



God's Plan  
for  
Victory

THE MEANING OF  
POSTMILLENNIALISM

R.J. RUSHDOONY

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Postmillennialism**

**By**

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**Chalcedon Foundation  
Vallecito, California 95251**

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First Edition 1977  
Second Edition 1997

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 97-067974  
ISBN-10: 1-879998-63-7

ISBN-13: 978-1-879998-63-6

*Printed in the United States of America*

Published by Chalcedon Foundation  
PO Box 158  
Vallecito, CA 95251

**Chalcedon thanks  
Grace Community Day Cares and Schools,  
a ministry of Nicene Covenant Church,  
for financing this printing.**

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# 1997 Preface

by R. J. Rushdoony

*God's Plan for Victory* was first published in 1977 and quickly went through two large printings. Failure to reprint it further was due to negligence on my part, and a desire to add to it possibly.

Eschatology, the doctrine of last things, is also the doctrine of first thing because it is concerned with the goal of history. Of necessity, goals determine present-day action. We are not motivated to action unless we know the purpose for our action. Specific goals motivate us. If we believe that the main and final goal of the Christian life is heaven, or the salvation of our souls, we will be indifferent to history and the world around us. But, if in terms of Matthew 6:33, we believe that the Kingdom of God and his righteousness or justice must have priority in our lives, then we will not have a self-centered view of salvation. Our personal salvation is not the focus and goal of the Gospel but simply the starting point. The goal is God's Kingdom, His purpose for humanity and the world. The essence of man's fall is his will to be his own god, his own source of law and morality (Gen. 3:5). All too often men retain aspects of this original sin in insisting that their salvation is the center of God's plan. God seeks His own glory and purpose; our place in His plan is not at the center.

Thus, it is serious deformation, *first*, if we make our personal salvation central to God's plan and purpose. It is arrogant for man, in plain divergence for God's word, to see himself as more important in God's plan than God Himself! Such a view is an echo of man's original sin.

*Second*, it is also an error to make the church central to God's plan and purpose. Such a view is Augustinian but wrong. St. Augustine, father of much good and bad in church history, despaired of victory in the world and therefore saw the church as the sphere of victory. This led to a very high doctrine of the church, both in Rome and Protestantism. If our hope for the futures of man and Christ's world is only in the church, then we will stress the church as man's hope. The church will be over-stressed because it is man's only hope. Neither the state, the Christian family, nor the school, nor any other institution offers hope, and none are seen as therefore central or important.

*Third*, an eschatology which is not postmillennial will have a prayer life very different from that of a postmillennialist. A problem in prayer is self-absorption, and undue concern with the personal. To a degree, this is necessary, and the psalms reflect the private concerns of their writers; but they also reflect the hope of victory and the assurance of God's triumph in history. Without such a concern, our prayers become warped and self-centered.

A grim fact that faces us today is the impotence of the Christian community. More than half the people in the United States who are eighteen years of age and older profess to believe in Jesus Christ as God incarnate, and in the Bible as God's infallible word. If those people were only one fourth of the population, they should still be dominating the culture when in fact they are marginal. Their false eschatologies place them on the sidelines of history, and some even pride themselves on their irrelevance.

Some years ago, I edited the eschatological writings of J. Marcellus Kik and published them under the title *Eschatology of Victory*, perhaps the best title I ever gave a book. The title states the case: postmillennialism is the eschatology of victory. This was the reason for the widespread success of *God's Plan for Victory*. Many people with other views were quick to embrace postmillennialism because, as they wrote, they were not happy with being "losers." The notion of defeat does not go well with the fact of an omnipotent God and a conquering Christ.

For me, there is another (and very personal) advantage in postmillennialism. It takes with total seriousness and a totality of meaning the validity of Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." My work has not lacked its sometimes ugly and dishonest attacks. To be in the "winner's circle" makes a great difference in facing these things and ignoring them because the end result is so clear. History, both world history and the personal outcome, is a magnificent success story according to the Bible. We can thus be patient at the rage of the ignorant and of losers.

