

his failures, and he does not mortgage his life into bondage to the failure of others" (p. 29).

This book consists of a collection of essays by Ayn Rand and a number of additional articles by Nathaniel Branden. After introducing the essential tenets of Objectivist ethics, the writers move into a wide range of contemporary problems such as intimidation, counterfeit individualism, racism, the nature of government, man's rights, the cult of moral grayness. They ask and ponder the questions: Isn't everyone selfish? Doesn't life require compromise? How does one lead a rational life in an irrational society?

In his reason-bound schema of reality, the Objectivist has no place for faith. He refers to it as "a malignancy that no system can tolerate with impunity," with the further qualification that "the man who succumbs to it, will call on it in precisely those issues where he needs his reason most" (p. 38). Despite all of his apparent air of bravado, the humanistic Objectivist seems to be whistling in the dark, a lonely itinerant without any "invisible" means of support. With his ultimate commitment to that which is less than ultimate, self, he cannot ever hope to regain that requisite relationship with his Maker and subsequent interaction with his fellow man, mediated by love, to acquire that wholeness which is holiness, which is blessedness, which is happiness.

A Story of Friendship

R. EDWARD JOHNSON

THE CHOSEN

By Chaim Potok

Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York, 1967 284 pp \$4.95 paper \$.95

The Chosen is a moving story of both generational and religious conflict among Hasidic and orthodox Jews in the late 1940's. The incidents that take place in a tiny section of Williamsburg in Brooklyn have universal implications. The struggles of Jewry in this regional microcosm are parabolic of the quest of those of each generation and religion who see themselves as "the chosen." Through this remarkable book, which offers a great deal of information about the complexities of Talmudic study, the origins of Hasidism, and Jewish customs, Potok portrays the intricacy and poignancy of human relations.

The protagonists are two fifteen-year-old boys, sensitive Reuven Malter and brilliant but troubled Danny Saunders, and their fathers. Danny is a member of the ultraorthodox sect distinguished by earlocks, broadbrimmed hats, and long, black overcoats. His father, Reb Saunders, is a tzaddik, a Hasidic rabbi, who believes that his sect alone is fulfilling God's will. Custom demands that Danny follow his father

as the sect's leader, though he is personally inclined toward psychology. Reuven practices a liberal Judaism. Malter, his father, is a Zionist writer and scholar.

Conflict begins with a rousing softball game between the two yeshiva (parochial) schools. A fever of competition drives the Hasidic team to defend its religious honor. Generations of Hasidic hatred for the Apikoros (educated Jews who deny basic tenets of the faith) seem now to be present in the overwhelming urge to "kill Reuven." Sensitive Reuven is frightened by the inordinate drive to win. "I felt as if all the previous years of my life had led me somehow to this one ball game and all the future years of my life would depend upon its outcome." Danny, a vicious place hitter, slams a line drive into Reuven's face. The hit shatters Reuven's glasses and lodges a fragment in the cornea of his left eye. Danny visits Reuven in the hospital while Reuven's sight hangs in the balance.

The vision of his newfound friend is recovered. Danny reevaluates his sect's concept of "the Chosen," and out of this incident a motif for the book emerges. Regaining the sight of the injured eye becomes the means by which the whole world is brought into clearer focus. The two former enemies see the parochial nature of their hatred. Danny begins to question his father and Hasidic ways. Both boys realize instinctively that it is the human factor in man, not the divine, that breeds distance and misunderstanding. Through this new perspective, the heterogeneous character of man becomes a delight to be appreciated and not a wrong to be deplored. The conflict that separated the boys serves to fuse their friendship. They even admire and respect rather than damn their religious differences.

Destined by Hasid custom to inherit his father's mantle of authority in the sect, Danny is brought up "in silence," that he might "know compassion," for "words conceal the heart." Reb Saunders believes silence to be the only relationship that a father and son should enjoy beyond the rigors of Talmudic study. In *The Chosen*, silence is the means of instruction, the ultimate in communication between a man and his soul. It has unique quality and dimension. Far from being a void, silence becomes a means to participate in and shape reality. Between the warmth of friendship and the ugliness of hatred, silence captures the characters' greatest moments of life. "The tzaddik sits in absolute silence, saying nothing, and all his followers listen attentively." As the Talmud says, "A word is worth one coin, silence is worth two."

Danny is not content with only Talmudic study, and his curiosity and intelligence carry him beyond the rigid confines of Hasidic ritual. His is the quest of youth who seek to relieve themselves of the traditions of a previous generation, to build their own futures. Danny goes secretly to the public library to read the "forbidden books," because his sect prohibits "secular works" of literature, science, and especially psychology. Extensive reading soon develops within him a growing interest in Freud. He wishes that he did not have to be a rabbi. An anguished struggle follows as he seeks to escape from the choking orthodoxy without breaking his father's heart. As a serious student, devoted to faith and family, he feels that rebellion is a hideous act.

