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THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

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How we understand God's foreknowledge and his exercise of that amazing power can seriously affect our relationship to God. To view the matter correctly, however, certain factors must be recognized.

First, God's ability to foreknow and foreordain is clearly stated in the Bible. God sets forth the proof of his Godship with this ability to foreknow and foreordain events of salvation and deliverance, as well as acts of judgment and punishment, and then to bring such events to fulfillment. (Isa. 44:6-9, 48:3-8) Such divine foreknowledge and foreordination form the basis for all true prophesy. (Isa. 42:9, Jer. 50:45, Amos 3:7-8) God challenges the gods of the nations opposing his people to furnish proof of the godship that is claimed for their idol-gods, he calling on these gods to do so by foretelling similar acts of salvation or judgment and then bringing them to pass. Their impotency in this respect demonstrates their idols to be 'mere wind and unreality' - Isa. 41:1-10, 21-29, 43:9-15, 45:20-21.

The second factor to be considered is the free moral agency of God's intelligent creatures. The Scriptures show that God extends to such creatures the privilege and responsibility of free choice, of exercising free moral agency (Deut. 30:19, 20; Josh. 24:15), thereby making them accountable for their acts. (Rom. 14:10-12; Heb. 4:13) They are thus not mere automatons or robots. Man could not truly have been created in "God's image" if he were not a free moral agent (Gen. 1:26-27) Logically, there should be no conflict between God's foreknowledge and foreordaining and the free moral agency of his intelligent creatures.

Another factor that must be considered, one sometimes overlooked, is that of God's moral standards and qualities, including his justice, honesty and impartiality, his love, mercy and kindness, as revealed in the Bible. Any understanding of God's use of the powers of foreknowledge and foreordination must therefore harmonize with not only some of these factors, but all of them.

Is his exercise of foreknowledge infinite, without limit? Does he foresee and foreknow all future actions of all his creatures? And does he foreordain such actions or even predestinate what shall be the final destiny of all his creatures, even doing so before they have come into existence?

Predestinarian View - The view that God's foreknowledge is infinite and that he does foreordain the course and destiny of all individuals is known as predestinarianism. Its advocates reason that God's divinity and perfection require that he be omniscient not only respecting the past and present, but also regarding the future. For him not to foreknow all matters in their every detail would evidence imperfection, according to this concept.

But consider the implications of such a predestinarian view. This concept would mean that, prior to creating angels or earthling man, God exercised his powers of foreknowledge and foresaw and foreknew all that would result from such creation, including the rebellion of one of his spirit sons, the subsequent rebellion of the first human pair in Eden (Gen. 3:1-6, John 8:44), and all the bad consequences of such rebellion down to and beyond this present day. This would necessarily mean that all the wickedness that history has recorded (the crime and immorality, oppression and resultant suffering, lying and hypocrisy, false worship and idolatry) once existed, before creations beginning, only in the mind of God, in the form of his foreknowledge of the future. (Editor's note: This would most certainly assure us of an imperfect God, capable of gross error!)

If the Creator of mankind had indeed exercised his power to foreknow all that history has seen since man's creation, then the full force of all the wickedness thereafter resulting was deliverately set in motion by God when he spoke the words: "Let us make man." (Gen. 1:26) These facts bring into question the reasonableness and consistency of the predestinarian concept; particularly so since the disciple James shows that disorder and other vile things do not originate from God's heavenly presence but are "earthly animal, demonic" in source - Jas. 3:14-18.

The argument that God's not foreknowing all future events and circumstances in full detail would evidence imperfection on his part is, in reality, an arbitrary view of perfection.

In contrast with the theory of predestinarianism, a number of Bible texts point to an examination made by God of a situation then current and a decision made on the basis of such examination.

Thus, after wickedness developed at the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Jehovah advised Abraham of his decision to investigate (by means of his angels) to "see whether they act altogether according to the outcry over it that has come to me, and, if not, I can get to know it." (Gen. 18:20-22; 19:1) God spoke of 'becoming acquainted with Abraham' and after Abraham went to the point of attempting to sacrifice Isaac, God said, "For now I do know that you are God-fearing in that you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me."--Gen. 18:19; 22:11,12.