Rousas John Rushdoony

February 19, 1997

## 1. MILLENNIAL PERSPECTIVES

There have been many important analyses of premillennialism, amillennialism and postmillennialism from an exegetical perspective, that is, in terms of a careful analysis of the relevant Biblical texts. Notable among these are O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, and L. Boettner, *The Millennium*. It is our purpose to analyze these three positions from the perspective of Biblical theology. What are their *theological* implications?

To begin with, it must be noted that there is no neutrality on my part as I make this analysis. The ideal of neutrality is a myth. All men speak and write from a given perspective: we see things, and organize knowledge, in terms of a fundamental perspective, commitment, and faith. Our perspective is always conditioned by our religious presuppositions. There is a religious difference between these three perspectives on the question of the millennium. A Christian cannot hold that all three positions are legitimate and valid for Christians: either one is Biblical, and the others are not, or none are. The question of fidelity to Scripture cannot be a matter of indifference.

Once we adopt a position, it has certain logical consequences and also very practical implications for our lives. If I believe that Christ will soon rapture me from this evil world, this will have a practical effect on my life very different from a belief that I shall see the world get worse and worse, and live through a fearful tribulation. Again, if I believe that the world will see the progressive triumph of Christ's people until the whole world is Christian and a glorious material and spiritual era unfolds, I shall be motivated very much differently from either a premillennial or an amillennial believer. Thus, we cannot hold that these differing doctrines of eschatology are a matter of indifference. They make a very great difference in how we view the world and our work and future in it. There are said to be *at least* 40 million Christians in the United States who profess to believe that the Bible is the infallible word of God. If these people believe that the end is near, and the rapture at hand, their impact on the world is very different from that of 40 million who believe that they shall conquer the world. In the one situation, people are preparing to conquer the world and to assert the "Crown Rights of King Jesus."

The contrast is even greater when we consider the promises of Isaiah concerning a world relatively free of crime, at peace, and men having a long life expectancy, and we recognize that we are called to proclaim the saving power of Jesus Christ to all men and to prepare our hearts, lives, and communities for His reign in and through us. The impetus for Christian action is then very great.

The kind of faith we have governs the whole of our lives, and our total outlook. How we view God and Christ will determine how we view ourselves, our calling, and the end times. Our view of the end, of eschatology, depends to a large measure on our view of the beginning, and of all history, and on our doctrine of God and of salvation. Theology is a seamless garment, and a man's views of the end times is inseparable from his view of God. If he changes his mind on the one, he changes his mind on the other.

With this in mind, let us examine the varying perspectives, and, first of all, premillennialism, in particular the dispensational premillennial view. Virtually all premillennials are dispensationalists. This perspective was made prominent in recent years by the Plymouth

Brethren in England, under the leadership of the Rev. John Darby, c. 1830. It gained its most widespread influence through the Scofield Reference Bible, edited by the Rev. C. I. Scofield. The Scofield Reference Bible gives introductions, section headings, and extensive notes which interpret the whole of Scripture in terms of this dispensational, premillennial perspective.

Scofield held that there are seven dispensations, eras, or ages of history in which God had a particular revelation and a particular way of life for each, so that the value of Scriptures given in that era is, essentially, restricted to it. These dispensations are, *first, innocence*, the period in Eden from the creation of Adam and Eve to their fall. The *second* era is that of *conscience*, from the Fall to the Flood. The *third* dispensation is that of *Human Government*, from the Flood to the call of Abraham. The *fourth* is that of *promise*, from the call of Abraham to the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai. The *fifth* dispensation is that of *law*, from the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai through most of the public ministry of Jesus Christ. The *sixth* is that of *grace*, from the closing days of the ministry of Christ to the second coming to rapture the saints. (Some forms of premillennialism have more than one coming of Christ.) The *seventh* dispensation is the *kingdom*, the millennium, a thousand year period during which Christ reigns on earth.