The fathers split over the issue of Zionism. Reb Saunders, believing the Messiah will set up the kingdom when he comes, opposes the state of Israel as an interference of man. Consequently, he forbids Danny to associate with Reuven. Though disagreeing, Malter, the more liberal Talmudic scholar, feels that "honest differences of

opinion should never be permitted to destroy a friendship. . . . Ideas should be fought with ideas, not with blind passion." Refusing to tolerate the bitterness of his son toward Reb Saunders, Malter observes, "The fanaticism of men like Reb Saunders kept us alive for two thousand years of exile."

The two families are finally reconciled and the silence between the fathers is ended. Through Reuven, Reb Saunders reveals himself to Danny and thus frees his son to be a man. While Danny studies to be a psychologist, Reuven, ironically, enters the rabbinate.

The central theme of *The Chosen* is friendship. Friendship permeates the story and brings other themes into its larger perspective. The relationship of the two boys contrasts with the wide separation of their fathers. Reuven's father encourages his son to build lasting friendships; the conservative Reb Saunders does not like his son to "mix with outsiders." Yet they both agree with the Talmud, which says, "A person should do two things: one is to acquire a teacher, the other, choose a friend." In *The Chosen*, Potok dissolves generational and religious conflict in the depth of friendship. A knowledge of this abiding relationship helps us to see that all who choose a friend are in some sense *the chosen*.

How Can Man Find God?

PAUL O. CAMPBELL

JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

By R. Rubin Widmer

Southern Publishing Association, Nashville, 1967 142 pp \$4.50

To consider three views on how the light of salvation comes to men, Widmer classifies theologians — the liberals, the neotheologians, and the evangelicals — and explains the views of each group. He recognizes that theologians in the same group may differ and that group boundaries are not distinct, yet he names specific men as representatives of each group.

The liberals, as do the other two groups, believe that Christ is the One Light; but also they hold that all religions have some truth and that, hence, Christianity is not unique. According to this view, inspiration is not in the Word but in the message; emphasis is on the authority of man because of his judgment in science, his knowledge of history, and his feeling for worship.

According to the neotheologians and the evangelicals, Christ is the Light and reveals himself through the Scriptures, nature, and direct revelation. The evangelical view distinguishes itself from the neotheological view by the relative emphasis on the method of revelation: that knowledge obtainable through nature is not sufficient for salvation; that light is not automatically available; that God limits himself to working through men and the Holy Spirit.

Widmer's book seems to be the first of its kind published by Adventists, and thus it fills a place, especially for younger theologians, in Adventist literature. A preface in which the author shared his motives for this writing would have been helpful. The bibliography of 110 authors and 157 sources is impressive.

The first four chapters deal with the problem of how men are saved, and in them Widmer enumerates the contributions made by the theologians from each of the three groups. These chapters contain material that can be discussed in complimentary terms only. Chapter five, however, sets forth some personal interpretations of the following that should be reexamined: (1) that Christ is the only Light of the world, (2) that Christ is the personification of those characteristics we call light, (3) that, therefore, "there is none other name . . . whereby we must be saved," and (4) that without light there is no salvation.

Adventist Christians will agree with these statements. It is Widmer's interpretation of the four statements that can be questioned. His view of the gospel commission and his belief that God gives light almost wholly through human beings lead him to the conclusion that many persons may be lost because some Christian failed to tell them of Jesus. This conclusion needs critical review.

The author uses John 1:9 ("That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world") to make the point that Christ is the only Light. But he endeavors to sidestep the usual interpretation of "every man." At least twenty translators express the concept in varied language, but all retain the idea of "every man." We must discuss this idea. As do most Christians, Widmer believes that Jesus is the Light personified. But what are the personified qualities that we call light? Here we must define some terms.

The word *light* is translated from a Greek word that means to shine, to make manifest, to show, to appear, to lighten by rays, or to be seen. To know Jesus we must see him in action with love and forgiveness shining through for our salvation. The light of the gospel is not mere theoretical knowledge of God's character; it is the experiential knowledge that leads to our rebirth.

A pertinent question is: How much light is light? Does any human have all the light, or is light shining "more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18)? Some light must shine upon all men, for this is the "true light, which lighteth every man" (John 1:9). "Every man" will have enough light on which to base a decision.

The light of God and his name are one, "for there is none other name . . . whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The word *name* comes to the English through the Latin (*nomen*) from the Greek (*onoma*) and designates a person or an entity, but it also means character or authority. The last two of these definitions apply especially to the word *name* in this scripture. A word or symbol means no more than that which it represents. The six-letter word *Christ* has no potency as ink and paper. It is the character and authority of the Person represented that has the saving light of love and forgiveness.

