



# The Geneva Review

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## Conspiracy, Rumor, and Christian Paranoia

George Grant

Tucked away in the back reaches of the Old Testament is an important but virtually unheeded message for our day. "Do not call conspiracy everything these people call conspiracy, do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it" (Isaiah 8:12-13).

We are living in a day of Christian **paranoia**. Somehow we've gotten the notion that evil in our day has had a whole new surge of power, popularity, and vitality. Every circumstance of more than passing interest has become for us ominous evidence of doomsday's early arrival. We greet each new day with suspicious eyes. Daily reports of IRS collusions, the meteoric rise of **globalist influences**, and pandemic hysterias fill our Christian media and occupy our Christian minds. As a result, the Church is in trouble.

Our appetite for cloak and dagger has made a laughing stock of many authentic Bible doctrines. In the last decade, evangelicals have gained numerically but lost credibility. We've adopted the attitudes and techniques of gossip journalism, and as a result, our prophetic mantle is threadbare indeed.

As its root, the rumor and conspiracy problem is one of irresponsibility: **hermeneutical** irresponsibility and moral irresponsibility.

First, we perpetuate **hermeneutical** irresponsibility. Because of the drought of Scriptural instruction within the Local Church, it should not take us by surprise to see the **spectacularization** of half-truths. Rather than nurturing the flock of God in the rich truths of practical Biblical instruction, we indulge in theological junk food. It is amazing to witness the fascinations many Christians entertain today. Demonology, angelology, and **eschatology** have been bloated beyond recognition by unverifiable horror stories of New Age compromises, trilateral conspiracies, and AIDS complicity and complacency.

To be certain, we are living in a day of unmitigated evil. Our culture is velvet-lined with corruption. There is **little** doubt in the minds of

God's people that we **are** seeing accelerated occultic activity, abandonment of traditional values, and domination by systemic injustice. But our **imbalance**, imprecision, and inconsistency have deterred us from our tasks. We are called Christ's ambassadors, not investigative **reporters**. We are **ministers** of a new covenant, not **marshalls** for a witch hunt. Until our preaching and teaching reflects a Biblical agenda, we will continue to be harassed by the tangential ravings of the fantastic. Rumor will prevail. Surely we can call sin "sin", stand by our convictions, and sound prophetic alarms without indulging in nonsense (Proverbs 6:16-19; Amos 8:11-12).

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## The New Geneva Ministries

**Michael R. Gilstrap**

Probably the most infamous announcement in American corporate history was made on April 23, 1985. On that April day, Robert **Goizueta**, the chairman and chief executive officer of **Coca-Cola**, announced that the "best has been made even better." After one hundred years, Coke would have anew taste.

The reaction of the American people was immediate and violent. One Coke enthusiast warned Coca-Cola that it "had better not start pushing some sugar-plum **fairy** gag juice." Another die-hard Coke **fan** poured liter **after** liter of "new" Coke into the **street**. A Nashville songwriter even came up with a new corporate jingle: Coke **Was It**. **Three** months of unrelenting protest against the loss of **the real thing** brought this major American corporation to its knees. In July 1985 Coca-Cola told the American people that **it** was sorry and begged them for forgiveness. Never had such a large, multinational corporation had to eat so much humble pie!

**If** there is anything to be learned **from** the Coke fiasco it is that change is unsettling to people. Most of us don't really like change. When we see the adjectives "new" or "improved" we are immediately suspicious. The thought **naturally** occurs, "What was wrong with it before?" That was the response of most Coke **drinkers** in the wake of the formula change.

But there is another sense in which the word "new" is used. This sense carries with it the idea of **advancement** or **progress**. To be "new" in this sense is to be the **latest, state-of-the-art, or current** product on the market. Instead of being **improved** with the accompanying **connotation** that there is something wrong with the **unimproved** version, this sense of the word "new" emphasizes a progression **from** one good product to another good **product** which is "new" only in the sense of **being**

more **up-to-date** and **relevant**.

**It is in this** sense that Geneva **Ministries** is "new." Unlike Coca-Cola, which altered the very essence of its **product**, Geneva **Ministries** is **substantially the same**. Geneva **Ministries** exists in order to serve Christians who **are vitally interested in faithfully** developing a comprehensive **Christian** worldview with which **to rebuild** and restructure our increasingly **anti-Christian** society. Through the publication of **The Geneva Review** and the **various books, periodicals, and premium** tape packages, Geneva Ministries shall continue to examine in detail how Christianity relates to the world. There is, however, one main area that has changed in our desire to be more relevant **and** better able to **minister** to our supporters.

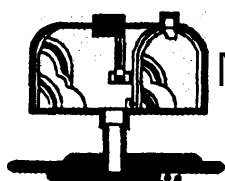
### Structure and Organization

**As** many of you **already** know, Geneva Ministries has been since its beginning a **ministry** of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Tyler, Texas. As a ministry of this local Church, Geneva Ministries was under the direct oversight of the Session (bead of elders) of Westminster. As director, I was responsible to the Session for the work of Geneva **Ministries**.

As of March 5, 1987, Geneva Ministries is no longer a **ministry** of Westminster. On March 5th, Geneva Ministries was officially incorporated as a separate non-profit, tax exempt educational organization devoted to research and publishing in the **area** of **Christian worldview**. Instead of being an outreach arm of a **local** Church, Geneva Ministries is a **support ministry** to **Christian** churches and other **ministries**. As such we are a non-sectarian, nondenominational ministry wholly dedicated to offering aid and support to Christians everywhere who share our vision of a world entirely submitted to our Lord Christ.