Rather than all history from creation onward being a mere re-run of what had already been foreseen and foreordained, God could with all sincerity set before the first human pair the prospect of everlasting life in an earth free of wickedness. His instructions to his first human son and daughter to act as his perfect and sinless agents in filling the earth with their offspring and making it

a paradise, as well as exercising control over the animal creation, could thus be expressed as the grant of a truly loving privilege and as his genuine desire toward them--not merely the giving of a commission that, on their part, was foredoomed to failure. God's creation of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" and the "tree of life" in the garden of Eden also would not be meaningless or cynical acts, made so by his foreknowing that the human pair would sin and never be able to eat of the "tree of life" -Gen 1:28, 2:7-9, 15-17, 3:22-24.

To offer something very desirable to another person on conditions known beforehand to be unreachable, is recognized as both hypocritical and cruel. The prospect of everlasting life is presented in God's Word as a goal for all persons, one possible to attain. After urging his listeners to 'keep on asking and seeking' good things from God, Jesus pointed out that a father does not give a stone or a serpent to his child asking for bread or a fish. Showing his Father's view of disappointing the legitimate hopes of a person, Jesus then said: "Therefore, if you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those asking him?"-Matt 7:7-11.

Thus, the invitations and opportunities to receive benefits and everlasting blessings set before all men by God are bonafide. (Matt. 21:22, Jas. 1:5-6) He can in all sincerity urge men to "turn back from transgression and keep living", as he did with the people of Israel. (Ezek. 18:23, 30-32) Logically, he could not do this if he foreknew that they were individually destined to die in wickedness. As God told Israel: "Nor said I to the seed of Jacob, 'seek me simply for nothing, you people' I am God speaking what is righteous, telling what is upright...Turn to me and be saved, all you at the ends of the earth."--Isa. 45:19-22.

In a similar vein, the apostle Peter writes: "God is not slow respecting his promise as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9,12) If God already foreknow and foreordained millenniums before precisely which individuals would receive eternal salvation and which individuals would receive eternal destruction, it may well be asked how meaningful such 'patience of God could be and how genuine his desire could be that 'all attain to repentance'.

Finally, it could not truly be said that Christ Jesus' ransom sacrifice was made available to all men, if the opportunity to receive its benefits were already irrevocably sealed off from some--perhaps for millions of individuals--by God's foreknowledge, even before their birth, so that such ones could never prove worthy thereof. (2 Cor. 5:14,15; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 2:9) "In every nation the man that fears (God) and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34,35; Deut. 10:17; Rom 2:11) The option is actually and genuinely open to all men "to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him although in fact, he is not far off from each one of us." (Act. 17:26, 27) There is no empty hope of hollow promise set forth, therefore, in the divine exhortation at the end of the book of Revelation invites, "Come! and let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that will take life's water free." Rev. 22:17. (Editors note: Our choice.)

Things Foreknown by God - Throughout the Bible record, God's exercise of foreknowledge and foreordination is consistently tied in with his own purposes and will. Since God's purposes are certain of accomplishment, he can foreknow the results, the ultimate realization of his purposes, and can foreordain them, as well as the steps he may see fit to take to accomplish them. (Isa. 14:24-27) Thus, God is spoken of as 'forming' or 'fashioning' his purpose concerning future events or actions. (2 Kin. 19:25; Isa. 46:11) As the Great Potter, God "operates all things according to the way his will counsels," in harmony with his purpose (Eph 1:11), and "makes all his works co-operate together" for the good of those loving him. (Rom. 8:28) It is, therefore, specifically in connection with his own foreordained purposes that God tells "from the beginning the finale, and from long ago the things that have not been done." -Isa. 46:9-13.

When God created the first human pair they were perfect, and God could look upon the result of all his creative work and find it "very good". Rather than distrustfully concerning himself with what the pair's future actions would be, the records says that he "proceeded to rest." He could do so since, by virtue of his almightiness and his supreme wisdom no future action, circumstance or contingency could possibly present an insurmountable obstacle or an irremediable problem to block the realization of his sovereign purpose. - 2 Chron. 20:6; Isa. 14:27; Dan. 4:35)

Foreknowledge Concerning Classes of Persons - Cases are presented in which God did foreknow the course that certain groups, nations, or the majority of mankind would take, and thus he foretold the basic course of their future actions and foreordained what corresponding action he would take regarding them. However, such foreknowledge of foreordination does not deprive the individuals within such collective groups or divisions of mankind of the exercise of free choice as to the particular course they will follow. This can be seen from the following examples:

Prior to the flood of Noah's day, God announced his purpose to bring about this act of destruction, resulting in loss of human and animal life. The Biblical account shows, however, that such divine determination was made after the conditions developed that called for such action. Additionally, God, who is able to "know the heart of the sons of mankind" made examination and found that "every inclination of the thoughts of (mankind's) heart was only bad all the time." (2 Chron. 6:30; Gen. 6:5) Yet individuals, Noah and his family, gained God's favor and escaped destruction. (Gen. 6:7-8; 7:1)

