

I was startled recently to hear of a development in the  
art of burying the dead. In California, apparently, a  
firm is offering a special computer which incorporates  
a tape recorder. By pressing a button a passerby can hear  
a number of pre-recorded messages from the deceased.

Just a fantastic  
THE TALKING TOMBSTONE  
program? Would you like to hear some? Would you like  
to know in general, or to particular persons? Why  
you could ask it a sort of program itself. . . . and  
about my dear mother who did all he could to ruin my  
business by his gross selfishness and stupidity. I would  
wonder like it recorded for ever that I consider him a  
middle-headed buffoon. . . . etc. . . . to my wife who kept  
telling me that my illness was imagination - you may know  
I was right. . . . Why a visit to the cemetery could be a new  
wonder about listening to the more famous statements  
of Saturday afternoon entertainment. Family groups could  
listen about listening to the more famous statements  
large audience. Computer video machines will be added  
and we will be able to hear the passersby  
of this new art-form.

**P.F. JENSEN**

Will it's clarity, and its language, its methods, but its  
also methodical, isn't it? These talking tombstones are only  
the most recent of a whole series of attempts to assure  
objectives of some sort of immortality, some permanence  
in a world of decay and death. Fixing bodies in the tape  
of eventual resurrection is another. So too is the attempt  
to contact the dead through spiritualism. We feel as though  
we should live for ever, but we fear that we do not.

All this frantic activity in the face of death is a symptom  
of the disease of western man. He is without God and  
without hope in the Bible. God and  
hope - they belong together. When you abandon God you

**THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**

I was startled recently to hear of a development in the art of burying the dead. In California, apparently, a firm is offering a special tombstone which incorporates a tape recorder. By pressing a button a passerby can hear a number of pre-recorded messages from the deceased.

What a fantastic proposal! What sort of message would you prepare? Would you talk about yourself? Would you talk to the world in general, or to particular persons? Why you could make it a sort of permanent insult ... 'and about my dear nephew who did all he could to ruin my business by his gross inefficiency and stupidity, I would like it recorded for ever that I consider him a muddle-headed buffoon ... etc.', 'to my wife who kept telling me that my illness was imagination - you now know I was right'. Why a visit to the cemetery could be a new form of Saturday afternoon entertainment. Family groups could wander about listening in to the more famous statements. Humorous, poetical or heart-warming efforts may attract large audiences. Doubtless video machines will be added and we will be able to see as well as hear the purveyors of this new art-form.

Well it's bizzare, and its humorous, its macabre; but its also pathetic, isn't it? These talking tombstones are only the most recent of a whole series of attempts to assure ourselves of some sort of immortality, some permanence in a world of decay and death. Freezing bodies in the hope of eventual resuscitation is another. So too is the attempt to contact the dead through spiritualism. We feel as though we should live for ever, but we fear that we do not.

All this frantic activity in the face of death is a symptom of the disease of western man. We are 'without God and without hope in the world', to quote the Bible. God and hope - they belong together. When you abandon God you

welcome hopelessness; when you decide that heaven is empty and that man is the highest being in the world, you have opened the door to a very great sadness.

It is especially sad because it is untrue and unnecessary. We kill God in our minds for one special reason: because we want to be gods. We want to be masters and lords of our own existence. In the prime of our lives this may even be impressive. It is easy to laugh at God when the world itself seems full of promise and the cold grave is as far off as Jupiter or Saturn. But what gods we are! The old Greek gods took hundreds of years to die - but we last just about 70 or so; and no-one worships us, except our own selves. In truth, we are 'without God and without hope'.

Jesus Christ had no 'talking tombstone' - he made no feeble protest at death! He conquered death - the first of a new humanity. The lives of his servants are filled with joy, for in Him we have our God and our hope.

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It is especially sad because it is untrue and unnecessary. We fill God in our minds for one special reason; because we want to be gods. We want to be western and lords of our own existence, in the grand of our lives. This may even be impressive. It is easy to laugh at God when the world itself seems full of promise and the cold grave is as far off as Jupiter or Saturn. But what hands we give the old Great God took hundreds of years to give - but we have just about 70 or so and no time to waste. We have no time to waste. We have no time to waste.

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