**As** a religious corporation, Geneva Ministries is governed by a board consisting **at** this point of myself, James B. **Jordan**, and **Mr. Thomas** Singleton of Nashville, Tennessee. Mr. Singleton has been a **faithful** supporter of Geneva **Ministries** over the years, and his wisdom and experience will undoubtedly prove to be a very valuable asset in the years to come. **I** am also the president of Geneva Ministries, and as such am directly responsible to the board for executing the mission of Geneva Ministries. We believe this new structure will better enable us to **reach** more people with our message.

Instead of being the national ministry of a local presbyterian Church, **Geneva** Ministries is now an



## New Address

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**Phone Number and P.O. Box have not  
changed**

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## The Judicial Operation of the Word

### Part One

Peter Leithart

The various Reformation traditions have always viewed the Word as a primary means of grace. Under the heading of calling, the Westminster Confession of Faith states that the elect are in history **called** "by his **word** and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death **in** which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus **Christ**" (X.1). The Lutheran **dogmatician** John Theodore Mueller discusses the same reality under the heading, "The Divine Efficacy of Holy Scripture": "The Word of God does not merely teach man the way of salvation and show him the means by which he may attain **it**; but by its truly divine power (vis *vera divina*) it actually converts, **regenerates**, and **renews** him" (*Christian Dogmatics*, 133).

Unfortunately, Reformed and Lutheran statements of this Biblical truth have often appeared to oppose one another. Lutherans teach that the Spirit **worksthrough the Word**, while the Reformed have stressed that the Spirit **workswith the Word**. Thus, Lutherans have understand the Reformed position in a **Barthian** sense, namely, that the Scripture becomes the Word when the Spirit accompanies it with the work of illumination. Reformed theologians, on the other hand, are concerned to insist, first, that God is never bound to his means, and, second, that the Word cannot be understood and grasped unless man is given a new heart.

The Lutheran position has clear Biblical support. Paul implies in Romans 10:14-17 that the preaching of the Word creates faith in its hearers. Peter described rebirth as coming from incorruptible seed, through the living and enduring Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23). Jesus claimed that his words were life-giving Spirit, not merely that His words were accompanied by the life-giving Spirit (Jn. 6:63). During His temptation in the wilderness, Jesus quoted Moses' statement that man lives by the Word of God (Mt. 4:4; Dt. 8:3). Scripture teaches that the Word has power to make alive. The difficulty, of course, lies in the fact that not **everyone** who hears the Word is saved. Lutherans explain this by claiming that the divine power of the Word is a resistible power. This leads to some fairly obvious paradoxes; Mueller states, "the **saving** effects of the Word may **be** withstood though **in** itself the Word is omnipotent." Luther himself explained that God's power is resistible if

it operates through means, but **irresistible** if it operates apart **from** means (Mueller, *op.cit.*; p. 134).

One **helpful** way to look at the issue is to examine the judicial nature of the **Word's** operation. The Word is an instrument of judgment, whether unto life or unto condemnation. The **Biblical** images of the Word emphasize this aspect. In several places, the Word is likened to a sword. The **sword** is used throughout Scripture as a symbol of judgment. The prophets describe judgment as the coming of sword, pestilence, and **famine**. Christ's work was a sword that divided (a judicial process) families (Mt. 10:34-36). This same image is applied to the Word in **Ephesians** 6:17, Revelation 1:16 and 19:15. This image is explained more fully in Hebrews 4:12-13. **First**, the Word is described as living and active; it is never at rest. Second, the sword splits open the hearers, opening the thoughts and attitudes of the heart to judgment. It leaves everything open to the judicial scrutiny of God. The Word is not merely the standard by which we are judged, but the Spirit's instrument of that judgment.

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***The Word is an instrument of  
judgment, whether unto life or  
unto condemnation.***

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Elsewhere, the Word is described as a fire. Jeremiah warns that false prophets of his day that the Word is like a hammer that breaks rocks in pieces and like a fire that will consume that worthless straw of the false prophets (23:29). The Lord puts his Word in Jeremiah's mouth to consume the prophets and people of Israel (5:14). Isaiah says that the tongue of the Lord is a consuming fire (30:27). Even the human tongue is a **fire** with enormous destructive potential (Prov. 16:27; Jas. 3:5-6).

The Word, of course, does not always lead to condemnation. But even the life-giving power of the word may be viewed as a judicial operation. That is, the life imparted to those who believe the Word is judicial life, life based on God's declaration of justification. The point here is that the Word not only announces that those who believe will **be** justified, but in a certain sense the Word effects **that** judicial decision. Jesus implies this is John 5:24: "Whoever hears my Word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not **be** condemned; **he** has crossed from death to

*continued page 11*

## Holy Rain

### Studies In Genesis One

James B. Jordan

*And God made the firmament, and separated the waters that were below the firmament from the waters that were above the firmament. And it was established (Genesis 1:7).*

The Bible self-consciously distinguishes between water from above and water **from** below. As we have seen in previous essays, water from above is associated with heaven, while water from below is associated with the earth. The dry land emerged out of water, and thus the lower waters are associated with the land (**Gen. 1:9**). As we shall see, the curse on the ground (**Gen. 3:17**) seems to have the effect of disqualifying ground water **from** symbolizing life.