Similarly with the nation of Israel: although God gave them the opportunity to become a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" by keeping his covenant, yet some forty years later, when the nation was at the borders of the Promised Land, God foretold that they would break his covenant and, as a nation, would be forsaken by him. This foreknowledge was not without prior basis, however, as national insubordination and rebellion already had been revealed. Hence, God said, "For I well know their inclination that they are developing today before I bring them into the land about which I have sworn." (Deut. 31:31; Ps. 81:10-13) The results to which such manifest inclination would now lead in the way of increased wickedness could be foreknown

by God without making him responsible for it due to his foreknowledge even as ones foreknowing that a certain structure built of inferior materials and with shoddy workmanship will deteriorate does not make that one responsible for such deterioration. Certain prophets delivered prophetic warnings of God's foreordained expressions of judgement all of which had basis in already existing conditions and heart attitudes. (Ps. 7:8-9; Prov. 11:19; Jer. 11:20) Here again, however, individuals could and did respond to God's counsel, reproof and warnings and merited his favor.— Jer. 21:8; Ezek. 33:1-20.

God's Son, who also could read human hearts and foretell future conditions, events and expressions of divine judgement. He foretold the judgment of Gehenna for the scribes and Pharisees as a class, but did not say thereby that each individual Pharisee or scribe was foredoomed to destruction as the case of the apostle Paul shows. (Acts 26:4,5) Jesus predicted woes for the unrepentant populations of Jerusalem and other cities, but did not indicate that his Father had foreordained that each individual of those cities should so suffer. (Matt. 11:20-23; Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-21) He also foreknew what mankind's inclination and heart attitude would lead to and foretold the conditions that would have developed among mankind by the time of the "conclusion of the system of things," as well as the outworkings of God's own purposes. —Matt. 24:3, 7-14, 21-22.

Foreknowledge Concerning Individuals - In addition to there being foreknowledge concerning classes, certain individuals are specifically involved in divine forecasts. These include Esau and Jacob, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, Samson, Solomon, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Judas Iscariot, and God's own Son, Jesus.

In the cases of Samson, Jeremiah and John the Baptist, God exercised foreknowledge prior to their birth. This foreknowledge, however, did not specify what their final destiny would be. Rather, on the basis of such foreknowledge, God foreordained that Samson should live according to the Nazirite vow and should initiate the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines, that Jeremiah should serve as a prophet, and that John the Baptist should do a preparatory work as a forerunner of the Messiah. (Jedg. 13:3-5; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:13-17) While they were highly favored by such privileges, this did not guarantee their gaining eternal salvation or even that they would remain faithful until death. Thus, God foretold that one of David's many sons would be named Solomon and he foreordained that Solomon would be used to build the temple. (2 Sam. 7:12,13; 1 Ki. 6:12; 1 Chron. 22:6-19) However, though favored in this way and even privileged to write certain books of the Holy Scriptures, Solomon nevertheless fell into apostasy in his later years. 1 Ki. 11:4, 9-11.

Likewise with Esau and Jacob, God's foreknowledge did not fix their eternal destinies but, rather, determined or foreordained which of the national groups descending from the two sons would gain a dominant position over the other. (Gen. 25:23-26) This foreseen dominance also pointed to the gaining of the right of the firstborn by Jacob, a right that brought along with it the privilege of being of the line of descent through which the Abrahamic "seed" would come. (Gen. 27:29; 28:13, 14) By this means God made

It is important to note that the foreknowledge of God is not a deterministic force that predestines individuals to a specific outcome. Rather, it is a knowledge of the hearts and intentions of individuals, which allows God to foretell the consequences of their actions. This knowledge is not a punishment or a reward, but a reflection of God's omniscience. The foreknowledge of God is not a deterministic force that predestines individuals to a specific outcome. Rather, it is a knowledge of the hearts and intentions of individuals, which allows God to foretell the consequences of their actions. This knowledge is not a punishment or a reward, but a reflection of God's omniscience.

clear that his choice of individuals for certain uses is not bound by the usual customs or procedures conforming to men's expectations. Nor are divinely assigned privileges to be dispensed solely on the basis of works, so that a person may feel he has 'earned the right' to such privileges and that they are 'owed to him.' This point the apostle Paul stressed in showing why God, by undeserved kindness, could grant to the Gentile nations privileges once seemingly reserved for Israel.--Rom. 9:1-6, 10-13, 30-32.