Love, joy, and peace are attributes of God's character. Men who accept these attributes, even though they do not know of the divine source, are accepting gifts of light from God. "Every good gift . . . is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). The continued acceptance of any godly characteristic will lead the acceptor to salvation.

Widmer believes that light from Christ is necessary for salvation and that without that light no one is saved. Are there degrees of reflection from Infinite Light? How much of the character of God do any of us understand? If salvation does not take total understanding, at what point do we make the distinction between enough light for salvation and not quite enough? If one accepts love, which is a gift from heaven, and follows it, will he not have increasing light, and will he not be following Christ, who said, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you" (John 12:35)? No one can remain in darkness, however meager his light, if he continues to pursue that light. If a man finds himself in darkness, he will be unable to blame anyone but himself.

Widmer emphasizes the gospel commission, which bids all Christians to "teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19). This is good, but what is the reason for this commission? Paul writes: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity [constraint in growth or movement, as having an arm bent with intensity; see Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance*] is laid upon me; yea, woe [an exclamation of grief, as *alas*] is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). Paul's reason for preaching was a personal one. The "woe" was on Paul, not on the heathen, if he failed. By preaching, he threw off the constraint and walked in increasing light with the joy of seeing others begin to grow. Had he unrepentantly failed to preach to the heathen, he would have been lost. However, when one does not do his appointed work, God calls another. In the parable of the talents, the one talent was taken from the nonuser and was given to the user. (See Matthew 25:14-24.) God raised Paul to preach to the gentiles. Had Paul failed, God would have used other means. When the Hebrews objected to the children's shouting praise at Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Christ said, "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:40). God's light must shine whether humans reflect it or not.

Widmer believes that God gives light mostly through human beings, and I would agree; but persons are not always the means, and even when humans are used they are not always saints. Can we limit God in the ways he gives light? There are at least four major ways by which God speaks to men — directly, through the Bible, through other humans, and through nature.

God has dealt directly with many men, from Adam to John the Revelator and on to the present time. God does not cease this personal confrontation. Joel wrote: "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28). Too often we think of this not as "all flesh" but rather as "the leaders" or "the righteous," but hardly ever as "the heathen."

The Bible gives instances in which God gave guidance by direct confrontation. In visions and dreams God spoke to heathens like Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh, Abimelech, and others. He spoke through backsliders like Balaam, Saul, and Caiaphas. He gave guidance to Cornelius, the light-seeking Roman. God has communicated directly with saints, sinners, and heathen.

God reveals himself through the Bible, but the Bible has not always existed, and even now millions do not have it. God plans to do something for people thus deprived, because the light must shine on "every man."

God planned for humans to spread the light as part of their Christian exercise, and

so he gave the gospel commission. Yet God has not depended wholly on man. God wants us to do missionary work not merely for the sake of unbelievers, but that our experience as collaborators with him might enrich our lives.

For those who cannot be reached by believers, God is not without a plan. The Holy Spirit pleads with men, and when the Spirit's coming is welcomed, it gives guidance. Jesus said, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit seals men and that sealing is done by placing love in their hearts. (See Ephesians 4:30 and Romans 5:5.) Love is a gift from above, and anyone who follows love is following the Holy Spirit. He will be guided into "all truth."

As far as telling the world of Jesus, Christians are farther behind now than they were a hundred years ago, for men are being born and are dying faster than Christians are reaching them. Does that mean that God will be thwarted in his endeavor to let light shine on "every man"? I believe not. "He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness" (Romans 9:28). How will he do this? He will use willing men, but he is not dependent on an army of humans. "Not by might [margin, *army*], nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). God will succeed, for, as John wrote, "the earth was lightened with . . . glory" (Revelation 18:1).

Paul believed that other creatures than human beings participate in this work. Speaking of angels (Hebrews 1:14) he wrote, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Some of those heirs have not yet heard or believed, but they will hear even if angels have to tell them, for they are included in the "every man."

"Every man" will be judged. "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10). No one can be judged without light. Paul indicates that sin came to all men through Adam's sin, but that "even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men" (Romans 5:18). The expression "all men" includes the heathen and the gentiles, but of course not all men accept the proffered righteousness.

The Hebrews received the law at Sinai. The rest of the nations were supposed to receive it through the Hebrews, or later through Christians. Hebrews and Christians have not always been willing to fulfill God's plan. Some of the heathen or gentiles, whether because of lack of zeal or lack of facilities, will have to receive the promised light through nature. "For there is no respect of persons [including people of every environment] with God. For as many as have sinned without law [or without the knowledge of the written law] shall also perish without law . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Romans 2:11-16).

