

The Shepherd of Israel



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Inside
this
issue:

Autobiography

People spend millions each year on the psychiatrist's couch doing maintenance work on personalities that need complete overhauls.

It took open heart surgery to convince Arthur Erdman that inviting God into his world could change his entire life. Read how a man "who never did anything right" learned to master the psychoanalyst's greatest commandment, Love thyself.

Also, "I'm Doing the Best I Can" by Raymond Cohen.

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"It finally started to sink into my head that there must be something other than just living day by day, not thinking of anything besides myself . . ."

— Arthur Erdman

Born of Jewish parents, I was brought up on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. My father died at an early age

continued inside



continued from cover

so my environment was such that there was no one in the house to tell me the difference between right and wrong.

I did what I pleased. As I made my bed, I slept in it and for the rest of my life I did everything short of murder. I never had any knowledge or fear of God. Whatever I felt like doing was right—whether I hurt people or not.

When I was about forty, my first feeling of religion came when my mother died. I felt lost and deeply hurt. Yet, time heals most wounds and I soon returned to my old ways.

About this time I started to have heart problems and was told I would need open-heart surgery. I still had no fear of God: I just wanted to die. I

knew nothing of heaven, hell or the forgiveness of sin. All I knew was I wouldn't have to cope with any problems like caring for my family any more.

I was prepared never to come through this operation alive; death would solve all my problems and depressions. I had already made up my mind. I was going to die.

At the hospital, coming out of the anesthesia, I was in a deep state of depression. I couldn't understand why I didn't die. Then back in my room, two beds away I met Rev. Woods who happened to be having the same type of operation I had.

He came over to comfort me, then he started to talk to me about God. He saw I could not converse with him, and he began quoting the Word of God. At this point I still would never think of believing in any kind of God.

After walking and talking with Rev. Woods each day while we stayed in the same hospital room, I became more interested. It finally started to sink into my head that there must be something other than just living day by day, not thinking of anything besides myself! *There had to be something else!*

I continued to see Rev. Woods after we both left the hospital and started to get more involved. Then I started to attend some of his meetings. After three or four meetings at the Hicksville, L. I. Center, I felt that something was happening to me.

One night at the service presented by Rev. Woods I felt a peace, a glow, like my heart was just going to burst

with love. I never had such a terrific feeling in my life; something money could never buy.

At the fourth meeting something just came over me. Even Mr. Woods noticed. My whole personality—my looks were changing. After the service Rev. Woods came over and asked if there was anything I wanted to tell him.

"Is it possible," I asked him, "to take God into my life?" I knew right then only God could save me; only God could take away my sins! Only the Lord Jesus knew my problems and could give me hope to keep on living.

Rev. Woods listened to me carefully. Then I received Christ as my Messiah and became a child of God! I knew I had many things to learn, but I was opening up a new life. A life that would be full of love and happiness; a life I could not turn away from any longer.

Several weeks later at our Hollis branch in Queens, I gave a testimony of how I had already purchased a gun and was ready to blow my brains out before knowing the Lord Jesus. I told them I never did anything right but that it's never too late to take God into your life. If it can happen to me, who never did anything right in his life, then it can happen to anyone. Whoever wants it, can have it.

Since my operation, I have been in intensive care at least five times to replace my heart valve. I have had problem after problem, yet my faith in the Lord has not weakened one iota. I will never deny that I am Jewish, but I will never deny Jesus as my Savior.

"I was prepared never to come through this operation alive; death would solve all my problems and depressions. I had already made up my mind. I was going to die . . ."

“I’m Doing the Best I Can”

So inbred in us is this defense mechanism that over the years it develops in us all sorts of inner conflicts.

by RAYMOND COHEN

More often than not, when people are confronted with their shortcomings, their defense mechanisms usually react at once with the reasoning, “I am doing the best I can.”

It is by far the minority who would honestly face up to their faults and inabilities and admit they need help. So inbred in us is this defense mechanism that over the years it develops in us all sorts of inner conflicts.