These cases of foreknowledge prior to the individual's birth do not conflict with God's revealed qualities and announced standards. Nor is there any indication that God coerced the individuals to act against their own will. In the cases of Pharaoh, Judas Iscariot, and God's own Son, there is no evidence that God's foreknowledge was exercised prior to the person's coming into existence. Within these individual cases certain principles are illustrated, bearing on God's foreknowledge and foreordination.

One such principle is God's testing of individuals by causing or allowing certain circumstances or events, or by causing such individuals to hear his inspired messages, the result being that they are obliged to exercise their free choice to make a decision and thus reveal a definite heart attitude, read by God. (Prov. 15:11; 1 Pet. 1:6,7; Heb. 4:12,13) According to the way the individuals respond, God can also mold them in the course they have selected of their own volition. (1 Chron. 28:9; Ps. 33:13-15; 139:1-4, 23, 24) Thus, the "heart of earthling man" first inclines toward a certain way before God does the directing of such one's steps. (Prov. 16:9; Ps. 51:10) Under testing, one's heart condition can become fixed, either hardened in unrighteousness and rebellion as was the heart of the Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus, or made firm in unbreakable devotion to God and the doing of his will. (Ex. 4:21; 8:15,32) Having reached such point of his own choice, the end result of the individual's course can now be foreknown and foretold with no injustice and no violation to man's free moral agency.--Compare Job 34:10-12.

The traitorous course of Judas Iscariot fulfilled divine prophecy and demonstrated Jehovah's foreknowledge, and also that of his Son. (Ps. 41:9; 55:12, 13; 109:8; Acts 1:16-20) Yet it cannot be said that God foreordained or predestinated Judas himself to such a course. The prophecies foretold that some intimate acquaintance of Jesus would be his betrayer, but did not specify which of those sharing such acquaintance it should be. Again, Bible principles rule against God's having foreordained Judas' actions. The divine standard stated by the apostle is: "Never lay your hands hastily upon any man; neither be a sharer in the sins of others; preserve yourself chaste." (1 Tim. 5:22) Evidencing his concern that the selection of his twelve apostles be wisely and properly made, Jesus spent the night in prayer to his Father before making known his decision. (Luke 6:12-16) If Judas were already divinely foreordained to be a traitor, this would result in inconsistency in God's direction and guidance and, according to the rule, would make him a sharer in the sins that such one committed.

Thus, it seems evident that at the time of his being selected as an apostle, Judas' heart presented no definite evidence of a treasonous attitude. He allowed a 'poisonous root to spring up' and defile him (Editors note: "and Satan entered the mind of Judas Iscariot.") resulting in his deviation and in his accepting, not God's direction, but the Devil's leading in a course of thievery and treachery. (Heb. 12:14, 15; John 13:2; Acts 1:24, 25; Jas. 1:14, 15) By the time such deviation reached a certain point, Jesus himself could read Judas' heart and foretell his betrayal.--John 13:10, 11.

God assigned his own firstborn Son to fulfill the prophesied role of the "seed" and become the Messiah. There is nothing to show that that Son was "predestined" to such a role even before his creation or before rebellion broke out in Eden. God's eventual selection of him as the one charged with fulfilling the prophecies was not made without prior basis.

The 'Called And Chosen Ones' - There remain those texts that deal with the Christian "called ones" or "chosen ones." (Jude 1; Matt. 24:24) They are described as "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God" (1 Pet. 1:1, 2), 'chosen before the founding of the world,' 'foreordained to the adoption as sons of God' (Eph. 1:3-5, 11), 'selected from the beginning for salvation and called to this very destiny.' (2 Thess. 2:13, 14) The understanding of these texts depends upon whether they refer to the foreordination of certain individual persons, or whether they describe the foreordination of a class of persons, namely, the Christian congregation, the "one body" (1 Cor. 10:17) of those who will be joint heirs with Christ Jesus in his heavenly kingdom.--Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:19-22; Heb. 3:1, 5, 6.

If these words apply to specific individuals as foreordained to eternal salvation, then it follows that those individuals could never prove unfaithful or fail in their calling, for God's foreknowledge of them could not prove inaccurate and his foreordination of them to a certain destiny could never miscarry or be thwarted. Yet the same apostles who were inspired to write the foregoing words showed that some who were "bought" and "sanctified" by the blood of Christ's ransom sacrifice and who had "tasted the heavenly free gift" and "become partakers of holy spirit...and powers of the coming system of things" would fall away beyond repentance and bring destruction upon themselves.--2 Pet. 2:1, 2, 20-22; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29.

