

SODOM AND GOMORRAH ON STEROIDS

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The title of this article is a line I borrowed from Art Cox, the pastor of our local congregation. Some months ago Art was preaching about the plague of sexual perversion in our nation, and he described it as "Sodom and Gomorrah on steroids." So with Art's permission, I am using that line as the title for this article, even though the article will cover more territory than Sodom and Gomorrah.

After the recent shooting at the nightclub in Orlando, some people on FB (FaceBook) got mad at me because I referred to homosexuals as "sodomites." I stated on FB that I feel sad for the sodomites who were killed, and for their families. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and neither do I. I hope that some of them repented in their final moments and asked God to forgive them for the sexually perverse lifestyle they lived. If they did, and if they were sincere, they will have a place in Paradise, and I will rejoice to see them there.

Some Bible believers on FB objected to my use of the word "sodomites" rather than "members of the LGBT community" or "gay community." They claimed that I was dehumanizing them and minimizing the fact that they are individuals created in the image of

God because the word "sodomites" labels them by their sexual orientation. I guess these FB theologians do not realize that calling them "the LGBT community" or "gay community" labels them according to their sexual orientation every bit as much as "sodomites" does.

When the Bible talks about homosexual acts, it uses the following words: *abomination, defiled, reprobate mind, sodomites, uncleanness, vile affections*. If people are angered by those words, they don't have a problem with me. They have a problem with God.

Some of my Christian friends from the past publicly accused me on FB of being harsh. I was told that people "dread" seeing me for fear I will "rip into them." One friend claims that "God told him" that I hate all homosexuals, and that I "would resist anyone EVER pointing out just a hint or a smidgin of a possible fault in you." Then he added, "The lake of fire may help you overcome."

My feelings are not hurt, but I am deeply disappointed to see so many Christians letting themselves be so brainwashed by the world that they think unrepentant sodomites need not fear the lake of fire, but I am in danger of the lake of fire because I call a sodomite a sodomite.

I feel compassion for people who engage in homosexual acts and afterwards feel ashamed and disgusted with themselves and wish they could stop. I pray that such people come to the Lord

and find forgiveness and deliverance. But for those who proudly parade their perversion in public, and carouse in their cross-gender costumes, and flaunt their faggotry, and loudly demand that we view their sexually perverse lifestyle as acceptable and celebrate their sin... I admit I don't feel a lot of compassion for those people, because I don't think God does. Psalm 5:5 says that God "hates all workers of iniquity." If those people are not workers of iniquity, then there's no such thing as a worker of iniquity.

God may hate these workers of iniquity, but I don't. I only feel pity for them for the fate that awaits them if they do not repent.

"Hate the sin, love the sinner" applies to ordinary sinners, but some sinners go so far that they cause God to abominate not only the sin, but also the sinner. Of cross-dressers, the Bible says "all that do so are abomination unto Yahweh thy God" (Deut. 22:5). Notice, it is not just the doing but also *the doers themselves* that are abominated by Yahweh.

In the Bible God prescribed the death penalty for homosexual acts. That does not mean that anyone has the right to independently act as judge and executioner, like the Muslim terrorist did. But it does mean that sodomites deserve the death penalty. In fact, we all deserve death, because "all have sinned" and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 3:23 & 6:23).

"Daniel, if we all deserve death

for our sins, then that must mean that homosexuality is no worse than any other sin. All sins are equally bad, right?"

Wrong. Every sin is sinful, but some sins are greater than others. Yeshua said to Pilate, "He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin" (John 19:11). Yeshua also spoke about "the weightier matters of the law" (Matt. 23:23), and about "the least of the commandments" (Matt. 5:19), and about some people receiving "greater damnation" than others (Luke 20:47).

Clearly some sins are greater than others. To say that all sins are equally bad is not only unBiblical, it is foolish. If one of your neighbors covets your car, and another neighbor murders you and rapes your wife, which neighbor committed the greater sin against you? Duh.

Some sins are called "abominations" and some are not. Even among abominations, some abominations are worse than others. The proof of this is in Ezekiel chapter 8, where Yahweh showed Ezekiel the sins of Judah and called them "great abominations." Then Yahweh told Ezekiel that he would see "greater abominations" than the great ones, then even "greater abominations," and finally even "greater abominations." Therefore there are at least six levels of sin. There are sins that the Bible does *not* call abominations, there are *abominations*, there are *great abominations*, and there are *greater and greater and greater*

abominations.