We're told in Genesis **2:5-6** that God had not yet sent rain upon the earth, but that water arose out of the ground and watered the land. Here the distinction between rain from above and waters from below is reiterated. These ground waters flowed out of Eden to water the whole earth. Thus, in the world as created by God, the water that came up **from** the ground gave **life** to the whole world.

**After** the fall of man, however, water from above seems to replace water **from** below as a picture of God's grace. In Deuteronomy **11:10-11**, Israel was told that God's land was not like Egypt, watered **from** below, but rather "drinks water **from** the rain of heaven." There is a contrast of source. Water out of the ground is associated with **Egypt**; water from above is associated with heaven. Accordingly, at the Flood, the wicked were immersed by waters out of the ground (**Gen. 7:1**). Similarly, at the Red Sea, the wicked were immersed in ground water, but God's people were *sprinkled by rain* (**Psalm 77: 16-20**).

God's holy rain consists of things other than

water. It includes **fire** and brimstone for the wicked (**Ezk. 38:22; Luke 17:29**), and manna for the blessed (**Psalm 78:24**).

In terms of what the Bible says about God's **glory** cloud, and how it hovered over His people, it is easy to see that God's blessings are holy rain **from** His glory cloud. Ordinary rain **from** ordinary clouds reminds us of blessings **from** above—just as lightning and thunder **remind** us of judgment **from** above.

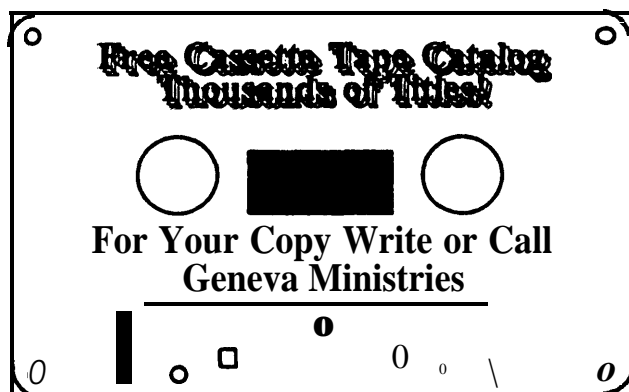
The distinction between water from below and water **from** above, between immersion and sprinkling, is important for the mode of baptism. On the one hand, it does not affect one's eternal position with God whether one was baptized by immersion or by sprinkling. On the other hand, however, the distinction is very important, **I** believe, for the **over-all** life and education of the people of God. Immersion runs in the direction of **incorporation into the old fallen creation**, and is associated with death (Flood, Red Sea) for just that reason. **Sprinkling** runs in the direction of **holy rain from God's glory cloud of heaven**, and is **associated** with incorporation into the Kingdom of God. Do we want to be incorporated into this fallen world (immersion in water **from** below), or into the **future** heavenly world (sprinkling with water **from** above, and thus "**immersion**" into the cloud)?

Churches that practice immersion run the risk of putting an image into the minds of their people that runs counter to the theology of the Bible, and people who have been trained by precept and example to think in terms of immersion will have a harder time understanding the worldview set out in the Bible. They will not understand the significance of the difference between water above and water below.

Water **from** below has to do with the first Adam, who fell. Water **from** above has to do with the last Adam, Who saves us. "The first man **is from** the earth, earthy; the second man **is from** heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the Heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly" (1 Cor. **15:47-49**).

It is true that the Bible pictures heavenly influences in terms of rivers flowing from the Temple (Ezekiel 47), the throne of God (Revelation 22), and the Rock in the wilderness; but each of these is a symbol of heaven and the New Kingdom of God. The Temple, the City, and even the Rock are permeated by the Cloud (cf. Ex. 17:16, "**I** will

*continued p. 11*



## Those Who Mourn

## Second Beatitude

Rav R. Sutton

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)*

"Mourning" is the **heart** of the second beatitude. It is a process of recovering from death, or the loss of anything. It is specifically called a **lamentation in the Bible**,<sup>1</sup> a subject to which Holy **Scripture** devotes an entire **book**; I call it a **manual on mourning**. A brief consideration of the Book of Lamentations sketches what is involved in the second beatitude.

Lamentations is a covenant. It clearly has a five-fold division, after the **covenantal** pattern in **Deuteronomy**.<sup>2</sup> Granted the chapter divisions are not inspired, but Lamentations has five **clear** units. Each section (chapter) is organized around the Hebrew alphabet: chapters one, two, four and five have twenty-two verses for the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, each verse beginning with a consecutive letter. Chapter three has sixty-six verses, three times twenty-two. Only, the third chapter changes letters every three verses, each triplet beginning with the same letter. Its structure, therefore, is generally recognized, but the real value of seeing the five-fold division is tied to the covenant.

The process of mourning is **covenantal**. Jeremiah laments the death of Israel's covenant with God. He realizes that he must die to this dying covenant, and that he must wait for a new one. But as he laments, he himself engages in a process of mourning that **renews** his own covenant with God, so that at the end of the book he exclaims, "Thou, O Lord dost rule forever, Thy throne is from generation to generation" (Lam. 5:19). He agonizingly begins the book by praying a **covenantal** lamentation, and he concludes by rejoicing over God's sovereign control of his circumstances. Whatever Jeremiah does is the key to dealing with grief. Whatever he does is the answer to life's deepest struggles. Whatever he does is the power of the covenant. There are five steps to Jeremiah's **covenantal** mourning.