On the other hand, viewed as applying to a class, to the Christian congregation or "holy nation" of called ones as a whole (1 Pet. 2:9), the texts previously cited would mean that God foreknew and foreordained that such a class (but not the specific individuals forming it) would be produced. Also, these scriptures would mean that he prescribed or foreordained the 'pattern' to which all those in due time called to be members thereof would have to conform, all this according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3-12; 2 Tim. 1:9, 10) He also foreordained the works such would be expected to carry out and their being tested due to the sufferings the world would bring upon them.--Eph. 2:10; 1 Thess. 3:3, 4.

Thus the exercise of God's foreknowledge does not relieve us of the responsibility to exert ourselves to conform to his righteous will.

(Source: The Watchtower, August, 1970)

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TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

as taught by

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

Physical Effects -- During transcendental meditation the mind experiences subtler states of thought and changes occur in the body which correspond to this refined mental activity. Scientific investigation of this phenomenon has found that a state develops which is physiologically unique. During TM, oxygen consumption, carbon dioxide elimination, cardiac output, heart rate, and respiratory rate significantly decrease while skin resistance greatly increases. The metabolic rate of the body is reduced by an average of 20%. However, analysis of the chemical content of the blood shows that the normal balance of oxygen to carbon dioxide is maintained; the rate of anaerobic metabolism does not increase.

The inference drawn from this physiological evidence is that the body gains a profoundly deep state of rest, while the mind, as recorded by the electroencephalograph (EEG), is fully awake and able to respond to stimuli. These and other measurements indicate the distinct difference between the automatic and natural effects of transcendental meditation and other techniques which involve any degree of effort, control, hypnosis, or autosuggestion. The combined mental and physical effects of TM are unique in that they indicate a fourth major state of consciousness which is as natural to the individual as the other three physiologically defined states--wakefulness, dreaming and deep sleep.

Those practicing the technique report that this fourth state of "restful alertness" is profoundly refreshing, physically as well as mentally. The deep rest provides a basis for increased energy and effectiveness in daily activity. It is due to this deep rest that accumulated tension and fatigue, which restrict the normal functioning of the nervous system, are dissolved in a natural way. The beneficial effects of TM on individual and environmental health are currently being assessed by medical research, particularly with respect to conditions produced by stressful living.

Mental Effects -- Transcendental meditation is a process of direct experience rather than one of intellectual analysis. The technique can be explained in terms of the mechanics of the thinking process. Every thought develops from a fainter and more abstract impulse in the mind; ordinarily this impulse becomes perceivable as a thought only during the later phases of its development. The technique of TM allows the attention to be drawn automatically to these refined levels of thinking, which are found by experience to be increasingly more pleasant.

The immediate result of this process of refinement is that the mind "transcends" the subtlest activity of thinking, reaching the source of thought, a state of pure awareness. Through proper instruction anyone can become familiar with these subtler, more charming levels of thought and directly contact the field of pure creative intelligence. TM expands the mind and heart, making available one's full potential. Regular practice of TM brings about a balanced development of all aspects of individual life.

This improved capability and knowledge enables an individual to experience greater enjoyment and achievement in life. Coming out of meditation, he engages in activity easily, without accumulating stress and strain. With increased clarity of perception he is able to grasp complex situations quickly and express himself in a more loving and creatively intelligent manner. All aspects of life are enriched.

-- Students International Meditation Society

Towards Pinning Down Meditation

Controversy has existed in the past over the nature of the states achieved by practitioners of various forms of yoga or meditation. Attempts to measure physiological changes in such subjects have encountered various problems: subjects are hard to obtain, their expertness varies, and the experimental environment tends to interfere with their efforts at concentration. A number of writers have concluded that meditation produces either sleep or self-hypnosis.

However, in the past ten years or so the position has altered. Transcendental meditation, taught by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, is being practised by thousands of people throughout the world. This meditation, which is defined as a technique for "turning the attention inwards towards the subtler levels of a thought until the mind transcends the subtlest state of the thought and arrives at the source of the thought," is aimed to be simple and universally applicable. It is normally practised for two 15 to 20 minute periods daily.

From the research point of view it has particular advantages. Large numbers of subjects, who have been taught in a unified fashion by a world-wide organisation set up for the purpose by Maharishi, are available; the effects are said to become apparent from the beginning of the practice - there is no 'training' period; no concentration or effort of any kind is involved, and hence people can meditate in the laboratory with comparative ease.

