speaking directly to the Christian church.

It is one of the phenomena of religious history that a thesis with as little Biblical support as has dispensationalism should be so widely accepted, even by Christians who accept the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Bible.

Louis Berkhof, author of *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1941), takes issue with dispensationalists, showing that even their use of the term "dispen-

"It is one of the phenomena of religious history that a thesis with as little Biblical support as has dispensationalism should be so widely accepted."

sation" is non-Biblical. He says, "The word 'dispensation' (*oikonomia*), which is a Scriptural term (cf. Luke 16:2-4; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4), is here used [by dispensationalists] in an un-Scriptural sense. It denotes a stewardship, an arrangement, or an administration, but never a testing time or a time of probation."—Page 290.

He calls the distinctions between the dispensations "arbitrary." "The distinctions [between dispensations as periods] are clearly quite arbitrary. This is evident already from the fact that dispensationalists themselves sometimes speak of them as overlapping. The second dispensation is called the dispensation of conscience, but according to Paul, conscience was still the monitor of the Gentiles in his day (Rom. 2:14, 15). The third is known as the

dispensation of human government, but the specific command in it which is disobeyed and therefore rendered man liable to judgment, was not the command to rule the world for God—of which there is no trace—but the command to replenish the earth. The fourth is designated the dispensation of promise and is supposed to terminate with the giving of the law, but Paul says that the law did not disannul the promise, and that this was still in effect in his own day (Rom. 4:13-17; Gal. 3:15-29). The so-called dispensation of the law is replete with glorious promises, and the so-called dispensation of grace did not abrogate the law as a rule of life."—*Ibid.*, pp. 290, 291.

Since most of the men who helped shape dispensationalism subscribed to Calvinistic creeds, there are strong elements of Calvinism in dispensationalism. Kraus says that "the sovereign transcendence of God, is the foundational assumption which underlies the very concept of a dispensation."—*Dispensationalism in America* (John Knox Press, 1958), p. 61.

He explains how this is so. "A dispensation is begun when God projects Himself into the historical process and initiates a covenant of His own making with some part of the human race. It ends when He intervenes in judgment because of man's disobedience. While there is a pattern of historical development within the dispensation, no covenant is in any way conditioned by historical processes, nor is it necessarily historically related to the covenants which precede or follow it. The promises enumerated in the covenants are in the last analysis unconditional, because although man cannot and does not cooperate with God, He fulfills His promises which He swore unto the fathers. He works out His predestined purpose in history, but quite apart from it—and one might almost say in spite of it. Each dispensation is set off as a distinct period of time which has little or no organically historical relation to what precedes or follows. Fur-

ther, God's sovereignty is exercised in the predestination and election of nations and men to a special relationship to Himself. The whole justification for giving the Jews the dominant place in God's future plan is worked out on the ground of their national election. What Israel wishes or does is quite aside from the point. God has chosen them to be His people, so they are His people come what may."—*Ibid.*, pp. 61, 62.

This same principle is applied to individual predestination. "The same rigid predestination is applied in this dispensation to the individual believers who have been elected to salvation. Their election is absolutely effective. Working on this assumption, contemporary dispensationalists have elaborated an almost mechanistic theory of eternal security, and have interpreted the New Testament strictly within the framework of this norm."—*Ibid.*, p. 62.

To the dispensationalist, then, prophecy is an unalterable decree having its grounds in the sovereign transcendence of God. But this is not the way prophecy is presented in the Bible. A conditional element in prophecy is clearly set forth. Let us notice particularly the predictions concerning Israel.

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Ex. 19:5, 6).

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth." "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee" (Deut. 28:1, 15).

Even if a condition is not stated, it may be implied. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them" (Jer. 18:7-10).

Ignoring the Biblical principle of conditionality, as well as the obvious


"I am convinced that no one taking the Bible and the Bible only could come up with dispensationalism."

teaching of plain texts, dispensationalists, who are futurists, speculate an incredible series of events. Alexander Reese mentions their postulation of a prodigious missionary enterprise despite the removal of the Holy Spirit from the earth at the rapture: "Their exegesis now [in the area of prophecy rather than in the central truths of Christianity], instead of adhering to the main emphasis of Scripture, and basing itself on careful and obvious deductions from clear texts, was shot to pieces by idle speculation, by the adoption of innovations like the Secret Rapture, and the prodigious missionary tour of the world in 1,260 days, by an army of half-converted Jews. . . . Without the Holy Ghost . . . [they] will do in 1,260 days what the whole Christian Church has been unable to do in 1,900 years—evangelize the world, and convert the 'overwhelming majority' of the inhabitants of the world to God. This declaration of Scofield's works out as about a

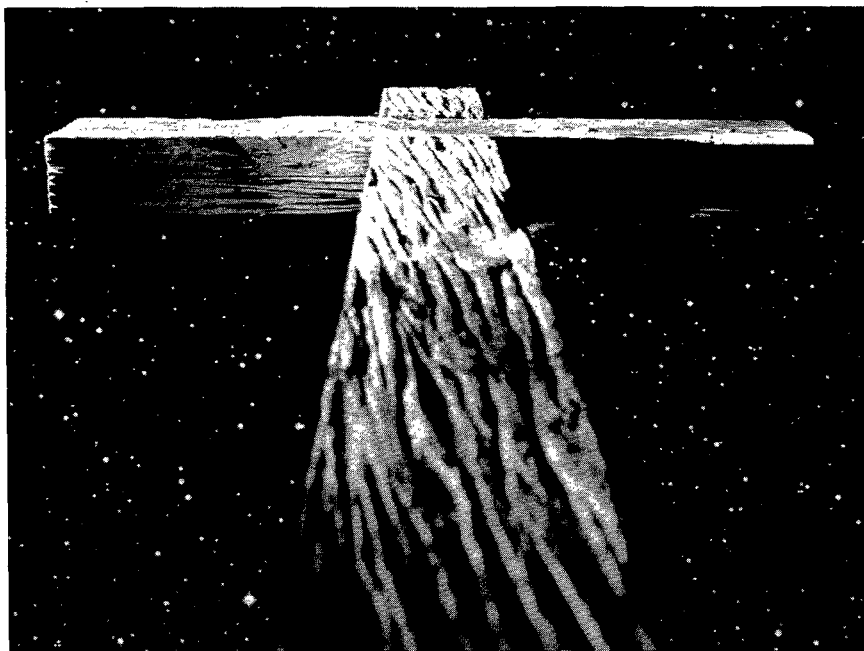
million converts a day; and this at a time when *ex hypothesi*, the Holy Spirit is in heaven, Antichrist is raging here below, and the elect evangelists are torn between the Imprecatory Psalms and the Sermon on the Mount!"—*The Approaching Advent of Christ*, p. 269.

Although dispensationalists make up a large segment of evangelical Christendom, although they are vocal and influential, and their extensive literature has invaded even the best-seller field, there are many evangelical Christians who dismiss dispensationalism as lacking in Biblical support. My counsel is that Christians wondering about the scheme study the Bible for themselves. I am convinced that no one taking the Bible and the Bible only could come up with dispensationalism. Without the utterance in tongues in Edward Irving's church, the system never would have arisen.

The dispensationalist view of the rapture will serve as an example. In *The Millennium in the Church* (William B. Eerdmans, 1945), D. H. Kromminga says, "The assumption that the rapture will precede the appearance of the Son of Man in public on the clouds of heaven so clearly contradicts the order of events as indicated in Matthew 24:30, 31, that it is puzzling to meet with the theory as often as one does without a word of explanation. In Matthew 24:30, 31, the order is very distinctly and unmistakably indicated as being first the public appearance of the Son of Man at which all the nations shall mourn, and then in that appearance the ingathering of His elect by His angels."—Page 309.

Let the dispensationalist give plausible Biblical evidence for his views, and the seeker for truth will be happy to investigate his claims. Until such time, the seeker will be better off studying the Scriptures for their obvious meaning, following sound principles of exegesis and hermeneutics. 

Don F. Neufeld is an associate editor of the *Adventist Review*.



The wondrous cross

The events clustering around the cross are the all-essential element of the gospel of salvation.

by Gordon M. Hyde

One of the best loved of the 600 hymns written by one of the greatest British hymn writers, Isaac Watts, who died 230 years ago, is entitled "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." Charles Wesley said of it that he would gladly exchange all the 6,500 hymns he had written for this one hymn by Isaac Watts.

Written in 1707, it was based on Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Many contemporary people have long since decided that the Christian faith does not really need the cross, because they have also decided that there really is no such thing as sin, and even if there were, that it does not need the cross of Christ to take care of it. Of course, during the earliest days of the Christian church, the Greeks already had decided that the cross was foolishness, and for

the Jews it was something to stumble over (1 Cor. 1:23).

But according to the testimony of the inspired Word of God, the event that towers above time and eternity is the cross of Jesus Christ. There is no greater commission given to Christians in their gospel outreach to the world than to make known by words and deeds that the cross is the supreme event of history.

To His apostles—His sent-out ones—Jesus said, "'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them . . . and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age'" (Matt. 28:19, 20, R.S.V.). Hear Him speaking to a man who, from fear of being seen, came to Him by night. To Nicodemus Jesus said, "'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his

only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life'" (John 3:14-16, R.S.V.).

Peter declared to the rulers, elders, and scribes of Jerusalem, just a few weeks after Calvary: "'Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well. . . . And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved'" (Acts 4:10-12, R.S.V.).

It is sometimes said that the greatest fact of the New Testament is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And certainly that was central to the apostolic witness. But there can be a resurrection only after there has been a death. All of eternity and all of history pivot around the cross of Calvary. In a sense, it was a sacri-

fice made from all eternity that climaxed at Calvary.

Ellen G. White wrote: "The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God."—*Education*, p. 263.

Look at Calvary's cross as long as you wish, write poems to the glory of the cross with all your skills, let the artist paint his conception of what happened, or the sculptor sculpt his impression, but you cannot begin to capture it all. Your deepest insights into the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross are only a little glimpse of the pain that has existed in the heart of God ever since the first sin was committed.

The Gospels make it evident that the events clustering around the cross are the all-essential element of the gospel of salvation. It has been estimated that if the Gospels told as much about the whole three and one-half years of Christ's ministry as they tell about the last three days of that ministry, we would have a life of Christ 8,400 pages long! Surely Scripture intends us to understand the centrality of the cross in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But there is a persistent question that is asked: Who required Jesus to go to the cross of Calvary? Who demanded the death of Christ on the cross? Was it the Roman governor Pilate; intent on saving his own neck and his own position? Was it Herod Antipas, "that fox" (as Jesus once spoke of him), who made friends with Pilate over the condemnation of Christ? Was it the Jewish council, which met repeatedly and illegally in its efforts to silence the voice of Him who claimed to speak from God? Was it the Roman soldiers who actually drove the nails? Or was it Satan, that liar and murderer from the beginning? Was it *he* who demanded the death of Christ? Was this the price he exacted from God in order that man might be released from the devil's prison house of death? Was it God the Father who required this of His Son? Was this the price, as some say, to save sinners from the hands of an angry

God? Let me ask, Did Jesus pay any actual penalty at the cross, or was the cross merely a beautiful demonstration of the fact that God loves us?

We have already quoted, "'For God so loved the world that he gave,'" so there is no question from the Biblical standpoint that the cross is a supreme revelation of the love of God—no question at all. But to make such a statement provides no adequate idea of eternity. Have you ever sat down and tried to think back through eternity? How far did you get? Perhaps it would be possible to unbalance the mind if a person tried specifically and definitely to con-

"According to the inspired Word, the event that towers above time and eternity is the cross of Jesus Christ."

ceive of eternity. But look at Calvary's cross. There God the Father and God the Son were separated for the first time in all eternity.

Perhaps you have experienced separation from a loved one through death. Perhaps you are grievously missing someone today. We hear of tragedies and accidents, and our hearts go out to those involved. But who has ever been separated from someone for the first time in all eternity? We really cannot understand it. In a way, God the Father and God the Son were on opposite sides at the cross for the very first time in all eternity. What put them on opposite sides? Had Jesus ever gone against His Father's will? Had He ever done anything contrary to His Father's will? Hebrews 4:15 says that He "was in all points tempted like as we are," so at times when He was here as man, He faced the temptation to go contrary to the will of His Father. But the writer of

Hebrews goes on, in that same verse, to say "yet without sin." Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yes, but without sin. He never yielded, and temptation is not sin until there is a yielding to the temptation. It is true that Pilate, Herod, Annas, Caiaphas, Judas Iscariot, the Sanhedrin, the devil, and his evil angels, all had some part in preparing the way to Calvary's cross and in putting Jesus there. Even the Father, in one sense, gave His unwilling consent for His Son to be there. But it was your sins and mine, actually, that put Him there. They are what did it.

In Gethsemane the cross was presented to Christ in the symbol of a cup—a bitter cup—that He was to drink. See Him in Gethsemane, aware of what it means to drink that cup, knowing it will put Him and His Father on opposite sides for the first time in all eternity. He will come to feel the wrath of God against sin, our sin. See Him pleading with tears and, as the scripture says, sweating drops of blood in the intensity of His agony at the coming burden of sin—not His, but ours. See Him pleading with His Father, "Isn't there some other way?" But each time He adds, "Not My will but Thine be done. Father, I know that back in the ages of eternity You and I agreed this was the only way. I still wish You could find another way, but if I must drink it, I will drink it." Had not that decision been made in Gethsemane, there would have been no Calvary. We might never have heard its name.

In *The Desire of Ages*, page 686, Ellen White says about this experience of Christ in Gethsemane that He was "now standing in a different attitude from that in which He had ever stood before." Christ had never had this experience before, and neither had anyone else, for that matter. "His suffering can best be described in the words of the prophet, 'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.' Zech. 13:7. As the substitute and surety for sinful man, Christ

was suffering under divine justice. He saw what justice meant. Hitherto He had been as an intercessor for others; now He longed to have an intercessor for Himself."

How understandable that He came to the sleeping disciples and said, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matt. 26:40). How He needed the strength that would have come from heaven in answer to their prayers!