<sup>1</sup> See Revelation 18:9 and 11 where the words "mourning" and "lammings" are juxtaposed with "weeping."

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller discussion of **covenant**, see Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion by Covenant* (Tyler, Texas: [C.E., 1987).

## Is Your Family on a Collision Course with Disaster?



Our families **are** in danger. **Divorce** & at an **all-time high**... **"Safe" sex is being taught in the public schools... the collapse of the family in Western civilization is a very real possibility.**

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First, Jeremiah faces the fact of death. He paints a verbal picture of a widow who has lost her groom (1: 1); the groom is Josiah and the widow is Jerusalem (II Chron. 35:25). He passionately

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## Trends In Creation Science

### The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle: A Cause for Concern

#### Jeffrey J. Meyers

You're sitting at the dinner **table** on a typical summer night, when out of the corner of your eye, you glimpse a fly. "Get it, **Daddy**," shouts one of your kids. But by the time you're up, the fly is no longer there. Then someone else sees it. "There it is. Get **it**!" But again it has disappeared. After stalking around in search of the critter, catching glimpses of it darting this way or that, but each time turning to find it gone, you retreat to your chair and set the flyswatter at arms length **ready** for your next opportunity. But it's no use. For the next half-hour you repeat the ritual, occasionally spying the **beast**, but never long enough to locate and **smash** it.

Illustrations similar to this are **often** used to explain the Heisenberg uncertainty principle as it applies to the difficulty of locating the precise position and velocity of an electron. Those elusive electrons move so fast that we can never be sure where they are. We can only speak of the probability of it's being at any given location within the atom.

### Experimental Limitations?

All of this immediately makes people think that **Heisenberg's** principle is all about **experimental limitations**. We cannot measure the precise position and velocity of an electron (or any subatomic particle) because our experiments are not accurate enough. If we had a special technologically sophisticated **flyscope** at the dinner table, we'd be able to zero in on that darn fly and blast it out of the air. **In** a similar way, using advanced technology, scientists will succeed one day in pinning down those **slippery** electrons. Right?

Wrong! According to quantum physics, uncertainty is **not the** result of the physical limitations of our equipment; it is a fundamental truth about the nature of the universe. Events at the subatomic level are incapable of being measured precisely. Here is where most people, especially creationists, get the **heeby-jeebies**. **Niels** Bohr said it nicely,

*"Anyone who is not shocked by quantum theory has not understood it."*

What is it about the **Heisenberg** uncertainty principle that makes it so weird? How should

creationists interpret this principle, which is perhaps the central feature of quantum physics? I would like to make some tentative suggestions in this article. "

### No Causality in Nature

The world according to **classical** Newtonian physics has been likened to a universe of very small billiard balls. Classical physicists believed that the universe was made up of a finite number of rigid particles which all interacted according to Newton's three laws and his law of gravity. Causality played a major role in this system of interacting rigid particles.

According to Newton's laws, the behavior of any particle could be exactly predicted given its interactions with other particles and the forces acting upon it. Thus, it was thought possible, given the position and momentum of each particle in the **universe**, to predict with utter precision the **future** of each particle. Not only could the **future** be predicted, but theoretically, a scientist could trace a causal chain back as far as his instruments (and the **finitude** Of his mind) **would allow him**.

**Thus** arose the familiar comparison of the universe to a machine. **This** was the mechanistic world of classical physics, where a strict physical causality linked the particles of the universe together. Each atomic event could be described in terms of particle collisions. Central to classical physics was the concept of causality and the search for causes. Using this model, deists could compare the world to a clock that God wound up in the beginning and let go.

Enter modern physics. Quantum physics has cleared the cosmic pool table of billiard balls, providing a different interpretation of subatomic entities — one that rejects the idea of rigid bodied subatomic particles. But that's not all. Not content with banishing the billiard ball electron from physics, quantum theory, as interpreted by **Heisenberg** and Bohr, radically breaks with classical physics by denying **causality at the subatomic** level.

J. von Neumen, for example, claimed quantum physics had proven that "there is at present no occasion, and no reason to speak of causality in nature."

**Heisenberg** claimed that since there is no such thing as a subatomic particle (an electron for example) that possesses both a precise momentum and precise position, we cannot know what is really happening at the subatomic level in **all** its details. We can only deal in **probabilities**. This demands a **clear** break with **classical** ideas of **deter-**

minism. To quote Heisenberg himself, "... *the invalidity of the law of causality is definitely proved* by quantum mechanics."

### Uncertainty at the Subatomic Level

At first glance, Heisenberg's argument for indeterminacy at the subatomic level appears to be nothing more than a fallacy of equivocation. Because we cannot "determine" the exact position and momentum of an electron, therefore the election is not "determined." The word determined in the sense of "ascertain" is used in the premise of the argument only to be replaced by the meaning "uncaused" in the conclusion.

To be honest, the uncertainty principle will not disappear so easily. Them *does* appear to be more to the uncertainty principle's challenge to causality than just an equivocal argument. Some experimental data *does* suggest that the law of causality breaks down at the subatomic level. Since subatomic entities are *not* particles, the question of what causes them to do what they do becomes acute. What *causes the* electron to move around inside the atom? What *causes the* nuclei of certain atoms to decay? For this reason creationists must come to grips with the uncertainty principle and its ontological significance.