Writing in 'Science', Dr. Robert K. Wallace of the department of physiology at the University of California, Los Angeles, reported studies carried out on 15 students who had been practising transcendental meditation for between six months and three years. He found that oxygen consumption, measured by both open and closed methods, fell in all the subjects; the average fall from the control value was 45 ml per minute. Total ventilation fell by an average of about one litre per minute. Respiratory quotient remained in the basal range throughout.

Dr. Wallace also measured galvanic skin resistance, which increased by more than twofold during meditation. The electrocardiograph showed falls in heart rate in all the subjects, the mean decrease being five beats per minute.

The electroencephalogram showed interesting features. Alpha rhythm, present in all the subjects at rest, increased in regularity and amplitude. In some subjects the alpha activity occasionally stopped for two to five minutes and was replaced by low-voltage theta waves. Alpha blocking caused by repeated sound or light stimuli showed no habituation.

One difficulty remarked on by Dr. Wallace was that the apparatus used to measure the respiratory changes inevitably interfered with the subjects' breathing, and thus probably reduced the apparent magnitude of these changes.

Dr. Allison's and Dr. Wallace's experiments strongly suggest that during the practice of transcendental meditation there is a marked fall in metabolic rate.

An important feature of the electroencephalographic and other findings is that they clearly distinguish the state reached during transcendental meditation from both sleep and autosuggestion or hypnosis. Reports of physiological studies on hypnotic trance indicate that the hypnotic state per se is accompanied by no particular metabolic or electroencephalographic changes; certainly there is no resemblance to the present findings.

Rather similar findings have been reported by Japanese investigators studying Zen monks, but the change in electroencephalographic activity from alpha to theta activity appears only to have been recorded in monks with over 20 years experience of meditation.

One possible direction which such work may take is clinical. A recent letter in the 'New England Journal of Medicine', from Dr. H. Benson, suggested that transcendental meditation has favourable effects on hypertension. Dr. Benson also said that it had been found to be of value in the treatment of drug abuse. Drug takers, it seems, report that they no longer feel the need for drugs, and that if they do take drugs the sensations induced are very distasteful in comparison with those experienced during meditation.

Both human beings and animals have previously been trained experimentally to control various autonomic functions such as blood pressure. However, conditioning plays no part in transcendental meditation and the respiratory and other changes are, in one sense, merely incidental.

For practitioners of transcendental meditation, of course, the real importance of the technique lies in the profound effects which it is said to produce on the quality of every-day life.

They include increased energy and efficiency in performing any kind of work; increased tranquility of mind coupled with decreased

physical and mental tension, partial or complete loss of desire for hallucinogenic and similar drugs, including alcohol; increased creativity, productivity, intuitiveness, and so on; improvement in functional disorders such as poor body posture and insomnia; and better mobilisation of body resources to meet adverse circumstances such as accidents, sensory monotony, and surgery.

One application of transcendental meditation stands out as of particular contemporary importance: its relevance to drug taking among young people. A vast amount has been written and spoken about this problem, but remarkable little effective action has been suggested; drug taking continues to spread like cancer.

Transcendental meditation may also be of interest to doctors in another way. Much lip service is paid today to the concept of 'treating the whole man', yet few people seem to know exactly what this ought to imply. There seems to be at least a fair chance that transcendental meditation, stemming as it does from the heart of this tradition, and acting simultaneously on the physiological and psychological levels is the long-sought answer to a very deep-rooted malaise of our time.

(Source: Hospital Times, London, May 1, 1970)

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COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS

(cont. from April N.B.)

The Church and the Fall of Rome Throughout the fourth and fifth centuries, the Roman Empire was threatened by various European tribes, such as the Goths and Vandals, and by a people of central Asia known as the Huns. In 455, the city of Rome was sacked by the Vandals, and twenty-one years later the rule of all Italy passed into the hands of the "barbarians."

As the Roman Empire came to an end, the Church was in tremendous turmoil. Libraries hundreds of years old lay in ashes. Church schools and colleges were destroyed. The learning that had been part of Roman culture died out, and a period which historians call the "Dark Ages" set in.

Slowly the Church rallied, and to a great extent it was aided by its monastic movement, the various communities of monks and nuns.