"Behold Him contemplating the price to be paid for the human soul. In His agony He clings to the cold ground, as if to prevent Himself from being drawn farther from God."—*Ibid.*, p. 687.

Can you see Him? He feels sin tearing Him away from the Father for the first time in all eternity. He begins to feel the wrath of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—against sin, and clings to the earth as though the very ground itself might be able to prevent Him from being pulled farther away from God.

Can we not begin to see an answer to this question, Who demanded the death of Christ at Calvary? Who required the cross? Obviously He was not *forced* to bear the cross, otherwise there would have been no meaning to His prayer in Gethsemane and to the decision He had to make under such awful circumstances. If He could not have laid the cup aside, the pleading would have been meaningless. But the anger against sin under which Jesus suffered in Gethsemane and on Calvary was not the anger that you and I have when we lose our tempers—not petulant, petty, or selfish. The wrath of God against sin is the consuming presence of His holiness. Sin cannot exist in the presence of God (see Exodus 19).

But it helps us to understand God the Father's love for us a little better when we understand that the Father Himself would have gone to the cross as willingly as He permitted His Son to do it. That is evidently the meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:19, R.S.V.: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not

counting their trespasses against them."

God was in Christ. In one sense, Christ was not alone on the cross. Yet in another sense He was, because sin forced the Father to hide His presence in that phenomenal darkness surrounding the cross. However, in still another sense God was in harmony with Christ, as together they carried out the agreement they had made in eternity.

Unquestionably the blood of Christ, shed on Calvary's cross, provided reconciliation, atonement, and remission for our sins. For some 4,000 years the offering of blood

"The blood of Christ, shed on Calvary's cross, provided reconciliation, atonement, and remission for our sins."

sacrifices in the Old Testament era had proclaimed the unchangeable truth: "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Heb. 9:22, R.S.V.). And that constant message was not suddenly canceled when John the Baptist, pointing to a wayfaring man in the crowd at the Jordan, thrilled the souls of his few disciples when he declared: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The wondrous cross does reveal the love of God. Not because the cross turned a God who hated us into a God who loves us, but because in the cross we see a God who shows His love for us in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). But the cross was also the God-agreed means whereby God could count us righteous without the members of the Godhead making themselves unrighteous. The cross made it possible for God to be

just and the justifier of them who are in Christ Jesus. At the wondrous cross we see a glimpse of the pain that sin has brought to the heart of God ever since the first sin.


After an angel stayed the hand of Abraham as he was about to take the life of his son in obedience to God's instructions, Abraham "called the name of that place The Lord will provide" (Gen. 22:14, R.S.V.). God provided a ram caught in a thicket, and the ram was sacrificed in Isaac's place as a substitute and a surety. Jesus took that place for us on Calvary's cross.

We can never exhaust the theme of the wondrous cross. But we must keep in mind that there would have been no wondrous cross without a wondrous life, and the wondrous cross would have been inadequate for us without a wondrous resurrection from the dead, and the benefits of Calvary would still remain unappropriated were there not a wondrous Intercessor, our High Priest, standing at the right hand of God, holding out His hands and pleading His blood before the Father in behalf of penitent, believing sinners (see Acts 7:56; Heb. 1:11-14). Those words must describe our experience, for only as we are penitent and believing will the salvation wrought in Christ's life and death and resurrection be ours.

"Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed.'"—*Ibid.*, p. 25.

Who nailed Christ to that wondrous cross? You did. I did.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,

And pour contempt on all my pride. 

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The way of the blood

The song of heaven itself will ever be:
"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

by Desmond Ford

The greatest problem in the world is sin and guilt. Even death finds in guilt the chief cause of its terrors. A host of lesser ills including unhappiness, uncertainty, irresoluteness, failure, and disease are intimately related to this universal phenomenon. In the parable of the ancient Jewish tabernacle we find symbolized Heaven's answer to man's greatest need—an answer traced in crimson by a divine finger dipped in blood.

"'For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for *it is the blood that makes atonement*, by reason of the life'" (Lev. 17:11, R.S.V.). This key word, "atonement," said to be procured by the blood, occurs almost eighty times in the books of the tabernacle—Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. The term literally means "to cover," thus indicating that the record of sin is covered before God through life poured out by a substitute.

A Jewish priest saw the blood on every hand. It was on the veil, the altar, the hangings, and the floor of the tabernacle, as well as being sprinkled on the mercy seat on the great Day of Atonement. The New Testament apostles likewise seemed to live surrounded by blood. Continually they glory in the blood of the antitypical Sacrifice. They describe salvation with all its facets in such

terms as redemption (1 Peter 1:18, 19), forgiveness (Eph. 1:7), justification (Rom. 5:9), peace (Col. 1:20), cleansing (1 John 1:7), sanctification (Heb. 13:12), access (Eph. 3:12), victory (Rev. 12:11), and everlasting glory in the presence of the Lamb (chap. 7:14, 15). But all these facets are the fruit of the atoning blood of Christ. Even the song of heaven itself is and ever will be: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (chap. 5:9).

Some in our day have endeavored to find a bloodless gospel in the New Testament. They speak of the blood as merely the symbol of a life lived in service, and our Lord's death is made a subordinate affair. The Incarnation rather than the cross becomes central, and salvation is set forth as the result of humanistic effort rather than as the fruit of substitution and imputation. The result of all such religion was clearly shown when Cain, who refused to apply the blood of a lamb, polluted the earth with the blood of his brother.

Neither Testament can fit the mold of such religion. The Hebrew word for blood occurs in 362 places, and, of these, 203 apply to death with violence. C. H. Spurgeon rightly claimed that no one could read Isaiah 53 with an open mind and fail to recognize the penal and atoning nature of the sufferings of Christ. For in that chapter we find such

statement as: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. . . . The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . He was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. . . . They made his grave with the wicked . . . although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief . . . he makes himself an offering for sin. . . . he shall bear their iniquities. . . . He bore the sin of many" (verses 5-12).

In the New Testament one third of Matthew's Gospel is devoted to the Passion Week; more than one third of Mark; one quarter of Luke; and more than one third of John. The Gospels, as has long been recognized, are Passion narratives with extended introductions. Their nature explains the almost complete silence on our Lord's early years, and the fact that only forty-four days of His ministry find specific mention.

In Acts and the Epistles the emphasis is the same. The burden of apostolic preaching is, "Redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14), conveying, through the simple act of faith, a present cleansing to the conscience, as the necessary qualification for the glory that is to follow.

"We should naturally have expected in apostolic teaching an abundant reference to the words and acts of our Lord Jesus, as the prolific sources of instruction. But we do not find such reference, nor anything like it. . . . The great doctor of the Church [Paul] had no such remembrances. . . . If the others were the Apostles of the manifestation of Christ, he was the Apostle of its results . . . the redemption, the reconciliation, the salvation." Thus T. D. Bernard in *The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament* (pp. 163, 164) has summarized the truth recognized by all evangelical and other Bible scholars, that the central proclamation of the apostles in Acts, and Paul in the Epistles, was the sacrifice of Christ and the redemption thus accomplished.

Even the Gospel accounts prior to Passion Week are replete with allusions to Calvary. Our Lord was laid in a manger at birth, reminding us that salvation from ancient times with its sacrificial victims such as the heifer, came out of the stable. The blood that attended His symbolic circumcision, the massacre of Bethlehem, the piercing sword predicted for Mary, the death and resurrection of the baptism at the Jordan, the turning of water into the wine (which prefigured His blood), the breaking of the loaves symbolizing His broken body, the reference to the uplifted serpent on the cross of the banner staff, the plain predictions of His sufferings found in Matthew 16 and elsewhere, the pervasive fragrance of the broken alabaster box—all these and more were fingers pointing to Golgotha's hill and its mysterious Victim. We also do well to make preeminent that which God has set forth as of first importance: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

From the shedding of the first tear and the decaying of the first leaf, from the very gates of Eden, winds the trail of sacrificial blood. Before the Jewish tabernacle, there was but one great sacrifice—the burnt offer-

ing. The later Levitical ritual divided this original sacrifice into parts—peace offering, trespass offering, and sin offering. But the heart of the primeval burnt offering was ever preserved—blood and fire being common to all, from the basic daily burnt offering for the whole encampment to the individual voluntary offerings.

And why this focusing on blood and fire? Because He whom we have sinned against is King and Judge, as well as Father, and therefore must needs be "just," as well as the "justifier" (Rom. 3:26). He must show that the law is inflexible and inexorable, the very foundation and keystone of existence. God must re-

"From the very gates of Eden winds the trail of sacrificial blood."

veal His hatred for sin, as well as His love for the sinner, and therefore atonement must spring not from His indifference to sin, but from His holiness. Only thus could He be both faithful and "just" in forgiving; only thus could grace reign "through righteousness" (1 John 1:9; Rom. 5:21). Calvary validates God's law as a reflection of the divine nature, more than if all mankind from Adam onward had kept it without a flaw. Our Creator is shown to be light as well as love, and truth as well as mercy. His wrath is revealed to be not like our selfish, capricious anger, but the inevitable recoil of His holiness against the most destructive element in the universe—sin. The fire associated with each sacrifice pointed to God's holy wrath, while the blood revealed that the demands of the equally holy law had been met.

Every sinner instinctively knows that *forgiveness that costs nothing is not true forgiveness. We could not worship a God who did not take our*

guilt at least as seriously as we ourselves take it.

"For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; . . . yet doth he [God] devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him" (2 Sam. 14:14). These beautiful words from the wise woman of Tekoah reveal the infinite superiority of God's dealings compared with man's. David, to whom the words were first addressed, failed miserably in dealing with his rebel son. Hear his cry as he contemplated the problem of reinstating a sinner whom he loved: "'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!'" (chap. 18:33, R.S.V.). Our Father, against whom we have conspired, *did die* in our stead, for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19).

The cross was the solution devised in heaven's eternity to meet the emergency of sin. It upholds the sacred law, yet brings forgiveness to the lawbreaker, and in such a way as to break his heart and restore him to harmony with the precepts he has formerly despised. "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. 11:33, R.S.V.).

It is no wonder, then, that the chief theologian of Scripture could exclaim: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (chap. 1:18, R.S.V.).

This is the second of a series of articles to appear bimonthly on the subject of the Jewish tabernacle and the Christian faith.

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Visiting the churches of Revelation—3

PERGAMOS— the popular church

by Orley M. Berg

Forty miles northeast of Smyrna is Pergamos, site of the church to which the third of the seven letters of the apostle John was addressed. The present city of Bergama lies at the foot of the mountain upon which stood the ancient city. Visiting there today, we pause first at the excavated remains of the Asclepieion—the famous center of healing and religion, with its two temples, a theater, and a medical library. Here some of the world's most renowned physicians practiced their art, with emphasis upon diet, hot and cold baths, and exercise. Among the patients were emperors Marcus Aurelius and Caracalla. The god of healing, Asclepius, was symbolized by a serpent.

After visiting a sacred spring, those seeking healing would run through a sacred tunnel, eighty-five yards long, to the round temple of Telesphorus, god of cure-revealing dreams. The priests would encourage patients with the assurance that, by the time they reached the temple, they would be well.

One fixture of the ancient city, the theater, is still usable. Seating 3,500, it is at the base of the hill where the sacred boulevard terminates. It is still used in May, during the annual festival of Bergama.

The elevated city

Pergamos means “elevation.” Appropriately, the religious and cultural center of the city was on the top of a conspicuous elevation a short distance from the healing complex. The acropolis is entered by the path leading to the gateway, or royal door, of the town's first wall. Up the hill came pilgrims of distant lands to worship at one of the sacred shrines, or study in one of the libraries. A threefold defensive wall of tremendous size, some of which remains, rendered the fortress town seemingly impregnable to enemy assaults.

Having passed through the huge stone gateways, we see the site where stood the Temple of Athena. Erected in the fourth century B.C., it was converted into a church by Justinian in the sixth century A.D. Today only the lower portions of courtyard columns and a few broken porticoes remain.

Near the temple stood the 200,000-volume Pergamon library. To the magistrates of the metropolis and keepers of the library, book collecting became a mania. The library of Alexandria was the only rival. Becoming jealous, Ptolemy of Egypt forbade the shipment of papyrus, of which books were made.

The Pergamene were thus forced to turn to the use of skins. And so “Pergamene paper” came into being. From its name the word *parchment* is derived. Pages were made into codex-type books, marking a great advance in the publishing business. Unfortunately, none of the books have survived.

A short distance from the library, against the steep hillside, is a spectacular Greek-style theater. Its seventy-eight rows of seats accommodated 15,000 spectators.

Where Satan's seat is

Equally impressive is the site of the famous altar of Zeus. Marked today by a cluster of trees, it stood on an 1,800-foot-square terrace on the eastern side of the mountain. Only the foundation remains, for the German excavators sent every unearthed stone to Berlin, where the huge altar was reassembled. It may be seen in the Pergamon Museum in the eastern sector of the city. A special building was needed to house it, for it measures 127 feet long, 120 feet wide, and 40 feet high. A monumental stairway leads to a large portico, with additional porticoes on either side. Both the inner and outer walls were embellished with a 375-foot-long frieze depicting

the gods of the Greek Olympiad battling giants with snakelike tails, the worship of Zeus being associated with snake-handling. Following World War II the altar was dismantled and taken to the Soviet Union. In 1958 it was returned and rebuilt in the museum. The altar represents one of the most fantastic remains of pagan worship to survive the ages.

In John's letter to the church of Pergamos the denunciation is made that its members dwelt "even where Satan's seat is" (Rev. 2:13). In 1871 an altar was found bearing the inscription "Zeus, the Saviour." Pergamos was indeed the city of the Imperial Cult.

Period of amalgamation

The historical period represented by the letter to the church of Pergamos began in A.D. 313, with the decree of Constantine bringing persecution to an end. It continued until A.D. 538, when the decree of Emperor Justinian made Christianity the official religion of the empire. During this period the persecuted church of the Smyrna period became the "elevated," or popular, church. "Constantine became revered as the equal of the apostles and the vice-regent of God on earth. Blending temporal powers of Caesar with the spiritual authority of the church, he ruled supreme over both church and state."—*Hagia Sophia*, p. 17.