Basically, we know we fall short, but our stubborn defense persists and soon we find ourselves in mental and spiritual trouble.

It is more amazing when we consider that this line of reasoning only applies to our own situations and circumstances, and never will we accept it as an answer from another individual. Let me illustrate.

The story is told of a preacher who, each time he went for a haircut, spoke to the barber about his sin and need of salvation. This went on for many years but the barber’s answer was always the same, “I do the best I can.”

MAN’S FAULTY REASONING

The preacher finally hit on a plan that might show the barber the error in his philosophy. After their usual discussion, the preacher asked if he might wait upon several of the barber’s customers.

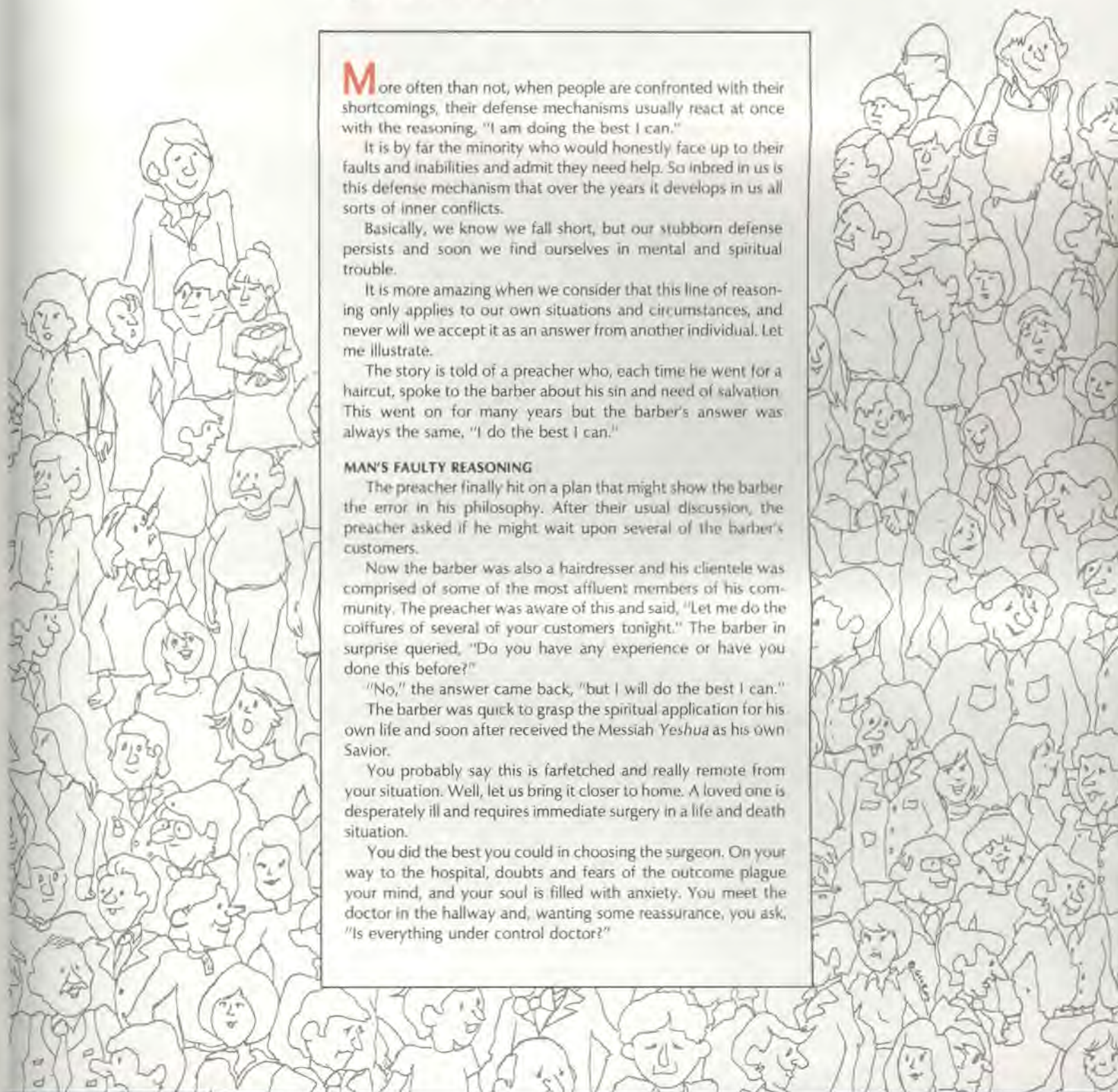
Now the barber was also a hairdresser and his clientele was comprised of some of the most affluent members of his community. The preacher was aware of this and said, “Let me do the coiffures of several of your customers tonight.” The barber in surprise queried, “Do you have any experience or have you done this before?”