A lot of the FB chatter from professing Bible believers after the Orlando shooting deeply concerns me. Of course there are the usual clueless Christians who chime in by quoting Jesus' words "Judge not," along with unsaved worldlings, many of whom know nothing about Jesus except that He said "Judge not."

It is understandable that unsaved worldlings will quote these two words of Jesus in a misguided effort to justify sin, but Christians should know better. Christians should know the importance of context. If Christians would simply quote the entirety of Jesus' "Judge not" statement, they would understand that He was *not* saying that it is always wrong to point out someone else's sin. They would understand that He was saying that you should not point out a minor flaw (a "mote" or "splinter") in your brother's life if you yourself have a major besetting sin (a "beam" or "log") in your own life. Christians would also realize that Jesus said that after you have cast away the major sins that formerly blinded you, after you have "cast the beam out of thine own eye," then you can see clearly to help your brother get free of his sin - even a relatively minor sin, a "mote." Look at the entire statement:

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull

out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matt. 7:3-5).

In another place Jesus said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). In other words, don't rush to condemn someone before you know all the facts. Judge, but do it righteously. Paul said "he that is spiritual judgeth all things" (1 Cor. 2:15). A spiritual person can and should judge, and can even confront a brother for sin, as it is written, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

If it is right for an overcoming Christian, "ye which are spiritual," to aid a weaker brother by helping to pull a mote out of his eye, a minor sin that only partially distorts his spiritual vision, then how much more is it right to help a brother who has a beam in his eye, an abominable sin like sexual perversion in his life.

Of course people point out that Jesus and Paul were talking about sins committed by a *brother*, not by unbelievers, and that the great majority of homosexuals do not claim to be Christians and therefore are not "brothers."

I agree that a sexually immoral person who claims to be a brother

should be treated differently than a sexually immoral person who does not claim to be a brother. Paul discusses this in 1 Corinthians 5, where he says we are "not to company with fornicators," then clarifies that he is not talking about fornicators who are unbelievers, "fornicators of this world," but specifically and only about fornicators who claim to be brothers: "if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator... with such an one no not to eat." Then Paul adds:

"For what have I to do to judge them also that are without [i.e., outside the Body of Messiah]? Do not ye judge them that are within [i.e., in the Body of Messiah]? But them that are without [outside the Body] God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves [i.e., excommunicate] that wicked person."

According to the Bible, sexually immoral people in the assembly are to be removed from the assembly and shunned if they refuse to repent. But we are not to judge the sexually immoral people who are outside the Body of Messiah.

What does it mean when it says we are not to "judge" unbelievers? Again, context is important. Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 5 are in the context of taking decisive legal actions against someone in the form of a *cherem*, a formal verdict handed down by a *beit din*, a council of spiritual leaders who act as judges to handle cases within the community of believers. Therefore we are not to "judge" unbelievers

in that way. We are not to summon unbelievers to appear before a church council and demand that they repent of their sins or else. If they are not members of the church or synagogue, the church or synagogue has no authority to summon them to appear before a council of religious leaders and no authority to sentence them to some form of punishment.

My concern is that some FB theologians, even some Messianics, take Paul's instructions to mean that we should never point out any sins of unbelievers.

"The Torah was given to Israel," they say. "Sins committed by people who are outside the covenant are none of our business."

I have two major problems with this attitude. First, it shows a cold, callous indifference to the fate of lost sinners who are on the broad way that leads to destruction. "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20) and "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). How will they see their need for a Savior if they do not hear that they are transgressing God's law? "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14). And I say unto you: How shall they know they have transgressed God's law, except the preacher shall proclaim to them God's law?

A second major problem I have with Messianics who think that the

sins of people outside the covenant are none of our business is the fact that the Prophets frequently rebuked Gentile nations for their sins.

Isaiah prophesied against Babylon, Moab, Damascus, Tyre, the Assyrians... The first 39 chapters of Isaiah consist mostly of prophesying against Gentile nations. Jeremiah prophesied against Egypt, Philistia, Tyre, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Elam, and Babylon (ch. 45-51). Ezekiel prophesied against the Ammonites, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, and Egypt (ch. 25-32). Daniel rebuked Gentile kings for their sins (ch. 4 & 5). Joel prophesied against Gentile nations (ch. 3). Amos prophesied against Damascus, Gaza, Tyrus, Edom, Ammon, and Moab (ch. 1-2). The entire book of Obadiah is a prophecy against Edom. The entire book of Jonah is about Nineveh. The entire book of Nahum is a prophecy against Nineveh. Zephaniah prophesied against the Philistines, Moab, Ammon, and Ethiopia (ch. 2). Zechariah prophesied against Damascus, Tyrus, and Philistine cities (ch. 9).