The letter to the church of Pergamos rebuked the congregation for fraternizing with those who held the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes. Balaam corrupted the morals of the ancient Israelites just before they were to cross Jordan into the Promised Land. The Nicolaitanes were a heretical sect who sought accommodation with the pagan cults.

This period, then, was a time of deteriorating morals and doctrinal corruption for the church. Satan had failed to destroy the church through persecution. Now he sapped it of spiritual vitality through compromise. Christian standards were lowered, and a union was formed between Christianity and paganism. "The multiplication of holy days,

the veneration of saints, martyrs, and relics, and the value attached to pilgrimages and holy places, often pushed truly spiritual concerns into the background."—HARRY R. BOER, *A Short History of the Christian Church*, p. 142.

Describing the aims of Constantine, church historian F. J. Foakes-Jackson declares, "In dealing with the church his object was gradually to transfer to Christianity from heathenism all that had hitherto made it attractive in the eyes of the people."—*The History of the Christian Church*, p. 286.

Historian H. G. Heggtveit describes these events in vivid terms: "Constantine labored at this time untiringly to unite the worshipers of the old and the new faith in one religion. All his laws and contrivances are aimed at promoting this amalgamation of religions. He would by all lawful and peaceable means melt together a purified heathenism and a moderated Christianity."—*Illustreret Kirkehistorie* (Christiania: Cammermeyers Boghandel, 1891-1895), p. 202.

Heggtveit points to Constantine's law of 321 as a notable example of this: "His injunction that the 'Day of the Sun' should be a general rest day was characteristic of his standpoint. . . . Of all his blending and melting together of Christianity and heathenism, none is more easy to see through than this making of his Sunday law. 'The Christians worshiped their Christ, the heathen their sun god; according to the opinion of the Emperor, the objects for worship in both religions were essentially the same.'"—*Ibid.*, p. 202.

Concerning the Sunday Law, Harry Boer writes, "he designated Sunday by its traditional pagan name, the Day of the Sun, not the Sabbath or the Day of the Lord. Pagans could therefore accept it. Christians gave the natural sun a new meaning by thinking of Christ the Sun of Righteousness. Both Constantine and later emperors, as well as the church councils, enacted additional Sunday legislation. It was Constantine's decree of 321, however, that laid the basis for the uni-

versal recognition of Sunday as a day of rest."—BOER, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

In the parallel prophecy of Revelation 4-6, this important period is represented by the opening of the third seal, revealing a rider on a black horse. Illustrating the corruptions that came in, the color is in striking contrast to the white horse of the first-century church. The rider of the horse holds a balance in his hand and offers grain at an exorbitant price, thus indicating the scarcity of the pure Word.

But there were those who sought to maintain the true faith of the apostles. Foremost among them was Patrick. Born in A.D. 389 in Britain, he was taken captive to Ireland at 16 years of age, but managed to escape after six years. Later he converted to Christ and returned to Ireland as a missionary. There he established scores of churches and baptized, always by immersion, thousands of converts. Out of his labors grew the Celtic church, which held to much of the true faith through long centuries while apostasy flourished.

Columba, a native of Ireland, was a product of Patrick's work and the Celtic schools. In A.D. 563 he and twelve followers sailed for Scotland, where he established a missionary center on the island of Iona. From this center, missionaries went to distant lands, where they heralded the faith of the Bible. But with their efforts we trespass into the period of the fourth church, Thyatira.

In every age, followers of Christ have stood for the true faith. The promise to the faithful of Pergamos was, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving him that receiveth it" (verse 17). ■■

Orley M. Berg is an executive editor of MINISTRY.

During the period of A.D. 313 to A.D. 538, represented by the Pergamos church, numerous alterations in religious practice and belief found their way into the church. The article on page 14 follows the process of one such transformation.

How the doctrine of baptism changed

by V. Norskov Olsen

The following article, "How the Doctrine of Baptism Changed," illustrates the period of changing beliefs and doctrinal amalgamation that took place within the era of the Pergamos church.

The New Testament presents a doctrine of baptism in which the essential spiritual prerequisites are the preaching of the gospel, confession of sin, and a personal affirmation of faith in Christ's death and resurrection, leading to a baptism burial of the "old man" and a spiritual resurrection to a regenerated life with Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Since the baptism was by immersion of adult believers, one may well ask, "How and when did the practice of infant baptism with its different theological content originate?"

Basic religious influences

In the postapostolic age of the second century, an apostasy began that touched most Christian doctrines, leaving hardly a single Biblical truth free of Jewish or pagan ingredients.

Many factors aided this process. One major influence was superstition, which associated itself with the numerous pagan mystery cults, where sacred rites performed by an initiated priesthood with a mystic efficacy conveyed "spiritual" cleansing. As a materialistic concept of the baptismal water entered the church, the significance of the scriptural teaching of repentance in the life of the recipient was reduced. The growing belief in the mechanical efficacy of baptism went hand in

hand with a failure to understand the New Testament concept of salvation by grace alone.

Christian parents who believed in the mystical, magical power of baptism administered the "sanctifying" water as early as possible in the lives of their children. On the other hand, the same concept made some parents postpone the act of baptism in fear of postbaptismal sin. For this reason the emperor Constantine was first baptized on his deathbed, because he believed that his soul would be purified of whatever errors he had committed as a mortal man through the efficacy of the mystical words and the salutary waters of baptism. However, the practice of infant baptism gradually became more firmly established, especially after the church father Augustine (died A.D. 430) undergirded the mystical efficacy of infant baptism with the doctrine of original sin.

The post-Nicene fathers

In the period of the post-Nicene fathers (c. 381-600), adult baptism continued along with infant baptism until the latter became the common practice in the fifth century. Bishop Ambrose of Milan (died 397) was first baptized at the age of 34, even though he was the son of Christian parents. Both Chrysostom (died 407) and Jerome (died 420) were in their twenties when they were baptized. About A.D. 360 Basil said that "any time in one's life is proper for baptism," and Gregory of Nazianzus (died 390), when answering the question, "Shall we baptize in-

fants?" compromised by saying, "Certainly if danger threatens. For it is better to be sanctified unconsciously than to depart from this life unsealed and uninitiated." However, when no danger of death existed, his judgment was "that they should wait till they are 3 years old when it is possible for them to hear and answer something about the sacrament. For then, even if they do not completely understand, yet they will receive the outlines."

This statement reflects the ever-present theological dilemma when one seeks to adhere both to the New Testament prerequisites for baptism (personal hearing and acceptance of the gospel by faith) and the belief in a magical efficacy of the baptismal water itself. The latter concept gained the upper hand when Augustine made infant baptism cancel the guilt of original sin and was more solidly established as the church developed the idea of sacramental grace (the view that the sacraments serve as vehicles of divine grace).

The historical development of infant baptism in the ancient church marked a milestone at the Council of Carthage (418). For the first time a council prescribed the rite of infant baptism: "If any man says that new-born children need not be baptized . . . let him be anathema."

The conflict over rebaptism

In the middle of the third century, the church of North Africa faced the question of the validity of a baptism administered in a schismatic or heretical church. Cyprian, the Bishop

of Carthage, and other bishops decided at two councils at Carthage in 255 and 256 that "heretics" and "schismatics" who wanted to join the Catholic Church should be baptized anew. Stephen, the Bishop of Rome, opposed this concept and threatened the African bishops with excommunication, declaring that the validity of the baptismal act depended only on the proper formula and intention. Further, the virtue of the baptism would be realized when the person joined the one true Catholic Church. The issue had subsided by the death of Stephen, in 257, and Cyprian, in 258, but was revived early in the fifth century among the Donatists in North Africa.

The Donatists claimed to be the only true Catholic Church, in distinction to the established church, with its worldliness and lack of discipline. Those from the established church who wanted to join the pure church were requested to be rebaptized. The unity of the church, which Constantine so much needed in order to glue his empire together, was threatened by the Donatist schism, so the first church council he convened after becoming ruler of the West Roman Empire dealt with this issue. At Arles in A.D. 314 this council opposed rebaptism.

The unity of church and state

When Constantine accepted Christianity and later made it the favored religion of the empire, he sought to fuse together church and state into a homogeneous Christian society. The process begun by him was continued by succeeding Christian emperors. In such a society, all citizens must be considered Christians; to wait for the voluntary decision of the individual would contradict the very nature of a state-church. Further, a church in homogeneous unity with the state cannot dispense with compulsion. The "Christian" emperors already found infant baptism in existence; they believed that the act of baptism makes one a Christian; therefore, it is easy to understand how infant baptism gradually became the cor-

nerstone of the established church in a Christian society, just as circumcision had been the covenant sign among the Israelites.

The great cleavage in the church of North Africa regarding rebaptism continued into the fifth century. At the suggestion of Augustine, the emperor Honorius called a meeting in Carthage in 411, with nearly three hundred bishops on both the Catholic and Donatist sides present. The outcome of the discussion was prejudiced by the presence of the emperor's representative, who declared the Donatists wrong in requiring rebaptism. Two years later, in March, 413, Honorius joined Emperor Theodosius in reissuing a law regarding rebaptism. This law formed a part of the Theodosian Code, a collection of sixty laws against heretics, with exile, confiscation of property, and corporal punishment among the penalties for heresy. A similar law was issued again in 428.

Most significant is the legal code *Corpus Juris Civilis*, by Emperor Justinian, 527-565. This code incorporated ecclesiastical decrees of the emperors and doctrinal resolutions of the church councils into the civil laws of the state, thus transforming them into judicial statutes to be enforced by the secular power. A whole section of the code deals with the question of rebaptism, specifying capital punishment as the penalty for this act. Since the Code of Justinian was adopted by the "Christianized" countries of Western Europe, it is not surprising that the law against heretics found application century after century. In fact, when Roman Catholics and Protestant Reformers alike sanctioned capital punishment for Anabaptists in the sixteenth century, they did so on the strength of the Justinian Code.

The mode of baptism

The word *baptism* comes from the Greek *baptizo*, "to dip," "to immerse." Accordingly, we find only one mode of baptism in the New Testament—immersion. This form continued to be the most common

for more than thirteen centuries, as reference upon reference from the church fathers demonstrates. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), the foremost Roman Catholic theologian, asserted in his *Summa Theologiae* that "baptism may be given not only by immersion, but also by affusion of water, or sprinkling with it. But it is the safer way to baptize by immersion, because that is the most common custom" (III. 66.7). Baptistries in ancient churches up to the time of the Reformation tell us that baptism was performed by immersion even when infant baptism was practiced. However, sprinkling became ever more common. Luther sought to restore immersion, but did not succeed. In England and Scotland, sprinkling was not practiced until after the Reformation, and the practice of immersion continues in the Eastern churches to the present.

Baptism by sprinkling or pouring came to be known as "clinical baptism," because it was first primarily used for those who were sick. No doubt because of bodily weakness the practice was used also on infants. However, sprinkling can also be traced to pagan rites. When the water of baptism became charged with a mysterious virtue, which gave it a quasi-spiritual efficacy operating more or less mechanically, the realistic symbolism of baptism by immersion was lost.

Yet the apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Romans points out that the rite of baptism by immersion expresses symbolically our personal faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection in our behalf. The essence of baptism on the human side, wrought by the Holy Spirit, is a renunciation of self or a burial of the "old man" and a resurrection to a new life in which the power of the resurrected Lord is at work. Only believers' baptism by immersion can realistically symbolize the theological essence of the Biblical doctrine of baptism. ■

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ASK THE EDITOR

With homosexuality becoming such a prominent issue, how does MINISTRY view the subject? What is the Biblical perspective?

The following is an edited condensation of a recently taped discussion hosted by J. R. Spangler, editor of MINISTRY, on the subject "A Biblical Perspective of Homosexuality." Also taking part are Dr. Robert Wilson, chairman of the Department of Social Behavior at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland, and Arthur Delafield, veteran minister and author, of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Washington, D.C.

The entire discussion appears in the July selection of Aspire Tape of the Month Club. The single cassette may be obtained by sending \$2.50 to MINISTRY, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

Spangler: First of all, what opinion do you men have about our source of religious knowledge? What is the basis for the Christian's moral judgments?

Delafield: I think we must recognize that the Lord founded the church and that it is therefore a divine institution. As such, we must receive our instruction from the Author of that church, whom we understand also to be the Author of the Holy Scriptures.

Wilson: As a sociologist I would speak somewhat differently, in this sense: we have to develop a way of arriving at the truth—the truth we will interpret as reality. But when you're dealing with a concept of the Bible you are dealing not with temporary norms of human existence, but rather with permanent, eternal standards. Now, this is the main

problem that we have in homosexuality. Do we predicate our judgments on the categorical absolutes of God, or on the temporary norms of man, who is in sin?

Spangler: All of us agree, I believe, that God's Word is the standard on which to base our moral judgments. But what do you do with the argument put forward by Anglican Theologian Norman Pittinger, who thinks that homosexual orientation is an expression of God-intended variety of His creation.

Wilson: This view was expressed in a BBC program on homosexuality some years ago. But you see, if we get into the sort of situational ethic that says, "God has expected me to have variety," then why should I have only one wife?

Delafield: I think, Bob, that the homosexual problem is more than simply the gratification of sensual feeling, and variety. It has to do with the ingrained ability of man to reproduce. In the very beginning, when God made male and female, as the Word of God says, He gave them the command to "multiply, and replenish the earth." In other words, sex is related to more than gratification of sensual feeling. It is related to procreation. By contrast, homosexuality is death-oriented; it is not life-oriented.

Wilson: I think there is more than this, even. You see, homosexuality is, in a very real sense, taking what God originally created as a face-to-face expression of communication between a man and a woman in sexual relations and turning it into an

almost beastlike relationship. It is a perversion, although I know that after the Wolfington report of the middle 50's they didn't want to call it a perversion anymore. They wanted to use the word *inversion*, to make it look nicer. But at the same time I am not denying the homosexual's right to seek eternal life through Christ.