“No,” the answer came back, “but I will do the best I can.”

The barber was quick to grasp the spiritual application for his own life and soon after received the Messiah *Yeshua* as his own Savior.

You probably say this is farfetched and really remote from your situation. Well, let us bring it closer to home. A loved one is desperately ill and requires immediate surgery in a life and death situation.

You did the best you could in choosing the surgeon. On your way to the hospital, doubts and fears of the outcome plague your mind, and your soul is filled with anxiety. You meet the doctor in the hallway and, wanting some reassurance, you ask, “Is everything under control doctor?”



He replies, "I have never done this type of surgery before; but don't you worry, I will do the best I can." Certainly this is completely unacceptable and your fears increase rather than decrease.

Here is another instance. Assume you want to invest your hard-earned savings in a manner that will provide some future security for you. Would you give your money to a person who promised to do the "best he can," or would you seek out someone more certain of the outcome of your investment?

I think the point is well made, but apply it to a matter more important, such as eternal life. Why do we seek advice from those who have no experience and even less knowledge of this subject and abide by their stereotyped answer: "Just do the best you can."

Shouldn't we seek the person with experience and knowledge of so important a subject? Shouldn't we seek out the person who with full assurance can guarantee the outcome if we follow his advice?

GOD'S PERFECT PROVISION

Do you think for one moment your answer, "I am doing the best I can," will satisfy a most holy God, particularly when He has provided a Counsellor to instruct you in the way to eternal life?

How silly we are in matters that really count, and how specific in detail we become with insignificant matters that cannot add one iota to our eternal destiny.

We make much preparation for death in the form of insurance policies, wills, trust funds, and funeral arrangements; but we make no provision for the life after death, which is eternal. After all, we say, we have "done the best we can."

What does God say about our best?

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isaiah 1:18).

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags . . . (Isaiah 64:6).

They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one (Psalm 14:3).

God says our best is not good enough! We are all unclean sinners in His sight, and, as such our destiny is eternal separation from God. For He says,

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated be-

tween you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1, 2).

Did you take note that although we are condemned to separation because of sin, God says, "Come, let us reason together," and "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save?"

The Lord has provided a way of cleansing from sin, a way of reconciliation to Him, a way in which we can be certain that our Counsellor will obtain for us eternal life, eternal redemption, and eternal fellowship with Him!

Are you interested? You would be foolish not to be, for the Bible says, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Psalm 74:7).

"OUR BEST" IS TO BELIEVE GOD

Here then is God's counsel on doing the best we can:

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6).

When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand (Isaiah 53:10).

Who is this who will be our sin offering and reconcile us to God? The Bible says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

When Jesus (Yeshua) was born, the angel of God said, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

Yeshua said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). And again He said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29).

Saul of Tarsus said, "For even Christ (Messiah) our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Cor. 5:7).

Surely the accumulated evidence of the transformed lives of those who have trusted Jesus (Yeshua) as their Counsellor, their Passover Lamb, and sin offering, speaks emphatically that the "best you can do" is to believe God and take Him at His word. Receive His Son as your atonement and He guarantees a transformed life now and eternal life to come.

Are you really doing the best you can?