Other dispensationalists have other ideas of dispensations. Blackstone, in *Jesus is Coming*, had seven also: Innocence, Freedom, Government, Pilgrim, Israel, Mystery, and Manifestation. Still other dispensationalists, however, will not even agree on the number: some have as few as four, and others as many as eight dispensations. That there should be a difference of opinions about what should be so obvious, i.e., differing plans of salvation, is revealing. No such clearly marked dispensations occur in Scripture. Yet these dispensations are held to be totally different aspects of God's dealings with men, so that certain portions of Scripture are held to be essentially valid only for a certain era of history. The extreme dispensationalist will hold that, while the Old Testament is the inspired word of God, it has next to nothing to do with our religious life today. Only a few types and symbols are relevant, so that the premillennial preacher "mines" the Old Testament for "gleanings" for our time: the major portion is gone as far as relevance is concerned.

But this is not all. Much of the New Testament, strict dispensationalists hold, has nothing to do with our world today: it is for the "Kingdom Age." God has no absolute and unchanging Word for them. For many, only a very limited number of pages in the New Testament are valid for the "Age of Grace," the sixth dispensation, so that many end up with a shorter Bible than most modernists. To cite a specific example, one dispensationalist, in an Anglican Church, refused to use either the Lord's Prayer, ("Thy Kingdom Come"), or the reading of the Ten Commandments, as prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer, because he held that these had nothing to do with the "Age of Grace" but referred to the "Kingdom Age." Dispensationalism limits the Bible and its relevance; it wrongly divides the word of truth. It denies the wholeness of Scripture, and the fact that God does not change, nor does His law, nor His plan of salvation, change from age to age.

Many dispensationalists, in preaching from Moses, Exodus through Deuteronomy, will by-pass the plain requirements of the law to spend hours and chapters on the supposed symbolism of the colors of the Tabernacle furnishings. The plain and literal meaning of the law is disregarded for fanciful and allegorical interpretations. They do not read the meaning *out* of Scripture, but rather read a meaning *into* Scripture.

Premillennialism existed as a heresy in the church, rising and falling in various eras, long before John Darby. In every era, it had a strong tendency towards an evolutionary view of God and religion, thereby betraying its non-Biblical origins. Thus, the medieval millenarian, the Abbot Joachim of Flora, held that three ages exist: *First*, the age of the Father, the age of law, vengeance, justice, the Old Testament, and the Hebrews; *Second*, the age of the Son, the age of grace, faith, the church, the New Testament, and the missionary expansion of the faith; and *Third*, the age of the Spirit, the age in which grace and faith give way to love, the highest way, and in which the world's religions and nations unite in love, in a world beyond law and grace. Some forms of this doctrine see the third age as the death of God (and of the Son) era. An evolutionary view of religion and of God is basic to such thinking.

The rise of evolutionary faith and science led to a greater stress on a particular interpretation, common to many but not all premillennialists. This is the "gap theory," very strongly affirmed by Scofield. Supposedly, between Genesis 1:1, the "original" creation of the world, and Genesis 1:2, the supposed re-creation of the world, a great gap of time, thousands and perhaps millions of years in length, occurs. During this time, according to Scofield, "the earth had undergone a cataclysmic change as the result of a divine judgment. The face of the earth bears everywhere the marks of such a catastrophe. There are not wanting intimations which connect it with a previous testing and fall of angels." The same position was affirmed, a little more mildly, by the Pilgrim Edition of the Bible (1948) in its introduction to Genesis, which began by stating that "The beginning for this earth may have been countless ages ago." As a result of this interpretation, such dispensationalists hold that modern geology offers no problems for them; the gap theory can accommodate millions of years and make room for the geological epochs. Not surprisingly, it becomes easy for premillennial, fundamentalistic teachers of science to affirm a position which is an accommodation to evolution, trying to unite creationism and evolution. The American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), formed mainly by science instructors and professors in fundamentalistic colleges, is very hostile to six-day creationism and strongly favorable to accommodationism. Not all premillennialists are given to accommodationism, as witness Whitcomb and Morris (*The Genesis Flood*), and Bolton Davidheiser's *Evolution and Christian Faith*, but all too many are accommodationists, especially if they accept the Scofieldian system and the gap theory, which these latter men do not.