Delafield: Yes, I think we ought to make that very plain at the outset. We must never leave the impression that Jesus Christ is against *homosexuals*, when actually Jesus Christ is against *homosexuality*.

Spangler: All right, now, let's come back to the Scriptures. Art, you mentioned that the real function of sexuality is procreation. At least that's the primary function, isn't it? I assume, then, that you men believe that Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 portray God's original intention as far as human sexuality is concerned, even though some modern theologians believe that Genesis 2 is the older account of Creation.

Wilson: Yes. You see, the argument that some use to defend homosexuality is that Genesis 1, which includes the command to populate the earth, is a later account of Creation, whereas the second chapter, which they see as the older version of Creation, pictures a unity of the flesh, a unity of freedom in which the expression of God can come in the unity of the flesh.

Spangler: What you are saying, then, is that this unity of flesh has nothing to do with the unity of persons of the same sex, as far as the Scriptures are concerned?

Wilson: Correct. God made a difference, and He did so for a reason. I see this both as an ordained minister and as a sociologist who believes in the Word of Jesus Christ as the basis on which I must predicate all my decisions. God made a difference, because you and I can do something that angels cannot. We can literally enter into the act of creation. That act becomes a perversion, however, when one deliberately engages with someone of the same sex in actions that he or she knows are totally unnatural and contrary to the instructions of Him who made the plan for the creation of life.

Spangler: That's very good. I like the way you are explaining this. Now let's come to Genesis 19, where we find the story of the destruction of Sodom. This divine condemnation of homosexuality is challenged by some who would reinterpret the story to mean that inhospitality, not homosexuality, was the point at issue in arousing divine wrath.

Wilson: It is very interesting. As we read the story we see these angels who come to Sodom. And here were a group of men that wanted to "know" them. The reinterpreters say that the Hebrew word *Yadha*, "to know," means simply, I want to know you. According to this interpretation, the word shows no hostility at all. The men of Sodom just wanted to know who these strangers were, maybe for safety. But if you go further and read the next verse, you see that Lot offered his daughters for them to *yadha*, to know. He definitely uses the word in the context of sexuality. The whole concept of sexual relations in the Bible is described as "to know," because it is a communicative link in the sense that a man and a woman are literally speaking to each other during the act of engaging in intercourse. They are communicating. It is not just a passion, but a getting "to know." There is no doubt that Genesis 19 refers to homosexuality.

Delafield: I don't think that the mere lack of hospitality would jus-

tify such an enormous act of judgment on the part of God as the destruction of the cities of the plain by fire and brimstone.

Spangler: We want to come, next, to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. These are traditionally read as unambiguous repudiations of homosexual acts. The first says, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with woman-kind: it is abomination," and the second text says that if a man has intercourse with a man as with a woman, they both commit an abomination.

Wilson: I want to come back also to Leviticus 18:22, 23. Verse 23 is very important. It says, "Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith." So here the Bible connects the act of homosexual love-making with bestiality. They are similar and both without excuse. According to Leviticus 20:13 those who engaged in either practice were to be stoned.

Delafield: And it's obvious that the terrible penalty of stoning the homosexual to death was for homosexuality, not for discourtesy.

Spangler: I think that's a good point. The Bible position on homosexuality is beginning to show rather clearly now, isn't it? Now, gentlemen, in Romans 1 Paul talks about homosexual desire and activity and denounces it as shameful lust. What do you have to say about that? In fact, he characterizes homosexuality as abandoning natural relations—the normal heterosexual responses.

Delafield: Here in Romans 1:22-27 the apostle Paul speaks of degenerate men and women who "boast of their wisdom, but they have made fools of themselves, changing the splendour of immortal God for an image shaped like mortal man. . . . For this reason God has given them up to the vileness of their own desires, and the consequent degradation of their bodies, because they have bartered away the true God for a false one. . . . In consequence, I say, God has given them up to shameful passions. Their women have exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and their men in turn,

giving up natural relations with women, burn with lust for one another; males behave indecently with males, and are paid in their own persons the fitting wage of such perversion" (N.E.B.).* Now, Paul calls it perversion, and notice the very scientific statement that they "are paid in their own persons the fitting wage of such perversion." Only a homosexual knows, I'm sure, how true this Bible statement is, that he pays in his own body, mind, and soul the fitting wage of such perversion. The guilt, the frustration, the feeling of rejection by society, the rebellion toward God, the homosexual's inability to relate to the future and to having a posterity of his own—all of this seems to be paid to the homosexual by his very practice.

Spangler: This would be a good answer, then, to those people who assert that what Paul castigates here is homosexual promiscuity, not homosexual activity as such, or that God can tolerate homosexual monogamy just as easily as He can command heterosexual monogamy.

Wilson: There is a problem here. Some say that if two homosexuals get married and stay only to themselves, then this is all right because it is love. But it is unproductive. It is noncreative, and it is not love. Love is constructive. Homosexuality is destructive. If you put two men or two women together, instead of one and one making two, you've got one and one making one half.

Delafield: It's very easy for us to be enthusiastic about the Bible's position on this subject. But let me just put in this caution. We must recognize the possibility that some listening to or reading this interview will have tendencies in this direction, or may even be homosexuals. Let us never forget that Jesus died to save homosexuals. There is no doubt in my mind that homosexuality is sin. But the point I'm trying to make is that Jesus died to save sinners.

Wilson: It is certainly true that there is too much smug heterosexuality that is sin, as well. I've heard many kids say, "I'd rather be into adultery than homosexuality." Can

you really justify one by saying that it's better to do this than the other?

Spangler: Don't you feel, however, that the homosexual act takes a person to a very perverted and extreme conclusion? Perhaps you can't say that one sin is worse than another kind of sin. But homosexuality does seem to do something to the individual who goes that far into sexual perversion.

Wilson: People do much the same thing in the heterosexual realm. They call it "kinky" sex. A man and woman can engage in all sorts of experimentation in which there's no idea of communication or love.

Spangler: Now let me ask this question, Can homosexuals inherit the kingdom? What do we do with 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, where Paul seems to condemn all homosexuals without qualification? He says there, "Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals . . . will inherit the kingdom of God" (R.S.V.). Now how do we interpret that text?

Delafield: However, Paul says after he speaks about this terrible thing called homosexual perversion, "Such were some of you. But you have been through the purifying waters; you have been dedicated to God and justified through the name of the Lord Jesus and the Spirit of our God" (verse 11, N.E.B.). Now if I understand this verse correctly, some of the Corinthian members had at one time been homosexuals, but now they were redeemed homosexuals and had ceased their homosexuality.

Spangler: I'm encouraged with this, because I have talked with some psychiatrists who believe that once a person has become a practicing homosexual it's virtually hopeless for him to be reached even by the Spirit of God.

Delafield: Bob, we often quote the text in Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Now, do you know to whom this is directed? This

is the thing that is missing in our preachers' discussion of this text. This is addressed to "ye rulers of Sodom"—in other words, to homosexual Israelites back in the days of Isaiah. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah." "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well" (verses 10, 16, 17). Now if it was impossible for these "rulers of Sodom . . . [and] Gomorrah" to learn to do well, once they had been practicing homosexuality, why do you suppose Isaiah extended to them this invitation?

Wilson: It is a learned behavior.

Spangler: Now that's a point I want to come to, Bob—this idea of homosexuals' not being any more neurotic or psychotic than heterosexuals. Is this true? Is a person born with homosexuality, or does he cultivate it?

Wilson: Most of homosexual behavior is learned. And if it's a learned response, it can be unlearned.

Delafield: On this question of homosexuality's being a disease, I think of sickness as a disease—a dis-ease. In other words, the body, mind, and soul of a man is not at ease. Sin has brought this condition on. In that sense we must recognize disease in our analysis of the homosexual. There is a diseased function of mind as opposed to organic disease.

Wilson: There is another aspect of this question as it relates to society. The family is the basic unit of society. The Bible recognizes this fundamental sociological fact. Now, if the family is the basic essential unit for society's health, and if one begins to destroy this unit, which homosexuality does, and as adultery and some other practices also do, the equilibrium and the health of society is also weakened and will eventually fall.

Spangler: Very good. All right, let's go to one last point here. I was reading an Adventist author concerning homosexuality recently. He

said, "The thoughtful Christian is committed to the conviction that no one should be blamed, condemned, or even looked down upon for something over which he has no control."

Delafield: The Word of God consistently teaches that a man's will is of vital importance. If man puts his will on the side of faith and action—on the side of God—his will becomes omnipotent. Yet very seldom is the human will discussed in books and classes in psychology. To downplay man's will makes him a sort of machine, a creature of his circumstances and his surroundings with no control over his own destiny.

Wilson: And it makes him subservient to conditional manipulation and behavioral modification.

Delafield: Worse, still, it makes him a mere animal. But in the Bible, man's will stands out as the distinctive feature of the one whom God made in His own image. So I disagree that there are situations such as homosexuality over which man has no control. When a man wills to do God's will there is introduced into his life the grace of God and the gospel.

Wilson: And this grace is predicated on the faith that is based on the hearing of the Word of God. Here is a frightening thing. As a man who has taught sociology and religion, I am frightened that in the Adventist Church there seems to be a growing lack of predicating our values, our standards, on a direct knowledge of the Bible. We're beginning to look to theologies and away from a "Thus saith the Lord," and that's where homosexuality gets in and where it's able to make inroads—through the behavioral sciences and the philosophies and disciplines such as that.

Spangler: I think that's well put. Let's base everything we stand for solidly on the Bible. ■■

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SCIENCE AND RELIGION

How Scientific Is Evolution? Some basic assumptions of the evolutionary theory are now seen as examples of circular logic.

The following material originally appeared as an editorial in Origins, vol. 4, No. 1, 1977. Used by permission.

The *Humanist*, an official publication of the American Humanist Association and the American Ethical Union, recently (January-February, 1977) published a statement affirming evolution as a principle of science. The statement, signed by 163 scholars, most of whom are biologists in leading universities of the United States, was prepared for distribution to major public school districts in the United States. Among its sponsors are such notables as Isaac Asimov, Linus Pauling, and George Gaylord Simpson.

The statement points out that "all known forms of life including human beings developed by a lengthy process of evolution." This broad perspective on evolution is what Kerkut (1960, p. 157) calls the "general theory of evolution," in contrast to the "special theory of evolution," which deals with small variations in organisms such as have been observed in nature and the laboratory. The statement in the *Humanist* also indicates that the principle of biological evolution meets "exceptionally well" the criteria demanded by science of being "*firmly established . . . on rigorous evidence*" and that in recent years more confirmation of the principle of natural selection and adaptation as proposed by Darwin and Wallace has continued to accumulate. The statement further asserts that "creationism is not scientific," while evolution is "strictly scientific."

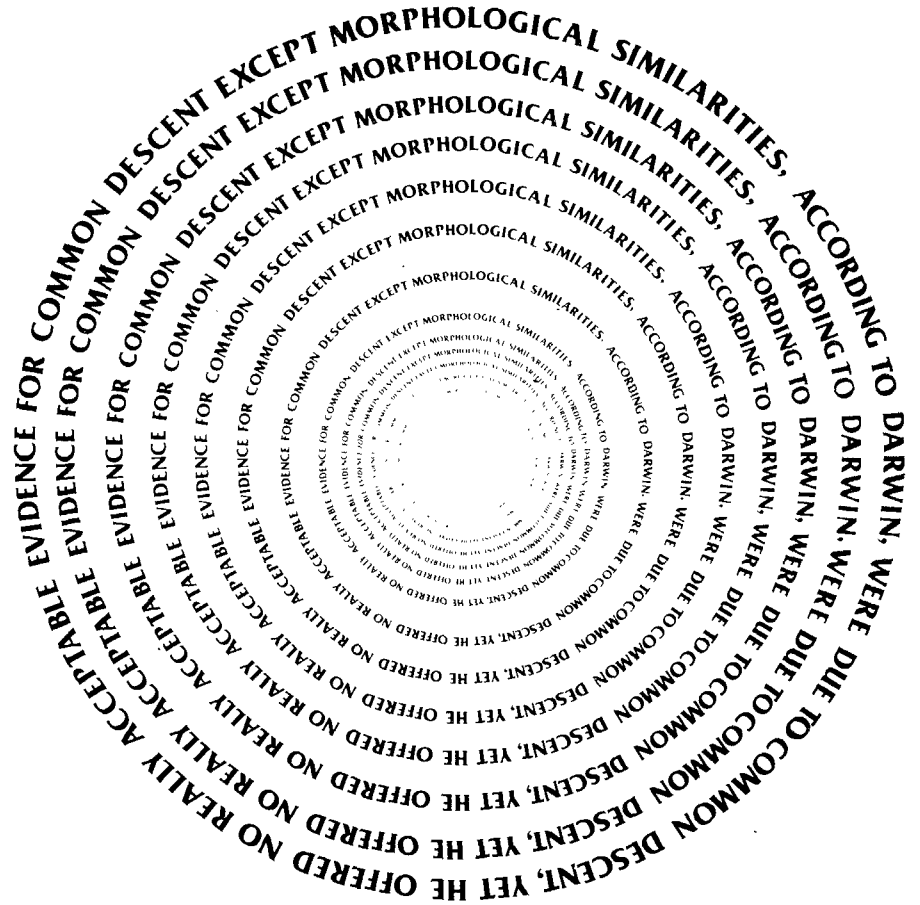
On the other hand, there has been an ongoing debate within the scientific community, largely among individuals who believe in evolution, about the validity of evolution as a scientific principle. The statement published in the *Humanist* suggests that under the pressure of current criticism leveled at evolution, basic

scientific values may be overlooked or given secondary place over other factors.

Much of the debate regarding the validity of evolution revolves around the elementary notion that science explains things on the basis of cause and effect. Simply stated, given certain conditions, certain results can be expected. This feature gives science its predictive qualities. For instance the statement "A magnet attracts iron" can be tested and used to predict what will happen when the two are near each other.

