

## The Machinery of Good

It was one thing to get souls started and keep them running, but quite another to assemble them properly as cogs in the ultimate Machine of God's Goodness. This Machine is essentially the new Kingdom, the church, and its purpose is to project the Goodness (or voice) of God. And God's Holy desire is that it run smoothly. For that to happen, parts have to move in the right way at the right time. This was another area that the angels were being trained to monitor.

As views of the Machine's "landscape" were brought up, it could be seen that some elements were meshing together, but most were not; some were binding up and stopping progress in certain areas.

One angel in particular had immersed himself in studying the inner working of the Machine. He looked at several screens with some disappointment, but then smiled as he lingered on another. His pleasure at the proper operation of a particular cog or gear was evident as he zoomed in to get a closer view. He could see where one of the followers of God had stepped up to do their part in a very heroic way for the good of many others.

He wanted to draw boundaries around groups of elements that appeared to have some value working together [congregations, perhaps denominations]. But one group did not always work towards the same goals as another – there was conflict when both attempted to fulfill their purpose. His supervisor, however, warned him to be careful about artificially fencing off different areas. Neither angels nor men are able to completely see the big picture, he said; only the Holy One Himself could do that<sup>1</sup>. The supervisor told the angel analyst to just monitor the working of individual gears and leave the rest to the Creator.

The angel was amazed in the variation in the sizes of the particular parts. Compared to the overall size of the machine, none were more than a tiny atom or grain of sand. Some indeed were larger than others, but immersed in the vastness of the whole, it didn't seem to matter much. Some were also brightly colored, as if to draw attention to their importance, but it was obvious that this feature had no bearing on their ability to function. Others made irritating squeaking noises<sup>2</sup> as they worked, with a similar lack of meaningful effect.

In fact, some of the smaller pieces actually appeared to have more of an effect than the larger ones. There were many examples in the history of the kingdom<sup>3</sup> and in the sayings of the Great Teacher<sup>4</sup>, where the smaller components achieved what was right and good in a powerful way without regard for themselves. The angel could sense their feelings, and knew that the most effective components were not concerned about their own importance, but were just happy to be a part of the larger process<sup>5</sup> – one of the cast of many<sup>6</sup>.

The gears had trouble meshing from time to time, and that was considered normal. They were constantly being repaired (healed) by the Great Grace. Those that thought they were an indispensable part of the operation would some day be in for a great surprise. If they completely failed in their task, then it was such a simple matter for God to raise up another to accomplish the machine's purpose. There were critical times, when the progress of the entire machine appeared to depend on one tiny cog<sup>7</sup>, but the angel knew that God had infinite layers of backup material.

The angel could see that the size of the gear did not matter; all the gears are important but useless by themselves. Without another gear to work with, they merely spun without purpose. The success of the machine depends on the interworking of all the components, but is truly powered by the Spirit of God. The angel couldn't quite correlate all of the regional motions to the advance of the overall process. But God's Providence did make progress<sup>8</sup> in spite of the fact that only small areas seemed to be working correctly. His Machine of Goodness was a living structure, even though it was made up of unusual components<sup>9</sup>.

There appeared to be a capability of movement among the gears to different positions in response to points or processes of stress. This was somewhat analogous to blood cells in the human body, where one type passed on the power of life, and another involved protection against

disease. Other cells were built up into larger structures with more comprehensive functions. The single cells were just as important to the body as the larger structures. The complexity of the machine was overwhelming.

The analyst thought of the frustration of the Holy One in trying to get groups to work together. The original kingdom, which was to have been led by God, could never function properly for very long<sup>10</sup>. The new kingdom, with the Son, got off to a great start, but has also suffered fluctuations in performance throughout its history.

Fortunately, God does not have to keep re-starting the machine – it will run until the end of physical time. He has the power to sustain its operation in spite of the slips and jams that constantly occur. The larger wheels, which might be thought to influence a greater portion of the machine, are not of more value – they just cause more problems when they get off track.

The Machine of Goodness was created by God as the most powerful machine in the universe (and beyond). It is actually more of a framework where men and women insert themselves and grow to be the type of cog needed to contribute to its process. These people so believe in the supreme Good such that they forsake themselves – they throw themselves into the heart of the machine. They receive great joy as a reward for being part of something truly great.

1. 1 Peter 1:12, things angels desire to look into
2. Matthew 6:2
3. consider, for instance, Gideon (Judges 6), the widow who had a room built for Elisha (2 Kings 4:8-10), the widow who gave her two mites (Luke 21:2), and the woman who anointed Jesus (Luke 7:36ff and John 12:1-3)
4. Matthew 10:42, cup of cold water; Matthew 25:31ff
5. Psalm 84:10, preference to being a doorkeeper in the House of God
6. consider the work of the many cells in a human body
7. consider the roles of Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Gideon, etc.
8. 1 Corinthians 3:6, God gives the increase
9. 1 Peter 2:4, living stones – think of them as people
10. i.e., the nation of Israel