Almost from the start, Christianity's emphasis upon the approaching Kingdom of God created the urge in certain of its followers to practice asceticism; that is, to turn their backs upon normal ways of living. Paul's stress upon the sinfulness of man encouraged this even more. If by its very nature, as Paul maintained, human life was prone to sin, then as much of it as possible should be avoided. To deny the "desire of the flesh" was a high religious act. The result was that, even in Paul's day, many followed his suggestion to refrain if at all possible from marriage. This, of course, was in sharp contrast to Judaism with its stress upon family life as a supreme command of God.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY TO CONSTANTINE

IMPORTANT WORLD EVENTS	DATE	DEVELOPMENTS IN CHRISTIANITY
	About 4 BCE	Birth of Jesus.
26 Pontius Pilate becomes Procurator of Judea	About 29 CE	Jesus baptized by John the Baptist.
	About 30	Jesus crucified.
	About 40	Start of Paul's ministry and writing of his Epistles. Gradual development of Christianity.
54 Nero becomes Roman Emperor, to 68		
Fire destroys Rome.	About 64	Intense persecution of Christians begins. Death of Peter and Paul.
Fall of Jerusalem.	About 70	Break between Christianity and Judaism. Gospel Mark completed.
	About 100	Rome becomes largest Christian community. Importance of Bishop of Rome grows.
	117	Ignatius, who first used the term "catholic," dies.
135 Final destruction of Jerusalem.	About 150	Apostles' Creed appears.
	About 154	Celebration of Easter first mentioned.
	About 190	Asia Minor churches excommunicated by Bishop of Rome.
	About 250	The church develops basic organization of clergy.
	270	Intense persecution renewed, especially with Emperor Diocletian, from 303 on.
306 Constantine the Great becomes one of the rulers of Rome.	311	Edict of Toleration issued by Romans.
	About 312	Christianity given legal equality. Church gradually wins preferred position in Roman Empire.

Though the Church never taught that marriage was evil or that abstaining from it was required of everyone, by the end of the third century the trend toward intense asceticism had grown. Now there were numbers of individuals leaving their communities and going to isolated places where in absolute solitude they could meditate, fast, and afflict themselves. All forms of "mortification of the flesh," acts designed to destroy the vigor of the body, were practiced. Some of these hermits lived in desserts, some in caves or even trees. One, the famous Simeon Stylites, dwelt atop a pillar in a ruined city for thirty years. These so-called "pillar-saints" flourished in the East to the tenth century C.E.

Some went mad out of loneliness. Others died from their rigors. Many found it impossible to carry on their disciplines by themselves, and soon a group-type of ascetic life emerged. Monasteries with all sorts of religious disciplines and prescribed work, such as farming, writing, carpentry, were organized, and nunneries were also established for the women. Special vows were required of all who entered. In most instances they included vows of chastity (refraining from marriage and any act involving sex), poverty (not being permitted to have possessions of one's own), and obedience. Eventually these became the vows demanded of all the regular clergy as well.

With the fall of Rome, these monasteries and convents became the refuge of culture in the Western world. However, instead of Greek and Roman Knowledge, its members concentrated on intense study of sacred Church literature and Christian traditions and beliefs. In contrast, Judaism required no monasteries to perpetuate learning. It was part of normal Jewish living for all Jews to study and to learn. Hence, the Jews had no period when culture and education nearly ceased. Nor did Judaism ever feel the need to create a monastic movement, since "denial of the flesh" meant a denial of God's command to live fully and "be fruitful and multiply."

Meanwhile, the Church had also succeeded in converting the "barbarians," and now counted the peoples of the British Isles, France, and Germany among its followers. The result was that, even with the overthrow of the Roman Empire, the ruling powers continued to be supporters of the Church.

The Church Becomes a Political Force The power of the Church grew steadily throughout the centuries that followed. Greatly enriched by gifts of land and money, Roman Catholicism became a major political force in the Middle Ages. In the year 800, Pope Leo III helped establish Charlemagne as the first emperor of what came to be known as the Holy Roman Empire, and eventually the popes became extremely influential in approving or disapproving the candidacies of particular rulers.

The climax of the Church's rise to power took place in the eleventh century in a clash between Pope Gregory VII and King Henry IV, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. It illustrates well the tremendous power which the Church came to wield.

In 1075, Pope Gregory VII declared the Church supreme in political, as well as religious matters and denied the right of any layman, even a king, appoint bishops to their offices. Henry challenged him by appointing three bishops in Italy and two in Germany without his consent. The Pope refused to accept his appointees. Henry then "deposed the pope" in 1076, demanding that Gregory surrender his papal office as a "false monk." The Pope in turn claimed that he was responsible only to God and refused to resign. He went on to excommunicate the King and deny him authority over his subjects.