Hans Reichenbach in *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (1951, p. 89) emphasizes the necessity of a predictive quality for science: "A mere report of relations observed in the past cannot be called knowledge; if

knowledge is to reveal objective relations of physical objects, it must include reliable predictions. A radical empiricism, therefore, denies the possibility of knowledge." The concept of predictability and subsequent testability has prompted the noted scientific philosopher Karl Popper to further emphasize that if an explanation cannot be adequately tested, it is not scientific. The concept must be testable (i.e., falsifiable) to qualify. Any kind of explanation will not do; it must be amenable to a testing process. If it survives testing, it can qualify. In our magnet example, we might propose that objects of only a certain color (and not a magnet) attract iron. If a red magnet were found to work, we could further test the notion by



using a wooden block of the same color as the magnet and thus disprove the color theory. Popper in his book *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1968, p. 40) is emphatic on the matter of falsification. He states: "But I shall certainly admit a system as empirical or scientific only if it is capable of being *tested* by experience. These considerations suggest that not the *verifiability* but the *falsifiability* of a system is to be taken as a criterion of demarcation."

The idea that a genuine scientific idea must have the consistency that gives it predictive value, and the potential for falsification, has received a great deal of attention during the past few years among scientific philosophers and evolutionists. There is very little disagreement with this aspect of science as enunciated by Popper, and there is genuine concern as to how to apply this principle to the theory of evolution. The unrepeatable or untestable events postulated for evolution are not amenable to evaluation on the basis of consistency and prediction. Thus the concept of evolution as a principle of science is being questioned at a most fundamental level. Does it really qualify as a scientific principle? Some examples of deficiencies follow.

The concept of natural selection by survival of the fittest is the basic evolutionary mechanism. This concept does not qualify as a scientific principle, since fitness is equivalent to survival. Here we have a case of circular reasoning; no consistency or predictive value can be tested. According to this idea, organisms have survived through the evolutionary process because they are better fit, and the way one tells they are better fit is that they survive. A number of evolutionary scholars have labeled the principle of survival of the fittest a tautology (e.g., Waddington [1957], Eden [1967], Peters [1976]). Popper (1963) attacks the unfalsifiable nature of the concept and concludes: "If, more especially, we accept that statistical definition of fitness which defines fitness by actual survival, then the survival of

the fittest becomes tautological, and irrefutable."

The concept of survival of the fittest of itself does not necessarily imply any evolution. Would not the fittest survive, whether they evolved or were created? The noted evolutionist Mayr (1976, p. 3) speaks of "an all-powerful natural selection." Platnick (1977) wonders if there is any difference in this kind of explanation as compared to that of an all-powerful Creator.

Some evolutionary biologists are of the opinion that it is not necessarily the fittest that survive through the evolutionary process, but those that are best adapted to the require-

"Would not the fittest survive whether they evolved or were created?"

ments of evolution. Others have emphasized that survival of the organism is not as important as its fecundity. In both cases the problem of predictability remains. In a symposium volume celebrating 100 years of Darwinism, the prominent geneticist Waddington (1960, p. 385) evaluates the matter of fecundity. He states, "Natural selection, which was at first considered as though it were a hypothesis that was in need of experimental or observational confirmation, turns out on closer inspection to be a tautology, a statement of inevitable although previously unrecognized relation. It states that the fittest individuals in a population (defined as those which leave most offspring) will leave most offspring."

Another problem associated with the untestability of evolutionary theory is that the theory explains too much. Grene (1959) points out that "whatever might at first sight appear as evidence against the theory is assimilated by redefinition into the theory." Evolutionary theory is broad enough to accommodate al-

most any data that may be applied. Two ecologists Birch and Ehrlich (1967) emphasize this. They state: "Our theory of evolution has become, as Popper described, one which cannot be refuted by any possible observations. Every conceivable observation can be fitted into it. It is thus 'outside of empirical science' but not necessarily false. No one can think of ways in which to test it."

No matter what is observed, there usually is an appropriate evolutionary explanation for it. If an organ or organism develops, it has positive survival value; if it degenerates, it has negative survival value. If a complex biological system appears suddenly, it is due to preadaptation. "Living fossils" (contemporary representatives of organisms expected to be extinct) survive because the environment did not change. If the environment changes and an evolutionary lineage survives, it is due to adaptation. If the lineage dies, it is because the environment changed too much, et cetera. Hence the concept cannot be falsified. Platnick (1977) states that this type of situation "makes of evolutionary biologists spinners of tales, bedtime storytellers, instead of empirical investigators."

A few scientists (e.g., Williams [1970, 1973], Ball [1975], Ferguson [1976]) have tried to show that evolutionary theory can predict. Their attempts, however, are concerned with the small changes of the special theory of evolution instead of the general one that is at issue and that is the main subject of the declaration published in the *Humanist*. These small changes do not prove large ones, as Grene (1959) points out: "By what right are we to extrapolate the pattern by which colour or other such superficial characters are governed to the origin of species, let alone of classes, orders, phyla of living organisms?" The question of the testability of the general theory of evolution remains.

Basic textbooks of biology usually illustrate evolution using the concept of homologous structures. Here we

have another example of circular reasoning that would not pass the prediction test for science. Homologous structures are defined as comparable parts of different life forms that have a common evolutionary origin. The forelimbs of a salamander, crocodile, bird, bat, whale, mole, and man all have the same basic bone structure and are considered homologous. Similarity does not necessarily imply evolution. A student commenting to an evolutionary professor put it aptly: "They find a muscle in an animal and give it a name; in another animal they find a muscle in a similar position and give it the same name and then call it evolution." Darwin himself used the argument of similarity of structure to support evolution. Lee (1969) points out that the argument is logically invalid: "He [Darwin] argued that morphological similarities were due to common descent and yet offered no further really acceptable evidence for common descent save morphological similarities. A circular piece of reasoning if there ever was one."

Hull (1967) makes the same complaint: "It is tautological to say that homologous resemblances are indicative of common line of descent, since by definition homologous resemblances are those resemblances due to common line of descent."

The same difficulty reappears when evolutionists attempt to classify living and fossil organisms so that their evolutionary relationships are revealed. One might select, for example, the group of invertebrates which most closely resembles the chordates and place the two groups near each other in a classification scheme. The classification is then often used as evidence for an evolutionary relationship.

Several widely divergent schools of thought have developed regarding the kinds of characteristics that are most important in determining evolutionary relationships. As a result, opinions as to whether Popper's criteria of falsifiability can be satisfied also differ widely (e.g., Bock [1973], Wiley [1975]). Perhaps the soundest

conclusion expressed by a number of scholars is that from a practical standpoint the process of evolution is too complex and past events too unknown to permit a meaningful reconstruction of evolutionary phylogenetic patterns (Manser [1965], Barker [1969], Lee [1969], Platnick [1977]). Orians (1973) and Slobodkin (1968) admit it is very difficult. An alternative is to adopt the view expressed by the prominent evolutionist Ernst Mayr (1976, p. 411) that classification of organisms is an "art." This would remove the problem altogether from the arena of science.


Evolution must lie outside of empirical science because no one can think of ways to test it.

This brings us to another point: a number of scientists and scientific philosophers, in attempting to reconcile the lack of rigor in evolutionary theory compared to current scientific standards, have proposed that evolution be treated differently. This, of course, tends to alienate it from science and from being a "principle of science" as proposed in the *Humanist* statement. Such views have been proposed by Beckner (1959), Scriven (1959), Smart (1963), and Manser (1965), while Barker (1969) and Flew (1966) propose that evolution is more closely related to historical studies than to typical science. Ruse (1973), on the other hand, suggests that evolutionary events are subject to the same scientific principles that apply to most of science. Platnick (1977) in the journal *Systematic Zoology* is still more emphatic: "Evolutionary biologists have a choice to make: either we agree with Mayr that narrative explanations are the name of the game, and continue drifting away from the rest of biology into an area ruled only by authority and

consensus, or we insist that whenever possible our explanations be testable and potentially falsifiable and that evolutionary biology rejoin the scientific community at large."

The concept of Creation does not appear to meet the criterion of falsifiability any better than evolution. Science is not at its best when dealing with unique past events, whether these be considered as evolution or Creation. Therefore it is surprising to find a statement signed by more than 120 scientists stating that creationism is "a purely religious view" while evolution is labeled as "strictly scientific."

The controversy over whether or not evolution is a scientific principle has reached beyond the scientific community. In his article entitled "Darwin's Mistake," published in *Harper's Magazine*, Bethell (1976) states his belief that Darwin's theory "is on the verge of collapse." The jurist Macbeth (1971) in his book *Darwin Retried* presents a long list of illogical arguments employed in support of evolution. He does not defend Creation, yet states that "Darwinism itself has become a religion" (p. 126).

The statement in the *Humanist* affirming evolution as a principle of science has the support of many influential scientists; yet a review of the literature of both science and the philosophy of science reveals significant doubt regarding its validity. In view of this, it is sobering to think that so many scientists should affirm, in a public statement to be sent to public schools, that evolution is a principle of science that meets "exceptionally well" the criteria of science which are based on "rigorous evidence." Apparently this is not the case at all. Evolutionists need to reexamine their thinking and reevaluate their claims. 

For a copy of the complete bibliography to accompany this article, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: MINISTRY, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

By Ariel A. Roth, Ph.D., editor of *Origins*.

BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY

Hebrew Inscriptions and the Word. Like an intricate puzzle, each piece of archeological knowledge fits into the Bible picture.

In 1869 a young official in the French consulate in Jerusalem, C. Clermont-Ganneau, who was destined to become one of the greatest Palestinian archeologists of his time, received word of an ancient inscription on a stele located in Diban, southeast of the Jordan, in an area occupied by the Moabites in Biblical times.

Clermont-Ganneau was unable to travel to Diban himself, but he had copies made of the inscription, both by hand and by squeezing damp paper onto the surface of the stone (the paper, when dry, retains an imprint of the inscription, called a "squeeze"). The interest shown in the stone aroused the suspicions of the local inhabitants. Deciding that it must contain treasure, they built a fire around it, then dashed cold water on it, shattering the stone into more than a score of pieces, but there was no treasure within, of course. Clermont-Ganneau was able to purchase several of the fragments, and eventually some twenty of these, together with the hand copy and the squeeze, found their way to the Louvre in Paris.

The restored text contains about thirty lines (the exact number is uncertain because the fragments from the bottom of the stele were not recovered) written in a dialect slightly different from Hebrew, commonly called Moabite because of the location where it was found and the contents of the text. The inscription is in the name of Mesha, king of Moab, contemporary of Ahab in Israel (about 850 B.C.), and recounts a Moabite rebellion from Israelite hegemony, a rebellion mentioned only briefly in the Bible: "After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel" (2 Kings 1:1, R.S.V.). More than one hundred years after its discovery, the Mesha inscription is still the longest single inscription in a dialect closely related linguistically and chronologi-

cally to Hebrew. Its importance for the reconstruction of ninth-century Israelite and Moabite history is commensurate with its rarity.

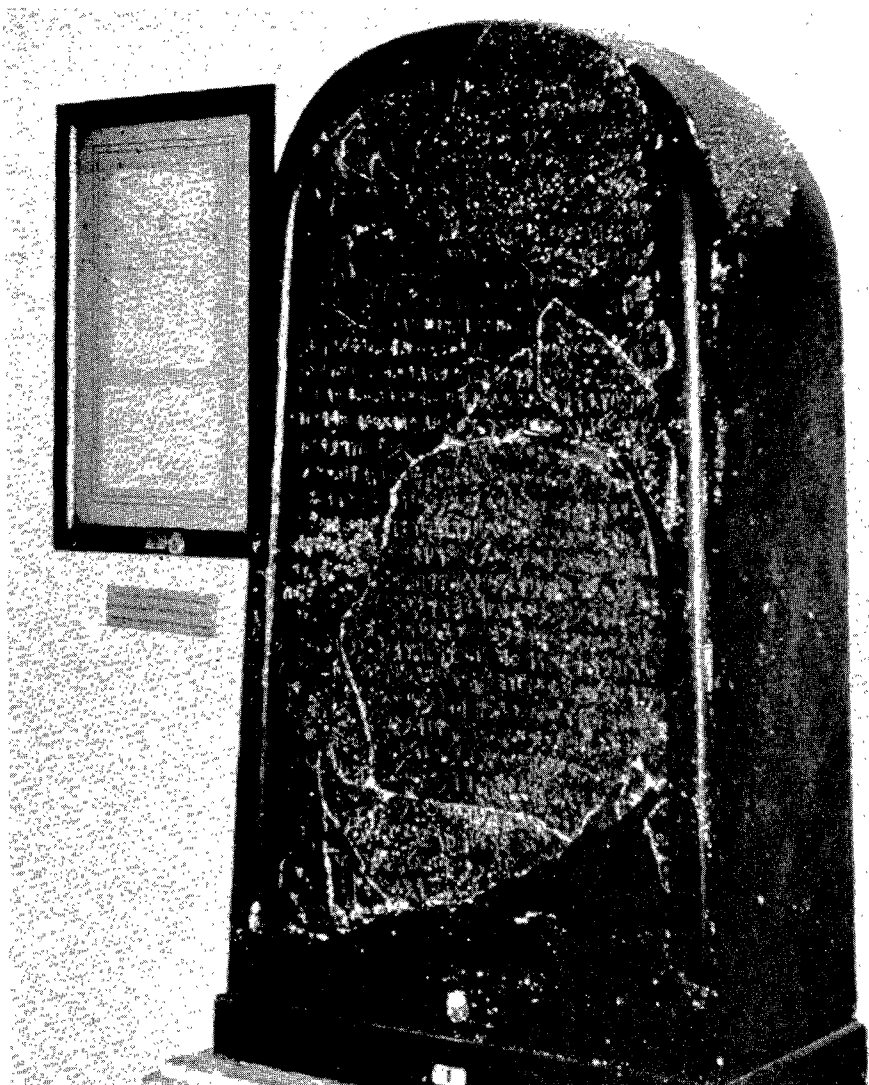
Another inscription with Biblical significance dates from about one hundred and fifty years after the death of Ahab in Israel, at a time when the northern state of Israel was no longer in existence (having been brought to an end by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.). Hezekiah, king of Judah, found himself under the threat of imminent attack by the Assyrians also in his turn. As a means of assuring water for the inhabitants of Jerusalem in case of siege, he had a tunnel cut through the bedrock underlying the city's east hill, from a spring on the east side of the hill to a pool within the walls at the south end of the hill. About twenty feet from the south end of the tunnel, someone inscribed a text on the tunnel wall relating how the project was finished. Two crews of workmen, tunneling from opposite directions, met in the middle, "pick against pick" as the inscription describes it. When the union was made, "the water flowed from the spring toward the reservoir for 1,200 cubits."—W. F. ALBRIGHT, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, p. 321.