Those who perish without law perish because they have rejected the little light which came to them. Those who are saved because of the writing in their hearts are saved without knowledge of the written law. The writing in their hearts is by the Holy Spirit. (See Hebrews 8:10 and 2 Corinthians 3:3-6.) Here Paul says that God judges men according to their capacity, their environment, and the light that has come to them. David was in accord with Paul. "The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there" (Psalm 87:6).

Paul believed that any excuse because of ignorance was removed by light from

nature and created works. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them [margin, *to them*]; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they [Greeks and barbarians, verse 14] are without excuse [margin, *that they be without excuse*]" (Romans 1:19, 20). Therefore, even though no missionary may have gone to them, God says that "they are without excuse." The belief that the heathen will be lost unless God's people go to them is not in accord with Paul's writings. If some particular man will be lost because I do not warn him, what particular aborigine in what far-off country is my special responsibility?

God never damns anyone for another's sin. It is "the soul that sinneth" that "shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4), not the one sinned against. Neither sin nor righteousness is transferable from one human to another. "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness" (Ezekiel 14:14).

Some fear that motivation of the church to missionary work will be lessened if the gentiles can hear the gospel even though Christians do not tell them. Perhaps the idea that the unwarned heathen will be lost is supported by some in order to maintain the motivation of the church. But fallacy is weaker than truth, even though both may motivate a good work.

Any sin, whether of omission or commission, may be forgiven. For God to forgive one for the sin of omission, then damn a neighbor for that sin which another committed, does violence to the Bible and to God's nature as the Saviour. Ignorance is excusable if there is no light. A man's accountability begins with information. There is never a time in a man's experience when he knows everything pertaining to salvation; yet every man is required to make his decision.¹

The sins of ignorance are different from the sins of presumption, and God deals with them in a different way. Sins of ignorance God "winks at," but with light God requires repentance. Rejection of light makes a sinner presumptive. He is unforgiven, not because God is unforgiving, but because the sinner doesn't want forgiveness.²

Would it not be strange if Christ died for all men, and then left some with no chance? Could he give men free choice, then not allow light to come to them so they could use that choice?

I conclude, then, that none will be lost because of mere ignorance, for no one will be completely ignorant; that no one will be lost because of another's sin of omission, for guilt is not thus transferable; and that no one will be without sufficient light for salvation, even though God may have to use means other than those intended. There are too many expressions like "all men" for anyone to be overlooked in the distribution of light. John was in accord with the rest of the Bible when he wrote, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9).

NOTES

- 1 Some will say that this is incompatible with the second commandment, part of which reads, "I . . . am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers . . . unto the third and fourth generation" (Exodus 20:5). The verse does not say whether it is the guilt of the iniquity that is visited on the descendants, or the weakness

resulting from the iniquitous action of the fathers. If we interpret this visitation to be the guilt of the iniquity, we contradict the rest of the Bible; therefore we must interpret it as the weakness. Ezekiel wrote, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (Ezekiel 18:20).

- 2 God's treatment of ignorance and of presumption is discussed in Numbers 15:24-31. Only the presumptive ones perish, unless they repent. Peter dealt with some ignorance on the day of Pentecost. (See Acts 3:14-19.) When Light banished the crucifier's ignorance, God required action, and thousands repented.

Brief Reviews

COMPARATIVE ODONTOLOGY

By Bernard Peyer; translated and edited by Rainer Zangerl

University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968 xiv plus 347 pp \$22.50

This book is the result of the dual effort of a German scientist and the chief curator of the department of geology of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. The death of Bernard Peyer in 1963 interrupted the publication of *Comparative Odontology*, and the book was subsequently translated from German into English and published by Zangerl.

This is a book intended primarily for the scientist. Despite the fact that it pertains to teeth, it is of only academic concern to the practicing dentist. Its highly technical terminology and detailed descriptions exclude it from ever becoming a best seller. As a reference book and as a scientific publication, it is probably the best in its field.

Probably no structures in living organisms manifest such variation in form as do dentitions. From the horny denticle of the lamprey and the polyphyodont dentition of the shark, to the highly differentiated teeth of some vertebrates, tremendous differences may be seen. Of particular interest are the tusk of the elephant (which is actually an incisor) and the hollow tubular fang of the rattlesnake.

As might be expected, Peyer and Zangerl support the theory of organic evolution and occasionally make reference to the changes in morphology of the teeth as the creature adapted itself to its environment. Of the 347 pages, however, only 17 are devoted to theories of evolution.

It has often been posed that the shapes of the teeth affected the eating habits of the animals; e.g., herbivorous animals have corrugated enamel plates for grinding grasses and herbs, whereas carnivorous animals, in contrast, have pointed, knifelike cutting edges to sever tendons and flesh of their prey. In this regard the authors have an interesting comment.

As a systematic criterion, the mode of feeding is usable only with caution, because in different, unquestionably natural, groups of mammals there are both carnivores and herbivorous forms; for example, among the marsupials. Even omnivorous forms and