Some modern physicists have suggested that chance generates subatomic events. Heisenberg dismissed as meaningless all speculations about the existence of a *real*, causally determined world behind the *statistically ruled* world of quantum events. Certain popularizers of quantum physics speak of subatomic events being caused by chance! For instance, according to a recent PBS television documentary, chance caused the big bang.

There's another basic fallacy here. How can statistics *rule* over anything? Statistics is a descriptive *science*, which some quantum quacks have elevated into a *cause* of certain events! We may be confined to *describing certain* subatomic events *statistically*, but is it valid to infer that subatomic events are *governed* by probabilities, as many quantum theorists demand?

Clearly chance cannot be elevated into the cause of subatomic events. But if chance can't, and if subatomic events are no longer thought to be the *result* of the collision of particles, what are we left with?

What explains the behavior of subatomic entities? How should creationists resolve the *dilem-*

*continued next page*

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ma posed by **Heisenberg** uncertainty principle? Let me suggest a few options.

### Resolution of the Dilemma

First, the **creationist** may opt out of quantum physics altogether and return to the more comfortable world of classical physics. In fact, many have done precisely this. These creationists understand the **Heisenberg uncertainty** principle (if they believe it is valid at all) to be nothing more than a statement of the limitations of our **current** experimental techniques and **equipment**.

Stanley L. Jaki (following Einstein's criticisms of quantum physics) claims that the problem is **epistemological** rather than metaphysical. He **observes** that the notion of causality itself is ultimately only an aspect of the principle of **sufficient** reason. If we fail to have sufficient reason for certain events, dare we say they are **uncaused**? We may not be able to perceive any causal **connection** between two events, but does this imply that there is no connection?

On this view there **are** only **apparent uncaused** events at the subatomic **level**. As our experimental knowledge increases and as our instruments are made more precise we can expect to find the causes for certain subatomic events.

There's no other option for a classical physicist. For him, an event is simply unintelligible without a **mechanical cause**. If the idea of **uncaused** events is absurd, in the eyes of a classical physicist nonmechanical causes **are** worse. Nonmechanistic connections border on the occult and hark back to **pre-Newtonian** days when the world was understood not as a machine but as an organism. **Uncaused** events and nonmechanical causes—both are unacceptable to the classical physicist.

But even if we accept the view that the **Heisenberg** uncertainty principle is **all** about experimental limitations, is it proper to presuppose **mechanical** causes for **all** subatomic events? Our causal search must stop somewhere. It may be that with quantum mechanics we have **reached** the threshold of **mechanical** causal relationships within the physical world.

### Supraphysical Causes

Here lies a second, more interesting option for the creationist. Maybe there are **nonmechanical causes** for certain **fundamental** subatomic events. Could there be events at the subatomic level that are the result of **supraphysical** causes? [In classical physics this suggestion would be preposterous, but

need the Christian scientist fear? Is the **fate** of Christianity tied up with the classical mechanistic **worldview**? I think not. The possibility of **nonmechanical** causes would lead to one of **two** conclusions.

First, we might propose that for every subatomic event there are nonmechanical causes originating **from** within the created world. This does not necessarily have to lead to something **occultic**, as it did in **pre-Newtonian** science. It would simply imply some form of "action at a distance," a nonmechanistic account for certain subatomic events.


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***"Of course there's only one Person outside creation who could be the cause of every subatomic event. Isn't it possible that God, who 'upholds all things by the word of His power' (Heb. 1:3), is directly responsible for subatomic events?"***

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Must everything in the created world be reduced to mechanistic interactions between particles? In rejecting **Heisenberg's** interpretation of quantum mechanics is the Christian forced to return to the billiard ball world of Newtonian physics? Need nonmechanical causes be identified with the occult? These are **all** questions Christian scientists must answer **if** they accept the **Heisenberg** principle, and yet still wish to avoid the absurdity of **uncaused** events.

Now for the final and most provocative alternative. Might there be nonmechanical causes for subatomic events that originate outside the created order? Maybe the atomic pie cannot be sliced any **further**. There's only so far man can go in his search for causes. According to **Ecclesiastes** 3:11, "No man can find out the work that God does **from** beginning to end." Could the uncertainty principle be telling us that we have really reached the limit of the physical, created causal chain?

Of course there's only one Person outside creation who could be the **cause** of **every** subatomic event. Isn't it possible that God, who "upholds all things by the word of his power" (**Heb. 1:3**) is directly responsible for subatomic events? 



## Music and Life



## The Benefits of Psalm Singing

James B. Jordan

One of the **sadder** aspects of much Christian education today is the lack of emphasis on music. In the Bible, music is very much a part of life, and music is the God-ordained means of praise in worship. The Books of Chronicles, especially 1 Chronicles 25, show how important music is to the worship of God. How wonderful it would be if our congregational singing could be accompanied by a brass choir, or even a **full** orchestra! Not for every hymn, of course, but for some of them, allowing the instrumentalists to sing along with the rest of the congregation on some of the hymns. Some churches, such as the **Moravians**, have always had this.

It would be a fine thing if Christian schools could provide orchestra and brass choir training, but it would be somewhat expensive. One thing that any school (Christian day school or church Sunday School) can do, however, is to teach singing. First and foremost among the songs the children should be taught is, of course, the psalter. There are a number of reasons for singing Psalms and other portions of the Bible. I can only give a few here.