First discovered by chance in 1880, the inscription was cut out of the wall in 1890 and eventually found its way in several pieces to a museum in Istanbul. Fortunately, squeezes had been made of the writing, and by comparison of the fragments and the squeezes, an almost complete text has been constructed. The inscription illuminates vividly the laconic statement in 2 Kings 20:20, R.S.V. (cf. 2 Chron. 32:30), that Hezekiah "made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city." The visitor to Jerusalem can still traverse the tunnel from the spring to the reservoir and feel against feet and legs the

clear, cold water that Hezekiah was attempting to store for a time of need. Though one would today have to travel to Istanbul to see the inscription, recalling its words while in the Siloam tunnel can almost bring forth the sound of the picks and the voices of the workmen who performed this marvelous engineering feat nearly 2,700 years ago.¹

Another century later brings us to the time of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, two of the last rulers of Judah (609/08-598 and 597-586 B.C., respectively), and to a remarkable group of texts from Tel Arad, a site in the northeastern Negeb near the southern border of ancient Judah. This site, named after the ancient city of Arad, has furnished more than two hundred inscriptions in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Arabic, including a group of letters written on broken pieces of pottery shortly before the destruction of the city in about 597 B.C. These pottery shards, of which there are thousands in most city ruins of the Near East, furnished a cheap and easily accessible writing medium—the scratch pads of the ancient world. The inscribed shards, called ostraca, represent the greatest amount of pre-Qumran epigraphic Hebrew extant today.

Most of the Arad letters are addressed to a certain Elyashib, who was evidently commander of the Arad fortress. Several deal with mundane distributions and transport of foodstuffs, but even these are highly interesting to the philologist and historian of culture for the evidence they provide on Hebrew grammar and lexicology, on the one hand, and on the organization of Judean society, on the other. For example, most of the letters addressed to Elyashib are from a superior (or superiors) who gives very curt and direct orders and who is obviously located elsewhere (otherwise there would be no need of a letter). Thus



The Moabite Stone.

Arad was only one element in a southern defense system that was organized and directed from elsewhere.

As a further example, the letters refer to most of the foodstuffs as distributed for transport and, partially, for consumption by persons called Kittim. The Kittim are well known to Bible students (Isa. 23:1, 12; Jer. 2:10; Eze. 27:6; Dan. 11:30; Num. 24:24) as people originally from Cyprus, whose capital city was Kition (*kt* or *kty* in consonantal writing, whence *kitti*, "someone from Kition"). The term also appears in certain Biblical texts and in the Dead Sea scrolls in the sense of "foreign conquerors," e.g., Greeks and Romans, so it is uncertain

whether the term in the Arad texts denotes Cypriots or Greeks. It is, in any case, of interest that the Judeans at this period were including foreign mercenaries in their defensive structure.

Other of the Arad texts contain allusions to more martial events. Arad 24, for example, refers to troop movements in the Negeb. The first part of this text is almost totally effaced, but from line 12 on, the message is clear:

12) from Arad fifty [men] and from Qinah [x number of men]

13) and send them to Ramat-Negeb under

14) Malkiyahu son of Qerabur. He is to hand

15) them over to Elisha son of

Yirmeyahu

16) at Ramat-Negeb lest anything happen to

17) the city. This is an order from the king—a life and

18) death matter for you. I have sent you this message to

19) warn you now: these men [must be] with Elisha

20) lest [the] Edom [ites] go there.

It is precisely this type of interference from Edomite bands, just when Judah was endeavoring to muster her strength to resist the Babylonian threat, that earned Obadiah's condemnation (verses 12-14, R.S.V.):

"But you should not have gloated over the day of your brother in the day of his misfortune; you should not have rejoiced over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin; you should not have boasted in the day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of my people in the day of his calamity; you should not have gloated over his disaster in the day of his calamity; you should not have looted his goods in the day of his calamity. You should not have stood at the parting of the ways to cut off his fugitives; you should not have delivered up his survivors in the day of distress."

Another main group of ancient Hebrew letters comes from a site excavated before Arad (in the 1930's), Tell ed-Duweir, commonly identified with Biblical Lachish. These letters date about a decade later than the Arad texts, or just shortly before Nebuchadnezzar's final invasion of Judah (588-586 B.C.). These letters are primarily of a military nature, having been written to the commander of the post where the letters were found, by a subordinate who was probably in charge of one of the lesser military installations in the immediate area. The writer refers to himself as "your

servant” and to the addressee as “my lord.” One of the most revealing phrases is the expression used three times to open the body of the letter: “Who is your servant but a dog (that you should send him the king’s letters, et cetera)?” The formula is used to express thanks on the part of the writer, but in such a way as to stress his inferior status in contrast to his correspondent.

The content of the Lachish letters reveals a state of military readiness, probably in preparation for an expected Babylonian invasion, as evidenced by the fact that the ostraca were found in a layer of debris left by the destruction of the city during the 588-586 invasion of Judah. Letter 4, for example, says: “. . . we are watching the Lachish (fire-) signals according to the code which my lord gave us, for we cannot see Azeqah.” We know from sources as disparate as the second millennium B.C. Mari texts and the Christian era Mishna that fire signals were used to spread information over relatively great distances at a faster speed than could be attained by human messengers. It is possible also that the fire signals were being prepared for use in case of Babylonian siege, when it could be impossible for human messengers to circulate.

Nearly all the Hebrew inscriptions that have come down to us from the Israelite royal period were written on hard materials such as stone monuments, tomb walls, ostraca, and in miniature on seals and weights. We can be certain that writings on softer materials (papyrus or skin) were being circulated, for we have the clay sealings, called *bullae*, from some of these documents, with traces of the tying cord or of the papyrus itself impressed on the back of the sealing. Because these more perishable texts have disappeared, we are without many of the documents needed to reconstruct the minutiae of Israelite society. We can only hope that in time a cache of such documents as marriage certificates, land sales or rental contracts, sharecropping agreements, adoption contracts, divorce

settlements, et cetera, will appear at a site in one of the drier parts of the country, where organic materials are more likely to escape deterioration.

The types of documents that do appear in the Hebrew inscriptions are as follows: The most impressive, but the rarest, are the large stone inscriptions such as the Mesha stone or the Siloam tunnel inscription. There are also a growing number of inscriptions carved in the sides of rock-cut tombs. The ostraca are much more numerous than the large stone inscriptions and deal with different matters, consisting almost entirely of letters and administrative documents. Some of the latter are name lists, ration lists, and dockets providing information on shipment of commodities. Items in the last category, that of small inscriptions, were written primarily for purposes of identification, such as signet seals. A seal indicated the owner’s name, often his father’s and even grandfather’s name, and/or his official title or position. Examples of such seals are: “(Belonging) to Azariah son of Shemiah,” or “(Belonging) to Shama servant of Jeroboam.” From excavations and from illicit treasure hunting, we have a great number of ancient seals, as well as quite a few *bullae* bearing ancient seal impressions.

Thus we have at our disposal a great body of personal names for comparison with the personal names found in the Bible. Besides the study of personal names, these texts are also useful for the study of Hebrew epigraphy (the history of letter forms), orthography (the conventions used in spelling), and social structure (relationships and titles mentioned). Even the smallest texts do their part in providing extra-Biblical evidence for reconstructing ancient Israelite society.

A striking example of how a very minor inscription can elucidate the Biblical text is furnished by a single word that has been found inscribed on several ancient weights, averaging about a quarter of an ounce each. The inscription is *pym*. This word is found once in the Hebrew text of the

Old Testament—in 1 Samuel 13:21, R.S.V., there written with a vowel as *pim*. Before this inscription was found, translators were uncertain of the meaning of the word. The King James Version, for example, translated it as “a file.” But when the *pym* weights were found, they proved to weigh about two thirds of a shekel,² an exorbitant but not implausible charge for sharpening large tools. On the basis of this evidence, *The New English Bible* translates: “The charge was two-thirds of a shekel for ploughshares and mat-tocks.”³

It should be clear even from this very brief introduction to the Hebrew inscriptions that such finds are few and far between, frequently incomplete when found, and that they often do not furnish the kind of information that modern historians are looking for in reconstructing the political and cultural history of a people or of a civilization. On the other hand, we must be grateful for what we have. The concentration of texts from the period of 625 B.C. to 586 B.C. has taught us a great deal about the language and history of that particular time. When placed alongside the information available from other extra-Biblical sources and from the Bible itself, the resultant picture is much clearer than it was before the era of modern archeology. ■

¹ A recent description of the state of this tunnel (though without comment on the inscription) may be found in “Hezekiah’s Tunnel Re-Opens,” *The Biblical Archaeology Review* 11/2 (June 1976):9-12. This article contains several good photographs and a plan of Jerusalem with the tunnel’s course indicated.

² According to *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 4.832, the shekel weighs 11.424 grams (0.403 ounce), and the *pim* weighs 7.616 grams (0.268 ounce). It should be kept in mind that modern precision in standard measurement was unknown in ancient times, that standards fluctuated with time and place, and that weight losses may have occurred as a result of wear, dishonest shaving of weights, et cetera. Thus the modern equivalents given for ancient units of weight are the result of averaging of several or many examples.

³ From *The New English Bible*. © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press 1961, 1970. Reprinted by permission. A photograph of the *pym* weight, alongside other inscribed weights, may be seen in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, in the article just cited, page 832.

By Dennis Pardee, as assistant professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization of the University of Chicago.

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Christians First? What matters is not when Christ's followers were first called Christians, but that they be Christians first.

I am about to commit a hermeneutical error. I am going to take scripture and use it for what it says instead of what it means. This, in theological circles, is not permissible. The only redeeming feature in my action is that I am telling you plainly what I am doing, so I am not attempting to deceive you. This, my theologian friends tell me, makes my otherwise inexcusable practice acceptable.

Recently a friend of mine and I were speaking on a very sensitive subject. He and I are of different cultural backgrounds, but because we are Seventh-day Adventist Christians we could discuss some of the delicate nuances of racial problems with complete understanding. Christian love sails us safely over many otherwise stormy and treacherous seas. Jesus, whether in the heart of a black man or in the heart of a white man, makes a world of difference.

Now we come to the hermeneutical error, but also to a basic Christian principle that will help us to live in love and at peace with those not of our own cultural background, both inside and outside the church.

In Acts 11:26 Dr. Luke says that "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Now I believe that Dr. Luke was merely recording a historical fact, that in the city of Antioch the followers of Jesus were called Christians for the first time. Permit me the hermeneutical deviation that changes the meaning completely, but states a great truth and a *sine quo non* in the area of peaceful and loving relationships within a church composed of members from "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

Whether you and I are black, or white, or brown, or yellow, God wants us *first* to be Christians. Whether our cultural roots and heritage lie in Europe, North America, Africa, South America, Asia, or the

islands of the "seven seas," our words, even our attitudes (and how very important attitudes are in this sensitive field) must reflect our lovely Jesus. This is the conclusion my fellow leader and I reached as we discussed the matter together. He is a man who I know practices this "Jesus first" concept. He is a sweet, lovable Christian, and I have never known him to offend anyone of a different cultural background.

The Christian, and especially the Christian leader, is kind and compassionate toward all with whom he

**"Whether one is
black, white,
brown, or yellow,
God wants us
first to be
Christians."**

comes in contact, whether they are of a different cultural background or not. Jesus was never rude. He did not speak harsh, severe words. The Christian will follow His example. Though placed in positions of tension, disciples of the Master will exhibit His kindness and compassion.

The society in which Jesus lived was one in which racial tensions ran high among Jews, Samaritans, Romans, and Greeks. Yet the Master never gave sanction to prejudice of any kind. He pointed rather to the great rule of loving one's neighbor as oneself.

The Christian leader must be careful in his choice of language. There are names that denigrate, words that hurt. The Christian will never let these words slip from his

lips. It is well to become acquainted with such offensive words and phrases so they may be avoided. We must not needlessly wound in this manner.

The Christian leader will go out of his way to be helpful to those of another racial or national heritage. This goes for black and white alike. Little helpful acts, unexpected and not required, smooth the path on both sides of the street. Of the Saviour it is said, He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). Good deeds, kind acts, being helpful, build bridges among people of any race.

During His earthly ministry Jesus associated freely with people. Because people knew Jesus, they loved Him. They marked His love, His gentleness, His thoughtfulness, His self-control, His zeal, His life of untiring service. "We have heard him ourselves" was the testimony of some Samaritans, who could then declare, "and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42).

Knowing people, associating with them, helps break down walls of partition. It is sometimes true that we are a bit suspicious of those we do not know and associate with. When Christian workers of varying ethnic backgrounds can be together, pray together, play together, worship together, they may learn the good points, the desirable characteristics of one another. It takes away the "you" and "us" labels. As Christians of varied racial and national backgrounds we need to know one another, to discover that Christ dwells in the hearts of people of all races.

May God help all of us that we may be "Christians first" before we are anything else in our relationships with one another. ■■

By Robert H. Pierson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

HEALTH AND RELIGION

Magic in Your Voice. Here are some things you can do to improve the preacher's stock in trade—articulate speech.

Do you like the voice you were born with? Do you even know what it sounds like?

Actually, we do not hear ourselves as other people hear us, because we hear our own voices from within, as well as through the ears. The best way to get some idea of how your voice sounds to others is to stand close to a corner of the room and speak into the corner so that the walls throw back the sound. It's quite a revelation.

Listening to a tape recording of your own voice can sometimes be a shattering experience, too. For one thing it is usually much higher pitched than you imagined, and all sorts of little faults ring out clearly and disconcertingly.