In the New Testament, Paul preached repentance to the Gentiles in Athens (Acts 17). The idol makers in Ephesus rioted because Paul had "persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands" (Acts 19). When speaking to the Roman governor Felix, Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," and "Felix trembled" (Acts

24:25). In Romans 1, Paul talks about the descent of the Gentile world into spiritual darkness, culminating in homosexuality and lesbianism. Paul says this perversion came about because of their rejection of truth.

To say that we should ignore the sins of people who are outside of God's covenant is to ignore the example of the Prophets and Apostles.

Some Messianic FB theologians even go so far as to suggest that the Torah commandments which forbid sexual perversion are only for God's covenant people, and do not even apply to people outside the covenant. In other words, homosexuality is not even a sin for people who are not in covenant with God.

This erroneous conclusion is based on the fact that God gave the Torah to Israel, and not to the nations.

Yes, the Torah was given to Israel. But if we are going to conclude from this fact that Gentile unbelievers are therefore exempt from the commandments that forbid sexual perversion, then are Gentile unbelievers also exempt from the commandments that forbid murder and theft and bearing false witness? If not, why not?

Furthermore, if Gentile unbelievers who are not in covenant with God are exempt from commandments that forbid sexual perversion, then why, before listing the forbidden abominations, did God specifically call these sexual

abominations “the doings of the land of Egypt” and “the doings of the land of Canaan” (Lev. 18:3)? And why, after listing all the forbidden abominations, did God say that “in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you” (Lev. 18:24)? Why did God say that the land itself was vomiting out the Canaanites because “all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled” (Lev. 18:25-27)? Why did God call these forbidden sexual acts “abominable customs, which were committed before you” (Lev. 18:30)? It is a greater abomination for a believer to do these things, but even for unbelievers they are abominations.

Another thing some Messianic FB theologians point out is the passage in Ezekiel 16:49, where the sins of Sodom are listed: “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.”

“See?” the FB theologians say. “Sodom wasn’t destroyed because of homosexuality! It was for these sins stated in Ezekiel!”

Two things to point out about that conclusion. First of all, one could argue that Ezekiel is actually not talking about the city of Sodom that existed in Lot’s day. Go back to the beginning of the chapter, and you will see that Ezekiel is talking to Jerusalem. The words “Sodom thy sister” are being spoken alle-

gorically to the city of Jerusalem in Ezekiel’s day, and refer to Jerusalem’s “elder sister” (16:46), the city of Samaria. Samaria, the capital of the northern ten tribes, is figuratively called “Sodom” by Ezekiel in the same way that Isaiah said to the people of Jerusalem and Judah, “Hear the word of Yahweh, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah” (Isa. 1:10), and in the same way that John referred to Jerusalem as “the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt” (Rev. 11:8).

So Ezekiel is actually listing the sins of Samaria in this verse. However, let’s concede that Sodom was probably guilty of the very same sins that Samaria committed. Even if we concede that point, we have to read the next verse, which lists another sin of Samaria and of Sodom:

“And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good” (Ezk. 16:50).

Even if we concede that the people of Sodom in the days of Lot were guilty of the same sins committed by Samaria in the days of Ezekiel, those sins *included abomination*. Which specific abomination did the inhabitants of Sodom commit in the days of Lot? Well, there might have been more than one type of abomination, but we know for certain from Genesis 19 that one of the abominations was homosexuality. And we also know that it was not just a small

gang of perverts who lived among a predominately heterosexual population, because the Bible says "the men of Sodom compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter." wanting to sexually "know" Lot's guests (Gen. 19:4).

Ezekiel tells us that the men of Sodom committed abomination, and Genesis tells us that one abomination practiced by "both young and old, all the people from every quarter" was homosexuality. Further proof of this is in Jude 7, which says that the sin of Sodom was "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh." So yes, the men of Sodom were homosexuals.

I can understand unbelievers being brainwashed by the world to think that homosexual acts between consenting adults are not sinful. I can even understand Biblically-illiterate Christians being brainwashed to think that it's no worse than any other sin. But Messianic believers who study the Bible should not let themselves be brainwashed into thinking that the commandments that forbid sexual perversion do not apply to Gentile unbelievers, or that the destruction of Sodom had nothing at all to do with homosexual sins.