First, the Psalter was given to train us in our prayer and praise. Thus, when we learn, sing, and pray the Psalms, we **are** laying the foundation for a closer walk with God.

Second, the Bible teaches us that wisdom and Christian maturity come through meditation upon Scripture. We are told to meditate day and night (Ps. 1:2), **and** to talk about God's truth when we walk by the way, when we lie down, when we rise up, and when we sit in our houses (**Deut. 6:7**). Obviously, we cannot meditate on Scripture at these times unless we have some of it memorized. Singing Psalms and other Scripture portions will give us many sections of Scripture to meditate on during the day. If **the** children were to sing three Psalms every day, at morning prayer, lunch, and at the close of the school day, they would have the entire Psalter memorized by the time they graduated from school.

Third, Scripture commands us to meditate upon the Psalms and to sprinkle our conversation with them (**Eph. 5:19**). While this verse does not

**command** us to sing Psalms **in** church, obviously it hints in that direction, although it does not exclude singing hymns as well.

Fourth, Psalm singing will improve our worship in many direct ways. In the time of the Reformation, many **beautiful** hymns **were** written. These hymns were written by men who were steeped in the **Psalms**, and thus reflect a profound understanding of God and man. When the **Psalms** go out of the church, the hymns decline in quality and strength.

Which **Psalms** should we teach our children? All of them, of **course**, even those that *seem strange* to us. If we only sing the ones we particularly like, we will be cutting ourselves off **from** the opportunity to grow and expand our appreciation for God's truth. **All** Scripture is God-breathed and profitable . . .

## Resources

There **are** a variety of Psalters available, but no one of them unfortunately is ideal. Of those Psalters that are easiest to sing **from**, **all** but one are incomplete. These books are the easiest to use because they are printed like regular **hymn-books**, with the words printed inside the music. Examples are the United Presbyterian Church **Psalter** (published by **Eerdmans**) and the **Christian Reformed Psalter-Hymnal** (published by the Christian Reformed Church). Both of these contain all the **Psalms**, but some of the Psalms are not **complete**: whole sections are omitted. **Thus**, if we want to learn the entire Book of Psalms, these will not do.

There are three absolutely complete Psalters we can choose among. First there is the **Scottish Psalter** (**Oxford University Press**). You can get this with the music, or with the words only. The musical edition has the pages literally split in half, with the words on the bottom pages and music on top. If you order one, be sure to specify you want "notation" rather than "sol-fa", because you won't **be** able to read the "sol-fa" edition. Advantage: the Psalms are in simple meter, and can be sung to familiar tunes. Disadvantages: virtually **all** the Psalms are in common meter (8 syllables, 6 syllables, 8 syllables, 6 syllables). There is not much diversity. Also, the verification is so literal that some very peculiar grammar and syntax results, which interferes with the meaning of the text. The language is often archaic and weird to modern ears. Also, the music is not very good.

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Second, there is the **Covenanted Psalter** (Board of Education and Publication, **RPCNA**, 7418 Penn. Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15208). The music is generally much better in this Psalter, though some of the songs are really bad musically. Again, an overly-literal verification has occasionally produced strange **language** and **weird grammar**.

My preference is far and away for the third alternative, the GeneVan **Psalter** or as it is currently titled **The Book of Praise**. (available from Geneva **Ministries** for \$10.35 **plus** \$1.00 postage and handling). The music of the Genevan Psalms is excellent. The Psalms are exciting to sing and have a rhythmical beat that children and adults really enjoy, once they learn them. The translations are accurate but freer than the Scottish and Covenanted, so that there is no odd language. The music is unfamiliar, but no harder than gospel hymns. A good song leader is required to teach them. Many of the Genevan tunes were used by Bach, and thus **find** their way into the **great** music of all time.

The disadvantage of the **Book of Praise** is that it only gives the melody, so the pianist or organist **has** to get a book giving the parts. At present the only one available is J. Worp, **Rhythmical Psalter** [It may be purchased from the Family Christian Bookstore, 750 **Guelph** Line, Burlington, Ontario L7R 3N5, (416) 637-9151].

I suggest you get as many of these as possible and look them over. **Keep** in mind that a little effort now will pay off in the future. I believe the extra effort involved in learning the rhythmical Genevan Psalms, called "Geneva jigs" in the old days, is well worth it! You will be teaching your children good music, along with teaching them the Bible.

### How to Teach the Psalter

Introduce Psalms into your church, so that the children can sing them there as well. I suggest the following: have a Psalm of the month for both morning and evening services. In six years you will know them all. When learning, perhaps at a weekly prayer meeting or Bible study, go through these steps:

- 1) Piano plays **all** the way through (use a piano for learning, since it is easier to hear the **rhythm** on a piano than on **an** organ).
- 2) Song **leader** sings **all** the way through to piano accompaniment.
- 3) Song leader sings one phrase at a time, congregation repeating after.
- 4) Song leader sings one half of the Psalm at a time, congregation repeating.

5) Congregation sings through the **first** verse a couple of **times**.

6) Congregation sings the whole Psalm.

Teach the Psalms at a relatively slow tempo, **speeding** up when the Psalm has been learned. Break up long Psalms into shorter sections, based on the natural divisions in the Psalter. ■

(This essay first appeared in the *Biblical Educator*, Vol. 1, No. 3, December 1979)

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*Sutton, continued from page 5*

etches her tears in our minds when he says, "She weeps bitterly in the night" (1:2). She was a woman who knew that death had come, and Jeremiah translates her suffering to mean that he knows that the king has died and that there is no one to take his place.