If you feel that your voice does not fittingly complement you as it should, the obvious course is to take steps to improve it. Bear in mind that people who can fan the breath of life into the most mundane facts through their voice are nearly always successful people. The tremendous value of effective speech has been understood by some of the world's most famous men and women. Demosthenes realized the fact centuries ago and went on not only to overcome a weak voice but to become the greatest orator in Athens. Abraham Lincoln, while still an uneducated backwoods lad, began to teach himself to speak effectively, realizing the need for such ability in public life.

Perhaps you think that few women can ever be good speakers. That is not true. Nature has given all of us the necessary parts for building a fine talking machine.

You may never become a famous radio or TV personality or a world-renowned statesman, but you can brighten your chances for success immeasurably by making full use of the magic in your voice. Just fifteen minutes a day spent on simple exercises will repay tremendous dividends.

The first step is to become acquainted with your speech apparatus (see box below). The voice is manufactured only after a trip along a human assembly line. If you could view the process by X-ray it would look like this:

You take in a breath of air—fuel for your voice. Then you exhale and the air is pushed up by your diaphragm into your voice box. Inside this box are vocal cords that vibrate as the air rushes through, producing tones. The sounds then travel up from the voice box to the mouth and nose, which act as amplifiers.

You can compare the voice box to the mouthpiece of a saxophone, and the mouth and nose to the horn itself. If you stuff a handkerchief into any part of the saxophone, the tones become muffled. The same principle applies to your voice.

The sounds are finally manufactured into words by the tongue, palate, teeth, lips, and jaw. You make vowels by changing the shape and size of your mouth. Consonants are produced by stopping or blocking the tones from the voice box.

You can develop a good voice

The good speaker has all the parts

working at top efficiency. Here are a few simple exercises that will enable you, too, to attain that end:

Read aloud whenever possible, to make your voice match the meaning of your words. This is the secret of talking interestingly. Listen carefully to good actors and actresses when they are delivering their lines. It can teach you volumes in the art of "manipulating" your voice.

When talking to a friend who has a good speaking voice, listen attentively to the way he or she lowers and raises the voice as a singer does, using first higher and then lower notes. Variety of intonation is a prime secret of speaking beautifully.

Listen to a famous actor such as Sir Lawrence Olivier, and you will realize how many different notes a speaking voice can have. Nothing makes a voice more tedious to listen to than to let it stay continuously on one note and then drop at the end of each sentence. When alone, practice keeping your voice up at the end of a sentence. An excellent way is to write down a series of sentences requiring an answer, and read them aloud.

Since even your best friend won't



always tell you if you have an unattractive voice, here is one way of finding out for yourself.

Stand in your room facing the wall and repeat with feeling some immortal lines from the Bible or from your favorite poet. You have just heard your voice at its musical best. Now give an imitation of yourself speaking angrily. You have heard your voice at its ugliest. The wall has thrown back your voice and lets you hear it somewhat as others do. From these two examples you now know which tones to avoid and which to cultivate.

Most people suffering from "nerves" have shrill, high-pitched voices. Muscular tension is usually the cause. To overcome this, practice speaking slowly up and down the scale as though you were singing. A relaxed position—whether standing or sitting—is also a great help in reducing emotional or nervous strain. Yawning, stretching, and jaw-dropping are excellent exercises for improving the voice.

Deep breathing, together with exercises for tongue, lips, and vocal cords are also necessary if you are to acquire your most attractive speaking voice. For instance, try repeating nursery tongue-twisters such as the following:

"Run, Robert, run,
To the river run.
How many R's in that?"

Or again:

"Sister Susie's sewing shirts for sailors."

And when reciting these lines, try to say the vowels over very clearly. Don't be afraid of using your mouth and lips freely. Only then can you articulate clearly and avoid mumbling.

To test yourself for nasal tones, hold your nose and recite the alphabet. If your voice sounds nasal, then it means that the soft palate—the little jigger at the back of the mouth—has become lazy through lack of proper exercises. Its function is to close the "back door" between throat and nose when you speak. To cure this laziness, practice holding your nose and saying, "Jer-

sey cows browse placidly all day."

Breathing deeply is very important. A strong clear voice depends primarily on the amount of breath available. People who breathe shallowly and quickly are the owners of those little voices we are never quite able to hear.

Clarity is also important. Try to think of your voice as a steady stream of sound that is molded by your tongue, in conjunction with your gums, lips, and teeth, into the separate sounds we know as words. If you look at your tongue and lips in

**"Though I speak
with the tongues of
men and of angels,
and have not clarity,
it profits nothing."**

a mirror as you say to yourself the vowels A, E, I, O, U, you'll get some idea of the movement it takes to form different sounds, and the effort you must make.

A large percentage of speech faults can be traced to a lazy tongue. Words are allowed to slither out without any attempt being made to assure their proper formation. The result is a succession of ugly sounds barely recognizable as the words they represent.

"Wha's the ma'er?" is an expression heard often.

How much better and clearer it would be if the tongue came forward to meet the gums of the upper teeth so that the poor, neglected *t* could fill in the very obvious blanks.

Some people with a lot on their mind are in such a hurry to express their thoughts that when the words come out they cannot be recognized. Really good speech is always slow.

Another good tip is to relax your throat and jaw muscles by rolling

your head in a circular motion. Opera stars often lie down before a performance and allow their bodies to go limp. Yawn and work your jaws slowly from side to side. Read in a stage whisper until your vocal cords get tired. Then notice how much deeper your voice sounds.

Practice tidying your thoughts to express them well in daily conversation. You may discover that you have hidden powers of expression. Form your own ideas. Develop your own convictions and announce them in your new speaking voice. Try to cut out entirely the *ums*, *ahs*, and *ers*. Otherwise your listeners will lose interest.

If ever you feel your voice is getting limp, concentrate on one person among your listeners and talk to him or her as though your life depended upon winning him over.

A few slight gestures may be used to give emphasis to your most important points as you are talking, but avoid flamboyant movements. Few people can get away with them. Ask a close friend beforehand if you have little habitual mannerisms that might irritate your listeners, and, if so, make an effort to avoid them.

Every sentence should be clear-cut, simple, and easily understandable. To parody a famous saying of the apostle Paul: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not *clarity*, it profits nothing."

No matter how you earn promotion, admiration, and friends, you earn them not only because of your hard work, looks, personality, and kindness, but with the direct assistance and cooperation of your speaking voice. It can add a great deal to your success and charm. ■■

This article is being published simultaneously in MINISTRY and in the July issue of Life & Health by special arrangement.

By Paul Brock, who resides in Sooke, British Columbia, Canada, and is a member of the Society of Magazine Writers as well as a frequent contributor to *Reader's Digest* and many other publications.

SHEPHERDESS

Mother-in-law. Daughter-in-law. Friction doesn't have to develop, as the love of Naomi and Ruth so beautifully demonstrates.

Dear Shepherdess: Each month my mail brings me many interesting letters from the various Shepherdess organizations throughout North America. What a pleasure it is to keep in touch with these local groups of pastors' wives and other ladies involved in the work of the church! Each communication has such a variety and originality all its own that it just isn't fair for me to keep all this good material to myself. So I decided I should share some of these pages with you this month. I am indebted to the newsletter from Marvel Bog-gess, president of the Michigan Shepherdess group, for this excellent treatment of a very important subject in human relations. No doubt many of you are already mothers-in-law. Others are preparing for that experience, and most of us are someone's daughter-in-law. The following article was a joy and a blessing to me, and I know you will feel the same. With love, Kay.

Is there any figure more often the subject of jokes than the mother-in-law? Her efforts to adjust to this new member of the family (her child's husband or wife) have been admittedly awkward at times, and the reason is not hard to find.

Such fundamental shifts in family relationships are often fertile breeding grounds for problems and misunderstandings. Yet it doesn't have to be so. Naomi, an Old Testament mother-in-law, shows us that friction between a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law is not inevitable. If you find yourself in either of these unaccustomed roles, take courage from Ruth and Naomi!

Their story is a beautiful one. At a time of national calamity, a Jewish family living in Bethlehem decided to find a new home, no doubt only temporarily, they thought. The normally fertile country of Judah, a rugged plateau west of the Dead Sea, was being ravaged by famine

because of a lack of rain. The wheat, the barley, the grape vineyards, and the groves of olive trees had withered, and famine followed.

Eliamelech with his wife, Naomi, and their two sons left Bethlehem in search of a more promising life. Their journey around the edge of the Dead Sea to the land of Moab was not a long one in miles, but certainly in their thinking, the distance between familiar Judah and alien Moab was great. Why did this family select Moab as their new home? We don't know. Perhaps some personal or business connection made it seem plausible for Eliamelech to establish himself in Moab. At any rate, the Hebrew family found themselves in a country where nearly everything must have seemed strange.

True, Israel and Moab spoke dialects of the same language, so making herself understood was not one of Naomi's problems. However, the people of Moab worshiped their god Chemosh with rites regarded as sinful by the people of Judah. Religious differences and political rivalries had resulted in longstanding friction between the two countries.

Centuries before, when the Israelites had first entered Canaan, attractive Moabite women seduced many of Israel's warriors, even enticing them to sacrifice to Chemosh. Their sin resulted in a plague that killed thousands of Israelites. Even in Naomi's day Israel still spoke harshly of Moabite women.

Consider, then, what Naomi's feelings must have been when, despite the traditional enmities, each of her sons married a Moabite girl. (The lessons of history must not have been deeply engraved on the minds of these young men!) Chilion married Orpah, and Mahlon took Ruth as his wife. For a number of years the family evidently lived comfortably, perhaps in Eastern style under the same roof.

Then tragedy struck.

Eliamelech died, leaving Mahlon

and Chilion, his two sons, to carry on. Life went on for a time, but some ten years from the time of their entrance into Moab, both sons, perhaps because of some physical weakness inherited from their father, also died. Naomi was left a stranger in a foreign land. She did not see how she could continue to live in Moab in comfort or maintain herself. How could she stand between her daughters-in-law and poverty?

In those days women could not inherit property directly, but could only hold it in trust for some future husband or another male relative. Women had almost no way to earn a living, and, without husband or family, were sure to become dependent upon the charity of others.

As Naomi thought of this, she knew that her future in Moab would be bleak. She was past the age to bear children. Besides, no man was likely to choose her as a wife. When she heard that Judah was blessed with rich harvests again, she decided to return to Bethlehem. Among her own people, there might be more concern for her welfare.

What a tribute to her relations with her daughters-in-law that both Orpah and Ruth decided to return to Judah with Naomi! They had seen her faith in God expressed in daily living, and were drawn to her and her God.

So these three widows started out for the land of Judah. It was spring-time, and the countryside was alive with beauty. They traveled some distance together, while Naomi wondered privately what reception these Moabite women would receive in her country. Occasionally she hinted her concern, knowing she could not take care of them financially.

Finally, Orpah gave in to Naomi's urgent suggestion and with tears kissed her mother-in-law goodbye. But Ruth clung to Naomi and uttered those beautiful words of selfless de-



votion that have stirred hearts in every age: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:16).

Naomi could protest no longer in the face of such wholehearted devotion, and the two women continued

their journey. Four or five days later, they saw before them the village of Bethlehem, with its humble, whitewashed dwellings huddled together on the side of a hill.

The narrative that continues from this point need not be repeated here. It portrays life and customs in early Israel. It describes a beautifully arranged marriage. It shows us the glorious outworking of God's con-

cern for His humble, trusting children.

But beyond all this, the character of Naomi stands out as a special object of admiration. Seemingly adverse fate led her to Moab, where she met Ruth. Love for her daughter-in-law crossed national boundaries, leaped over common prejudice, and induced in Ruth a response that was beyond all expectation.

When the two women took up residence in Bethlehem, neither dreamed that Ruth, the gleaner, would marry Boaz, the rich landowner, and that from this union would be born, three generations later, King David—and ultimately, the Messiah.

When God steps in, the ordinary events of life take on extraordinary significance. We can be thankful that Naomi, the mother-in-law, was big enough and wise enough to have faith in God, who orders all the circumstances of daily life. We can rejoice that Ruth was secure enough in her role as a daughter-in-law to return Naomi's affection and share her life. As mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law today, we can find the same loving union by God's grace.

By Retha H. Eldridge, a wife, mother, mother-in-law, and grandmother. After spending many years as a missionary wife in the Far East, she now lives with her husband in North Carolina.

Prayers from the parsonage

by Cherry Habenicht

We've arranged for substitutes, caught up with the garden, and tried to foresee possible events during the next two weeks. Vacation! Such an arbitrary segment of time filled with the dreams of each family member.

Please give us the rest we need. We do not plan a marathon trip or fast-paced schedule. Yet, from habit, we may bustle and hurry. If we run, may it be to race the waves. If we stay up late, may it be to study the stars.

Give us, also, the privacy we crave. Our lives, our work, revolve

around people. For this short time we want to be just a family. No calls except bird song. No interruptions except for discoveries. No guests except chipmunks.

Keep us from being selfish. May we allow each person opportunities to pursue his special interests. (I pray that I'll be patient when Dick wants to examine another boat or Lisa saves another rock.)

Don't let us be so exclusive that we miss opportunities to make friends. We'll be meeting new people in unfamiliar places, and without

Your prompting we cannot know who is lost and unhappy without You.

You tried to take a vacation once. All You asked was a rare escape from the multitude. But that retreat to a desert place never succeeded, for the great crowd followed You.

Yet You were not angry or resentful. Moved with compassion, You taught the people and even fed them all supper.

Take our plans, and work what is best for us and others.

Thank You.

WIDENING OUR WORD POWER

Sacred Words

Occupy Till I Come

In the exciting days near the close of Jesus' ministry there were many people who thought society was on the verge of revolution. Those who aligned themselves with Christ looked for Him to change the course of their lives and to transform the social order.

Jesus had some sober words, however, for those who walked on clouds. "He added and spake a parable, because . . . they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:11-13).