According to Scripture, the plain declaration of God is, "I am the Lord: I change not." However, according to the dispensationalists, He has changed, and repeatedly so. He has accommodated Himself to early man and later man, had varying plans of salvation, and has had a varying revelation.

Not only have evangelicals who are prone to dispensationalism and/or premillennialism been too prone to accommodations with evolution, but also to leftist political ideologies. Having denied God's law, they have no settled and fixed word by which to judge all things. Good intentions carry weight with people who lack a law foundation, and the world of socialism, like hell, is paved with "good" intentions.

Moreover, the emphasis in premillennialism is not on the Kingdom of God but on an essentially Jewish kingdom and empire, on the kind of thinking St. Paul called Jewish fables. Other aspects of the Jewish fables which the church adopted include works of supererogation, which is a belief

that the merits of Abraham, (and other saints) were so great that they were sufficient to save all Jews to the end of time. An appeal to Father Abraham would mean the application of his excess merits to the account of the applier.

In the Book of Maccabees, we encounter prayers for the dead. This and other aspects of Phariseism crept into the Christian Church, and, with premillennialism, at least one aspect of Phariseism has been revived.

Non-dispensational premillennials, while breaking with the Scofieldian system, are still latent or implicit dispensationalists in that they do divide history in terms of the Second Coming, the Rapture, the thousand year reign by Christ as the Jewish King of the whole earth, and then the end of the world, and they do posit a different kind of word and law from one era to another. Scripture gives us one unchanging law of God; it tells us that the Second Coming and the end of the world coincide. It does not give us a world which moves from law to grace and then back to law. In every era, law and grace are operative and unchanging.

In theory, the amillennial position holds that there is a parallel development of good and evil, of God's Kingdom and Satan's Kingdom. In reality, amillennialism holds that the major area of growth and power is in Satan's Kingdom, because the world is seen as progressively falling away to Satan, the church's trials and tribulations increasing, and the end of the world finding the church lonely and sorely beset. There is no such thing as a millennium or a triumph of Christ and His Kingdom in history. The role of the saints is at best to grin and bear it, and more likely to be victims and martyrs. The world will go from bad to worse in this pessimistic viewpoint. The Christian must retreat from the world of action in the realization that there is no hope for this world, no world-wide victory of Christ's cause, nor world peace and righteousness. The law of God is irrelevant, because there is no plan of conquest, no plan of triumph in Christ's name and power. At best, God's law is a plan for private morality, not for men and nations in their every aspect. Not surprisingly, amillennialism produces a retreating and crabbed outlook, a church in which men have no thought of victory but only of endless nit-picking about trifles. It produces a phariseism of men who believe they are the elect in a world headed for hell, a select elite who must withdraw from the futility of the world around them. It produces what can be called an Orthodox Pharisees Church, wherein failure is a mark of election. Lest this seem an exaggeration, one small denomination has a habit of regarding pastors who produce growth in their congregations with some suspicion, because it is openly held by many pastors that growth is a mark of compromise, whereas incompetence and failure are marks of election! Amillennial pastors within this church regularly insist that success surely means compromise, and their failures are a mark of purity and election. Not surprisingly, postmillennials cannot long remain in this basically and almost exclusively amillennial church.