Mourning begins by facing the reality that a loss has occurred. This is easier said than done. I once counseled a woman who lost her husband. She had a mannequin made to look like him, so that she could keep him in her presence. She couldn't let him go. Jeremiah let Josiah go because he knew that another groom would come, Jesus Christ, just as certainly as Jesus will come to any among His bride who are hurting.

Second, Jeremiah faces the loss of an old structure. He names the loss of the role of several key figures in the hierarchical structure of Israel: princes (2:9), elders (2:10), prophets (2:14), and even the tabernacle itself (2:6). He realizes that Jerusalem is left unguarded, therefore, and that the people of the city need a new structure to protect them.

Biblical **mourning** should initiate a **realization** that the loss of something restructures life, because any death creates certain vulnerability; a relationship is gone that provided structure to life and so forth. Anxiety is caused, and a gnawing fear sets in that C.S. Lewis described as butterflies in the stomach. A new structure is needed. For the Jews of Jesus day, the replacement of the Temple would be Jesus and the Church. For any who suffer loss today, it is **still** Jesus and His Body.

Third, Jeremiah sees that his fears of God's retribution are offset by God's faithfulness. He begins the chapter by describing a person who thinks that he has been cast off by God because of something he has done wrong, because of some offense against God's **law**. But as he progresses through this lengthy chapter, he turns to the Lord, saying, "Great is Thy **faithfulness** . . . Let us **exa-**

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**Second, we perpetuate** moral irresponsibility. Our addiction to mediocre scholarship and preaching has proven itself a spawning ground for a "devil-made-me-do-it" generation. As long as we can **lay** off on someone or something else the responsibility for sin, we **feel** we can escape its consequences. This wholesale denial of basic Biblical principles has short-circuited the very **effectiveness** and productivity of our **ministries**.

Scripture lays upon **believers** the awesome task of introducing help, hope, and healing in a hurting land. When a culture fails morally — or is stricken in wholesale judgment — Scripture looks to the impotent witness of the Church as the first cause, according to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Judgment befalls a people when the **saints refuse** to humble themselves. Society deteriorates when **Christians run from** their responsibilities, seeking "salvation" in education, legislation, or isolation. Sickness in a society is not measured by conspiracies, manifestations, or political orientation but by the dearth of costly discipleship among **God's** own (Galatians 6:7; James 1:14-15).

So what now? Our shallow imprecision and plastic prophetic **piffle** has caught our evangelical impact short. Our apologetics, before a watching world, is suspect, and our influence is compartmentalized. We must say this with tears.

Let us now roll back the results of our unfortunate sloppiness and slothfulness.

"Do not call conspiracy everything these people call **conspiracy**." ■

Gilstrap, *continued from page 2*

independent **ministry** endeavoring to **transcend** denominational boundaries with the world transforming message of the gospel of Christ. Our latest brochure which more **fully** explains Geneva Ministries purpose and mission is enclosed with this newsletter.

Although Geneva Ministries has made a change in the way we are organized, we have not changed the **fundamental** reason for our existence in the **first** place. With Paul, we must confess that in Christ **all** things must be reconciled to the Father (Colossians 1:20). It **is** through Christ and His cross that the entire universe is brought back or restored to its proper relationship to God. This world can only **be** rightly viewed from this perspective. Biblical Christianity is determinative of **all** of **life**.

It is Geneva Ministries' calling to examine **as** fully as possible the depth and practical ramifications of **this** confession. It **is** our job (**yours** and mine) to do our part in bringing this confession to a reality. ■

**The Geneva Psalms**  
**The Book of Praise**  
Available from Geneva Ministries  
Use Express Order Card!

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**life.**" Jesus teaches, **first, that** eternal **life comes** to those who respond to the preached Word in faith. Second, he contrasts "eternal life" not with death but with "condemnation." **Thus**, we may conclude that "life here implies 'acquittal.'" Putting these two **observations** together, we conclude that those who respond in faith to the Word **are** acquitted, justified. When one responds in faith to the Word, he crosses, judicially, from death to life. The Word applies God's judgment to the hearer. If he responds in faith, he will **live**; if he rejects the **Word**, he is condemned already. ■

Jordan, *continued from page 4*

stand on the rock"). **Thus**, these waters **are** flowing from heaven also. Heavenly water does not remove us from this world. On the contrary, it works to restore this world. In a sense the good water drives out the bad. Ground water is defiled unless **re-** renewed by heavenly influences (Ex. 15:23-25). Notice the language of Deuteronomy 11:10-11, "For the land, into which you are entering to possess it, is not like the land of **Egypt** nom which you came, where you used to sow your seed and water it with your foot like a vegetable garden. But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, and hind of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven." This heavenly water produces new ground **water**: "For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and **springs**, flowing forth in valleys and hills" (Dt. 8:7).

Water symbolism in the Bible is rich, complex, and **often** hard for modems to come to grips with. As we make the attempt, however, we must make sure we incorporate the distinction between waters above and waters below. The holy rain of baptism places us into the heavenly environment of the glory cloud of God, the waters above. But, because these heavenly influences shower down upon the earth, the fallen earth is restored. The **first** creation was corrupted, and water **from** the cursed earth cannot restore the world. There is a new creation, however, and water from above will rejuvenate **the world**. Holy baptism means nothing less.