Many Messianic believers are familiar with Isaiah 66:23. When talking to Christians about the Sabbath, Messianics sometimes quote that verse and say, "See? It says right here that in the new heaven and new earth, everyone will come

to worship *from one sabbath to another, and from one new moon to another.* We're gonna be keeping the Sabbath and celebrating the new moon in the new earth!"

Indeed we are. But we are going to be doing something else in the new earth, something I don't think I have ever heard a Messianic believer point out, even though it's mentioned in the very next verse:

"And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isa. 66:24).

Thus Isaiah ends his book, by telling us that in the new earth we will come from one sabbath to another and from one new moon to another to worship Yahweh, and that our worship will include looking upon the burning, worm-eaten carcasses of transgressors.

Whether you believe in the annihilation of the wicked or in eternal conscious torment is beside the point. Regardless of your personal views about the afterlife, we are going to be looking upon carcasses burning with unquenchable fire and being eaten by worms that never die. Yeshua quoted this verse three times in Mark 9, and called it "fire that never shall be quenched."

No, I do not believe we will be looking at these burning, maggot-infested carcasses to gloat over the fate of the lost. I suspect that we will look upon them to remind us that God does not bluff, and to

reveal to us how utterly abhorrent sin really is, because Isaiah's last words are "they shall be an abhorring to all flesh."

"Seriously, Daniel? Looking at burning carcasses being eaten by worms in the new earth? That's just too weird! Surely that's not meant to be taken literally, is it?"

I guess we'll find out after the new earth is established. That is, if there really is going to be an actual literal new earth wherein we worship from sabbath to sabbath and from new moon to new moon. If the "carcasses of the transgressors" is just figurative language and not really literally going to happen, then maybe the entire promise of a new earth is just a figurative promise and not really going to happen. Maybe it's all just sweet poetry, a fairy-tale legend that will never come true.

Personally, I believe these things are going to happen. Regardless of how literally or figuratively this verse about the transgressors is, one thing is certain. It does not bode well for transgressors. Even taken figuratively, the fate of transgressors will be horrible, "an abhorring to all flesh." God does not bluff. And He intends to demonstrate to the inhabitants of the new earth how utterly abhorrent sin is by displaying the carcasses of transgressors.

I believe that one reason so many people, including Bible believers, find the idea of souls being irretrievably lost forever, whether through annihilation or through

conscious torment, is because we do not see how utterly abhorrent sin is. If we saw sin the way God sees it, perhaps we would see that unrepentant transgressors really do deserve to be punished with "fire that never shall be quenched" and with a "worm that shall not die."

I do not claim nor pretend to fully understand all the details of the punishment of transgressors in the age to come. But I do understand that a fire needs fuel to continue burning, and a worm needs food to continue living. Somehow the carcasses of transgressors will provide fuel for "a fire that never shall be quenched" and food for a "worm that shall not die."

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God," the Bible says (Rom. 11:22). People love to behold the goodness of God. They love to focus on all the positive, uplifting Bible verses that promise good things to God's faithful people. But many folks want to neglect, or even worse, reject, the verses that talk about the severity of God.

Many Christians focus only on "gentle Jesus, meek and mild," and forget that when gentle Jesus returns, He is going to kill the disobedient by burning them alive in flaming fire, as it is written, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction

from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thes. 1:7-9).

It's almost as if Christians believe in two different gods, the harsh, cranky, mean-spirited God of the Old Testament, and the sweet, sappy, syrupy, sentimental Jesus of the New Testament, the meek and mild Jesus who would never condemn anyone to everlasting destruction.

Most Christians believe in the Deity of Jesus. They believe that Jesus was God manifested in the flesh, God incarnate. I too believe that. The thing Christians need to realize is this: God does not change. "I change not," He said (Mal. 3:6). "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). His nature and His character are eternally the same. If Jesus is God incarnate, if Jesus and the Father are one, then everything the Bible says about the nature and character of God is also true of the nature and character of Jesus.

God is one, not two. Ask Christians which of God's commandments is the most important, and many will answer, "To love God with all the heart, soul, and strength." That's sort of true but not entirely true, because when Jesus was asked which commandment is the most important, He did not just say "To love God with all the heart, soul, and strength." According to Mark's Gospel, before He said those words, He said "The first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel; the Lord our God is

one Lord" (Mark 12:29). After that, He said the words about loving God.