The word for occupy, *pragmateuomai*, is related to our English word *pragmatic*. As used in the verse it refers to any sort of occupation, although the ten recipients of the money understood it to mean business done for a profit. Verse 15 recounts how the lord later returned and asked what they had "gained by trading," this time using the word *diapragmateuomai*. The prefix *dia* here indicates the thoroughness with which the work was to have been carried on. Subsequent events demonstrate the depth of feeling indicated by the word. The lord listened to the reports of the servants. One had increased the invested sum tenfold, another fivefold. How they had achieved this gain is not divulged.

One servant, however, had decided to conduct a holding operation. He chose not to risk losing the capital, because he regarded his lord as a stern taskmaster. He had wrapped the silver

pieces in his *soudarion*, a handkerchief or large cloth, possibly one worn as a head covering. Though he returned the sum intact to the master, his penurious attitude won him only rejection. He had worried more about how *soon* the lord would return than about how he could *use* the lord's resources to advantage.

The parable had a message for the people of that day. Though great things lay ahead, each follower of Christ was charged with the responsibility to make every day count for God, not from fear, but from a spirit of active involvement with someone he respected. Christ's kingdom was not only a future promise but also a present reality for the people of Judea. Through the turbulent days before and after His ascension there were many Christians who were not called upon to do spectacular deeds, but only to live out the principles of Christ's teachings and help establish the *koinōnia*.

The parable has meaning for people today who anticipate the end of the present age and the coming of their Lord. "What should we do while we wait?" The answer is as clear now as in the first century: "Occupy till I come."

Pragmateuomai. More than that, *diapragmateuomai*. Make some gains for the Lord.

Secular Words

History in Words

The history of the English language is encapsulated in its words. Because English has borrowed from many other languages, one must pursue dictionaries in Greek, Latin, German, French, Norwegian, Spanish, or other languages in order to

get at the root meaning of many words.

The metaphors represented in English words also preserve history, since they often point to ideas held commonly in the past, as when an angry person is said to "vent his spleen" on the object of his wrath. The spleen was once thought to be the seat of emotions. Theological values are still evident in our speech in such expressions as "Goodbye" (God be with you), values for color ("black Monday"), and even for which hand one uses ("the right way to do it"). Such examples have more than mere historic interest, however, for if we are aware of our language's history we can pick our words with more discretion than if we remain uninformed.

Among the words listed this month are some that reflect popular notions about personality traits arising from anatomical features or physiological states. Others come from a theological dictionary and the current issue of MINISTRY. From the several definitions or synonyms offered for each word, choose the one that comes closest to it in meaning.

1. **adroit**: (a) quiet; (b) shrewd; (c) loud; (d) in line.

2. **anathema**: (a) curse pronounced by a priest; (b) parting salutation; (c) long discourse; (d) theological tract.

3. **animism**: (a) ancestor worship; (b) belief that nonliving things have supernatural power; (c) belief that spirits are personal and manifest themselves sporadically through people, objects, or places; (d) animal worship.

4. **bilious**: (a) peevish and ill-natured; (b) complaining; (c) mischievous; (d) grudging and selfish.

5. **dispensationalism**: (a) liberal giving to good causes; (b) flamboyant speaking and writing; (c) acceptance of aid from government sources; (d) view of progressive revelation in the Bible carried forward through seven different historical periods.

6. **experientialism**: (a) belief in the supernatural power of the saints; (b) belief that moral experience is the source and test of religious ideas; (c) desire to do, as well as to know; (d) validating theories in the laboratory.

7. **gauche** (gōsh): (a) South American cowboy; (b) sophisticated; (c) surprised; (d) awkward.

8. **hegemony**: (a) marriage to several spouses; (b) court ritual; (c) composed of like elements; (d) preponderant influence of one nation over another.

9. **jaundice**: (a) satiety or distaste; (b) pleasure trip; (c) sprightliness; (d) curiosity.

10. **metempsychosis**: (a) mental illness; (b) change from pupa to adult butterfly; (c) theory that souls are reincarnated many times; (d) meditation.

11. **Pelagianism**: (a) belief that natural corruption is inherited by each person as a consequence of the sinful choice once made by Adam; (b) belief that Adam's sin influences the race only as a bad example; man now has perfect freedom to choose; (c) belief that Adam sinned in the beginning; (d) belief that babies should be baptized to keep them out of limbo.

12. **phlegmatic**: (a) eager; (b) active and ambitious; (c) slow and stolid; (d) anxious.

13. **tautology**: (a) antagonistic claim; (b) doctrine of evolution; (c) needless repetition of an idea; (d) close, careful thinking.

For the correct answers, turn to page 31.

SHOP TALK

Compliment your teammates

Everything possible should be done to encourage teamwork. Players must not only play together, they need to help one another even in what they say.

Coach John Wooden, of U.C.L.A., has consistently produced outstanding basketball teams. Much of his success, undoubtedly, lies in the fact that he applies Christian principles to his own life and to his coaching.

One thing that he teaches his players is to compliment their teammates. *Time* magazine (Feb. 12, 1973) quoted Coach Wooden as saying, "I never permit a player to criticize a teammate. In fact, when a man makes a basket, I make him compliment the one who passed the ball or started the play. That way, I tell them, you'll get a pass again."

It is easy for anyone who has played on a ball team to see how this works. Too often, players who are praised by the media get the idea they are star players and forget they must depend upon the other team members to make their points.

Coach Wooden is a deacon in the First Christian church of Santa Monica and testifies that he reads his Bible daily. He does not tolerate profanity from the players, and he himself never smokes or drinks. Some of his team members think of him more as a minister than as a coach. And he gets results!—*Inspire*, September, 1977.

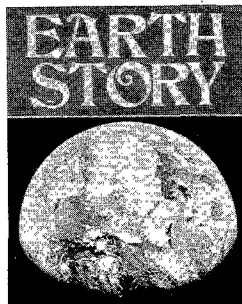
How to increase your creativity

Want to rise above the mediocrity around you, see things from a fresh point of view, come up with original ideas? Then keep these seven simple tips in mind:

1. Look over the fence.

Learn about successful practices in other operations and adapt them to yours.

2. Be curious, and read voraciously but with selectivity.
3. Visit businesses both similar to and different from yours.
4. Kick your ideas into reverse. Look at them from an unusual perspective.
5. Try left field. Take a project and see it in a variety of circumstances.
6. Look in the Fun House mirror. Distort your ideas to a ridiculous extreme. Even if you don't come up with a practical idea, you might get a few laughs.
7. Be a copycat. The most amazing and revolutionary ideas often come simply from adding a small wrinkle to an old idea.—*Executives' Digest*, February, 1978.



Earth Story now available

When a confused or curious church member comes to you for information regarding the earth sciences, Creation, or evolution, you can give him *Earth Story*, a long-needed, beautifully illustrated volume that intelligently yet simply compares the Biblical account of Creation with the theory of evolution and discusses both in relationship to science.

Written in the vocabulary of the young, this book is nevertheless excellent and informative for older readers, as well. Whether your inquisitive church member is a young science student in high school or an adult who seeks to fill the

gaps in his knowledge of the origin of this planet, *Earth Story* will answer his questions Biblically and scientifically.

You may order from your local Adventist Book Center or ABC Mailing Service, P.O. Box 37485, Omaha, Nebraska 68137 (in Canada, Box 398, Oshawa, Ontario L1H 7L5). The price is \$4.95. Please include State sales tax where necessary, and add 7 percent or a minimum charge of 50 cents for mailing. Prices slightly higher in Canada.

Colored slides available

Many of our pastors who have used materials from Global Church Films will be interested to know that the new address for this organization is Box 773, Auburn, Washington 98002. Phone: (206) 939-5005. Brochures of available materials, including scripts by well-known evangelists and slide sets, may be received on request.

Who writes your church newsletter?

A regular newsletter to all the church family is a great idea, but who is to do it? The church secretary? One of the pastoral staff? Most pastors are not looking for more deadlines and pressure. Many enterprising pastors, however, have found someone in the church who will take the responsibility of producing such a newsletter as a voluntary labor of love. A person who is well acquainted with the various activities and personalities of the church, and who is gifted in writing (or persuading others to write) may be delighted to take on the church newsletter. Having a church member do the job has the additional advantage of reflecting the personality of the church in the publication more than the personality of

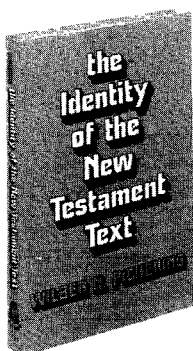
the minister. A short inspirational message from the pastor for each issue is enough to influence the pattern of the paper. Besides reporting the essential activities and programs of the church, the effective newsletter will have an abundance of news items about people and their activities. A wise pastor will turn over to his members church functions that they can carry out as effectively as he, or more so.

Answers to Widening Our Word Power (see page 30).

1. **adroit:** (b) shrewd. From the French for right-handed.
 2. **anathema:** (a) curse pronounced by a priest; usually accompanied by excommunication.
 3. **animism:** (c) belief that spirits are personal and may manifest themselves sporadically through people, objects, or places.
 4. **bilious:** (a) peevish and ill-natured. From the ancient idea that excessive bile secretions affected one's temperament.
 5. **dispensationalism:** (d) view of progressive revelation in the Bible carried forward through seven different historical periods.
 6. **experientialism:** (b) belief that moral experience is the source and test of religious ideas.
 7. **gauche:** (d) awkward, or clumsy. From the French for left-handed.
 8. **hegemony:** (d) preponderant influence or authority of one nation over another.
 9. **jaundice:** (a) satiety, distaste, or hostility. Supposedly associated with a liver disease resulting in a yellowish skin.
 10. **metempsychosis:** (c) theory that souls are reincarnated many times.
 11. **Pelagianism:** (b) belief that Adam's sin influences the race only as a bad example; men now have perfect freedom to choose. Promoted by Pelagius, a British monk, about A.D. 400 in Rome.
 12. **phlegmatic:** (c) slow and stolid. From an ancient Greek belief in a phlegm or "humor," which was responsible for sluggishness.
 13. **tautology:** (c) needless repetition of an idea. From the Greek for "say the same thing."
- Scores: 13-12 Excellent
11-10 Very good
9-7 Good

Erratum: The "Sacred Words" section of "Widening Our Word Power" (May, 1978, page 30) failed to identify V. Norskov Olsen as the author.

RECOMMENDED READING



THE IDENTITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT, Wilbur N. Pickering, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, Tennessee, 1977, 191 pages, \$7.95.

Do you love your Bible and like to think for yourself? If so, this is a book you should read. In his detailed and well-documented exposition of the whole problem of discovering the original text of the New Testament, Pickering takes up the challenge of the Westcott and Hort theory and text, which have dominated the field since 1881.

This theory was set forth in the first of the two volumes of Westcott and Hort's *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, in which Dr. Hort laid down rules for the discovery of the true text of the New Testament. His ingenious arguments are so highly involved and circuitous that on the back page of the wrapper of Pickering's book a vice-president of the Moody Bible Institute parallels my own reaction in his "doubt that very many in the present era have ever read it [Hort's theory]." Pickering will be admired by all who have tried to read it, for he studied every one of its 324 pages. Incidentally, the table of contents gives so full a summary of Hort's arguments that many who never read the book itself must have been convinced.

Hort's purpose was to

turn the search for the true text from the several thousand manuscripts of the traditional or Byzantine text, whose remarkably consistent witness had survived every challenge for over one thousand years, and to lead scholars to concentrate their efforts on the few hundred diverse manuscripts that seemed to conform to his "canons." Says E. C. Colwell, Hort "dethroned the Textus Receptus," yet his own theory "shaped—and still shapes—the thinking of textual scholars." So much so that K. W. Clark can say, "The Westcott-Hort text has become today our *textus receptus*. We have been freed from the one only to become captivated by the other" (see pp. 38, 39, and 29).

Such remarks are not surprising when it is realized that the manuscripts approved by Hort contain multiple contradictions. His two favorite manuscripts, Codices Aleph and B, for example, differ from each other more than three thousand times in the gospels alone.

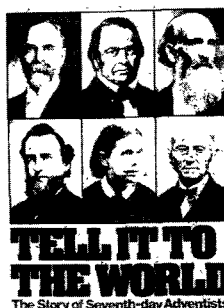
After one hundred years of following the path marked out by Westcott and Hort, how near are New Testament scholars to success? Pickering quotes from articles in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, which call the original text a "retreating mirage" and say "to achieve this goal is well-nigh impossible."

Believing as he does that the New Testament scriptures were inspired of God and accepted as such by the apostolic church, Pickering cannot accept such a conclusion. He believes that equally thorough work on the traditional text, using such modern aids as computers, could soon demonstrate the original wording of the autographs.

A German institute has already made a beginning and now has microfilms of 4,500 Greek manuscripts for study, according to this book.

Does Pickering point the way to a settled text acceptable to all? Since most of the variants between manuscripts are of little real consequence, one cannot read *The Identity of the New Testament Text* without concluding that the doubt regarding the identity of the Greek text has done great harm in that it diverts minds from the study of the Word of God to endless discussion of what that Word is.

W. T. Hyde



C. Mervyn Maxwell

TELL IT TO THE WORLD, C. Mervyn Maxwell, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California, 1976, 287 pages, \$6.95.

Dr. Mervyn Maxwell, chairman of the Department of Church History at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, has done much more in this volume than simply tell the story of the Adventist Church. Of course, he has done that (and in the inimitable style of the master storyteller he is), but he has also taken up the underlying causes for the experiences he relates. The basic spiritual conflicts and theological issues are here, as well as the facts and stories. The result is a very readable, consistently interesting, yet highly

probing analysis of how Adventism began, what makes it tick, and where it sees itself going.

According to Maxwell, the Adventist Church has a momentous message—Jesus Christ—and an impelling mission to tell it to the world. He examines what Adventists owe to other Christian bodies and concludes that the debt is quite large, a fact that shouldn't be too surprising, actually, when it is remembered that practically every man and woman involved in the founding of Adventism came from the Christian fellowship of some established denomination.

Whether or not one knows a great deal about the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he will find *Tell It to the World* profitable reading.

Russell Holt

MINISTRY

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