The power of excommunication was a potent weapon. It denied the sacraments of the Church to the excommunicant and thereby put his soul in danger of everlasting torment after death. Moreover, he was branded an outcast for the rest of his life. No Christian was supposed to have anything to do with him or even speak to him.

Henry's rule began to crumble. To preserve his reign, he had only one choice: exercise the privilege of all penitents by begging the forgiveness of the Pope. So, in the midst of winter, after four weeks of great hardship in crossing the frozen Alps, Henry arrived in Canossa, in northern Italy, where Gregory was on his way to a Church council. Henry asked forgiveness, but the Pope refused it. Then, clad only in a coarse woolen shirt, barefooted and bareheaded, Henry walked through the deep snow the castle where the Pope was staying. He was kept standing in bitter cold outside the gate for three days before he was permitted to enter. When he was admitted at last, Henry prostrated himself before the Pope. But now the Pope could not deny him. Gregory removed the excommunication and blessed him.

Such was the recognized authority of the Church during the eleventh through the fourteenth centuries! But it was the abuse of this very power which, as we shall see later, corrupted the Church, earned the hostility of the ruling classes as well as the peasantry, and eventually destroyed the unity of Christianity.

- to be continued -

(Source: "Our Religion and Our Neighbors" by Milton G. Miller and Sylvan D. Schwartzman. Copyright 1963, Union of American Hebrew Congregation - New York, New York, Edited by: Rabbi Eugene B. Borowitz).

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NEWS REPORTS

Oakland, California

David S. C. Kim

The chapel car has been restored after 20 days since it was stolen. It cost about \$300.00 to repair the minor damage done. I am very thankful for the restoration. After repair, it looks better than the previous condition. Possibly I will get new tires soon so that our Master's party can use this car during the part of his stay in the West.

On 19th April, one of Washington, D. C. family, Neil Salonen, visited Oakland chapel for short time, after he returned from Korea where he received training for anti-communist movement, and he gave some information on our Master's tentative departure (probably in month of June).

The anti-communist lecture manuscript is roughly completed, and now one of the family in Bay Area is re-typing from my poor handwriting before final finish. Very soon they will be available for N. W. family for their intensive study before our Master's visit to this country.

On April 25th, 4 blessed couples met at Edwin's place where we discussed the San Francisco situation in case that Mr. Chei and his wife intend to do their work independently from Hq. Seoul, Korea and our True Parents. I am thinking of my short trip to North West as soon as editing of the manuscript of anti-communism is finished.

Seattle, Washington

Dianne Pitts

Seattle has seen a slower month than we'd like--but Sandra Hiltz has given out two books this month, and one fellow, an art teacher, is responding favorably so far. Sandy and I also visited a spiritual artist (the "spirit of the brush" paints) this last weekend and are hopeful for her heartfelt growth into Principles. She is quite interested in meeting Mr. Moon which pleased us very much.

A great deal of our time and efforts have been spent in preparation for Master and Mother's visit and our prayers in preparing hearts and minds to receive them. We are so anxious for their visit and want so many to be able to meet them. It is really a responsibility to choose who is ready of the many contacts we have. But what a fantastic privilege for them!

God prepare us all for the visit and the responsibility we have--for America--for the world--for the Kingdom.

Portland, Oregon

Maxine Pearson

After a short trip to Boise, Idaho, Vernon returned to Portland with Joe Chipanno. We have enjoyed having Joe here in the Portland chapel. His spaghetti dinners have been served to several of our contacts as they have been having dinner with us before hearing the evening lecture.

While Vernon was in Boise he was joined by Galen Brooks and Larry Trenbeath from Utah. They spent time in fellowship and strengthening with Marilynne Brooks and Joe Chipanno. Time was also spent with some other contacts which had been made previously.

One evening three friends of one of the contacts in Boise stopped by the Portland chapel while on a visit to Oregon. There

For at least three evenings a week we have been having people over for meetings. It has been very strengthening to have Joe's support.

May 1 Anniversary of Holy Spirit Association--Seoul, Korea
in 1954

May 24
May 1--Lunar Day of All Things

May 27 Mrs. Won Pok Chei's Birthday, Seoul, Korea
June 1 Dianne Pitt's birthday

Come over here, faith!
I have a mountain
for you to move.
I woke up last night
and there it was--
sitting on my chest.

Please take it
stone by stone
to some other site.
Far away!

On second thought,
let me do it--

It's my mountain

by Florence Sibley

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.