Why is this significant? Because to truly love God, you must first understand that God is one. Christians who believe in the Deity of Jesus need to understand that the nature and character of Jesus is no different than the nature and character of the God of the Old Testament. The same God who drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden for one act of disobedience. The same God who drowned the entire human race except for Noah's family. The same God who killed an entire city of Sodomites by burning them alive in fire and brimstone. The same God who killed the firstborn of Egypt and drowned the entire Egyptian army in the Red Sea. The same God who caused the earth to open its mouth and swallow Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and all that pertained to them. The same God who killed His own covenant people by the thousands when they murmured and rebelled against Him in the wilderness. The same God who ordered a man to be stoned to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath. The same God who commanded the Israelites to slaughter certain people groups in Canaan and not even spare the little children or babies. The same God who blessed Phinehas with a covenant of peace and an everlasting priesthood because in his zeal Phinehas took a javelin, went into the tent of an Israelite who was

fornicating with a Midianite woman, and drove the javelin through both of them. The same God who killed Ananias and Sapphira (in the New Testament!) for lying. The same God whom Jesus described as "Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

This is the God we love and serve. This is the God who was incarnate in the person of Yeshua of Nazareth. God is one.

Many Christians love the Sermon on the Mount. I do too. It's probably my favorite passage of Scripture. I memorized the entire Sermon on the Mount the winter of 1985-86. I have recited it to myself many, many times over the years. It is one of the most beloved parts of the Bible, and understandably so. But my beloved Christian friends, please notice two very important things Jesus said about God's law in this Sermon, one statement near the beginning of the Sermon, and one at the conclusion of the Sermon.

The first thing Jesus said about God's law was right after the Beatitudes and His remarks about salt and light:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of

heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:17-19).

Christian friend, the very last thing your Old Testament says about God's law is "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant" (Mal. 4:4). Then the very first thing the New Testament says about God's law is this statement by Jesus, telling you to not even think that He came to abolish the law. If you think Jesus came to abolish the law, get that idea out of your head, Jesus says. God's law endures "till heaven and earth pass." Look outside. Heaven and earth are still here. They have not passed.

We come into the kingdom by grace through faith, not by keeping the law. But please notice that after you come into the kingdom by faith, your response to God's law will affect your rank in the kingdom. Those who break and teach others to break even the least of the commandments will be called the least in the kingdom, Jesus said. Those who do and teach the commandments of God's law will be called great in the kingdom, Jesus said. So, Christian friend, now that you are justified by faith, what are you going to do with the commandments of God's law? It's going to make a difference for all eternity, so think long and hard about it.

The second thing Jesus said about God's law in the Sermon on the Mount is at the conclusion. He begins wrapping up the Sermon with the so-called "Golden

Rule," then warns about the broad way that leads to destruction and about false prophets who come as wolves in sheep's clothing. Then He says this:

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:21-23).

"Daniel, what does that have to do with God's law? I don't see the word 'law' anywhere in that passage."

You don't see it in English, at least not in the KJV. But if you look at that final word "iniquity" in Greek, it is *anomia*, which literally means "without law" or "lawless." It is translated as "you who practice lawlessness" in the NASB. You might be familiar with our English words *anomia* or *antinomia*. The 1828 Webster's Dictionary defines an antinomian as "one of a sect who maintain, that, under the gospel dispensation, the law is of no use or obligation; or who hold doctrines which supersede the necessity of good works and a virtuous life."

My beloved Christian friend, I hope Webster's definition of an antinomian does not describe you, because Jesus will say to the anti-

nomians, "Depart from Me."

And Christian friend, do not make the mistake of thinking that it will be only a small group of people who will hear Jesus say those terrifying words to them. "Many will say to Me in that day..." And do not make the mistake of thinking that this multitude of people will be atheists, or Hindus, or Muslims, or Buddhists. These are people who call Jesus "Lord": "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name...?" These are church people doing church activities - prophesying, casting out devils, doing wonderful works - and doing them all in Jesus' name. They fully expect to enter the kingdom, and are stunned to hear Jesus say to them, "Depart from Me."

What is the reason Jesus gives for excluding them from the kingdom? Why does Jesus tell them to depart? Because they were workers of iniquity. They practiced lawlessness. They were antinomians.

Christian friend, get into your prayer closet and pray about your attitude toward God's law. But as you go to prayer, make sure you come with an open ear to hear what the law says, because "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9). Turn your ear toward God's law, not away from it, lest even your prayer be abomination.

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul" Ps. (19:7). □