(For a Biblical defense of sprinkling and what it means, see Duane Spencer, *Holy Baptism*, published by Geneva Ministries; price: \$9.95.) ■



April 1987

The AIDS Plague<sub>oo</sub>.

"Before the disease has run its course, world public health officials **estimate**, about one **hundred million people will die from AIDS worldwide** . . .

"Other epidemics could be controlled by quarantine. They came **fast**, and they went fast. The exception was tuberculosis. Now, horrifyingly, this dread disease is **returning** as a side-effect of **AIDS\***

"How can you quarantine a hundred million people? You can't execute **them**, yet this is the only means of removing the **first** cousin of the **AIDS lentivirus** which **attacks** sheep.

"You simply wait. And pray. And take steps to reduce the likelihood of your family's contracting the disease. But the problem **is**, pandemics reach a stage called **critical mass**. At some point, the disease leaps the **normal** transmission barriers and spreads far beyond. This may not happen with AIDS. Yet it may.

"In **Texas**, there have been 2,000 people with full-blown AIDS. So far, **1,300** have died (62%). By 1991, state health officials estimate there will be 16,000. It will be 60,000 by 1996. The plague is here. The world will eventually panic. When it does, who will be **ready** with answers? Which group will pick up **the** pieces?" (Gary North, *Remmnt Review*, 3/6/87, P.O. Box 8204, Ft. Worth, TX 76124, \$95/year)

## The AIDS/Abortion Connection...

"The issue of AIDS was subject to a new twist in the news last month, as it was linked with **the** issue of abortion.

"According to the Associated Press, health officials in Los Angeles are now counseling pregnant women who have been exposed to the AIDS virus to consider abortion.

"This comes after a study by the Centers for Disease Control **reported** that a

woman who **tests positive** for **AIDS antibodies** has a **30% to 50% chance** of passing the **infection** on to her unborn children even though there **is currently** no way of knowing whether the unborn child has **been** infected

"Prolifers are describing this **latest** attack on the unborn as 'reckless,' since **50% to 70%** of the children born to AIDS infected mothers don't have the virus.

"Says Curtis Young, Executive Director of the Christian **Action** Council, 'There's no agony of spirit among officials over randomly destroying seven normal human beings in order to destroy **three with the virus**.'" (*Action Line*, 3/15/87, 701 W. **Broad** Street, Suite 405, Falls **Church**, VA 22046)

## Aborted Fetuses to be "Harvested"...

"It was reported that in the near future the brains of aborted fetuses will be '**harvested**' and their cells **transplanted** into the brains of **people** suffering severe memory loss to help correct the condition.

"According to Dr. Robert **Morrell** of the Neuroscience Research Foundation, this would not be an immoral **practice**. 'It's a situation in which you must determine if the potential benefits to a patient **suffering** memory loss outweigh the concerns about taking tissue from a body that's going to be thrown away anyway,' he said.

"Although **Morrell** expects fetal brain transplants to become common, he anticipates the **first** procedures to be performed outside the U.S., due to **pressure from the prolife movement**.

"The use of fetal organs is well **documented**, but the notion of brain cell transplants is new. It is a sick society that **justifies** ending the lives of unborn children, and then uses what remains of them to prolong or enhance their **own** lives.

"This certainly guts the prime argument of abortion proponents that the fetus is unwanted. He's wanted **alright**, just like slaves were wanted, without rights and subject to the most outrageous abuse imaginable." (*Action Line* 3/15/87)

## Trillion Dollar Federal Budget...

The United States Government now

has a trillion dollar budget. "What is a trillion? If some tooth fairy left a \$100 bill under your pillow every **second**, every day and every **night**, in 317 years you'd be a **trillionaire**.

"It's a **thousand** billions. And a **billion** is a thousand millions. A million seconds is a mere 11 1/2 days. But a billion seconds is 31.7 years. A trillion seconds? **That's** a mere 31,700 years." (*Straight Talk*, 3/26/87, PO Box 60 Pigeon **Forge**, TN 37863, \$47/year).

## Little Support for Pat Robertson's presidential bid...

"In a poll taken at the March 3-5 convention of the National Association of Evangelical (**NAE**), Pat Robertson placed fourth among republican presidential **hopefuls** . . . 34% said the GOP would do well to nominate Bob **Dole**... Jack Kemp came in second with 23%... Bush was close behind with 21%... and Robertson fourth with 13%." (*National anti International Religion Report*, 3/20/87, 5007 Carriage Dr., SW, **Roanoke**, VA 24018, \$39/year).

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mine and probe our ways, and let us return to the Lord" (3:23,40). Man inevitably thinks that God is punishing him when something goes wrong, especially a great loss. But Jeremiah reminds us that a time of crisis is a time to turn to Christ with renewed, soul-searching **commitment**.

Four, Jeremiah finds a new sense of the judgment of God. He understands that **Jerusalem** is under some kind of punishment, and he concludes that her punishment is complete. Mourning should remind one of God's awful **judgment**; after all, there would have never been sickness and death if man had not fallen. But mourning should also channel one's life to the completion of judgment in **Jesus** Christ.

Fifth, Jeremiah realizes a change of new leadership. He describes the loss of the old leaders — fathers and elders — and the rise of slaves who rule over them (5:8). But beyond all of this, he sees the rule of God (5:19). He knows that he is secure in God's control. He is assured that everything will work out. **Jeremiah finds comfort (Matt. 5:4b)!**