Let us now examine some common traits of amillennialism and premillennialism. *First*, both regard attempts to build a Christian society or to further Christian reconstruction as either futile or wrong. If God has decreed that the world's future is one of a downward spiral, then indeed Christian reconstruction is futile. As a prominent premillennial pastor and radio preacher, the Rev. J. Vernon McGee declared in the early 1950's, "You don't polish brass on a sinking ship." If the world is a sinking ship, then efforts to eliminate prostitution, crime, or any kind of social evil, and to expect the Christian conquest of the social order, are indeed futile. It must be noted, however, that it was such premillennial opinions that united with Unitarianism in the early

1800's to replace Christian schools with state schools, so that the church could retreat to a minimal program, revivalism.

This points clearly to a *second* common aspect of these two positions, the limitation of the Christian task to soul-saving, to snatching brands from the burning. Scripture is stripped of its total message and reduced to a soul-saving manual. Matters of law respecting crime, the use of the land, money, weights, property, diet, civil government, and all things else are set aside to concentrate on soul-saving only. If now Christian schools are started by some of these groups, too often their essential purpose is to further soul-saving. Conversion, clearly, is important. So is the alphabet. We do not learn the alphabet to spend our lives majoring in the alphabet, but in order to read, learn, and grow. Conversion is the alphabet of Christian faith whereby the whole world of God's calling and law are opened up to us. Have we learned to read, if we get no further than the alphabet, and its repetition? Are we converted, if we do not move beyond the conversion experience, and, if not, is that experience then real? Life means growth, not paralysis, and true conversion is the beginning of life and growth.

*Third*, neither premillennials nor amillennials pay much attention to the creation mandate, and premillennialism, under the Rev. Carl McIntire's leadership, is falling into the heresy of denying it. But our Lord said, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13). God created man to exercise dominion over the earth, and to subdue all things in terms of God's law-word, and Jesus Christ restored man, as Himself the Last Adam, into this mandate, with the blessed assurance that our "labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). The Christian's duty and calling is to exercise the crown rights of King Jesus in every area of life. Although amillennialism gives formal adherence to the creation mandate, this is simply a tradition in terms of its Reformed ancestry. The adherence is formal and meaningless, because amillennialism, having affirmed the certainty of decline and defeat, *cannot* very effectively assert a call to dominion.

*Fourth*, both amillennialism and premillennialism are in varying degrees antinomian. They bypass the law entirely, or reduce it to merely personal morality. They fail to see the relevance of God's law as the way of sanctification and as the law of men and nations. They do not recognize God's law as God's plan for dominion, for godly authority and rule in every area of life. This anti-law attitude guarantees impotence and defeat to all churches who hold it. They may prosper as convents or retreats from the world, but never as a conquering army for God.

*Fifth*, there is *An Implicit Manichaeism* in premillennialism and in amillennialism. The material world is surrendered to Satan, and the spiritual world is reserved to God. In recent years, as our Chalcedon Reports have passed from hand to hand, one of the responses from premillennialists and amillennialists is to send a flood of their literature to me, to convert me, and also to write, sometimes anonymously, on what a terrible thing it is to encourage people towards Christian reconstruction. Some have boldly stated that the world belongs to Satan, and they are vehement in their hostility to any challenge against this idea. They fall into a form of Satanism, ascribing to Satan this world and all things therein. This is not Christianity: it is Manichaeism. It is more than heresy: it is apostasy.

*Sixth*, since the world is surrendered to the devil, the role of the church, as we have already indicated, is to be, not only a soul-saving agency but also a convent, a retreat from the horrible world around us. Protestants have long criticized the idea of monasticism, but, under the

influence of these two millennial views, Protestantism has turned the whole church into a retreat from the world, minus only sacerdotal celibacy. Men are summoned to withdraw from the world into the church. Nothing is said of establishing the reign and rule of God in every area of life, thought, and action.

*Seventh*, as we have indicated, these views hold to a fundamental disunity of Scripture, a sundering of the word of God. God was defeated in His plan for dominion through man when Adam fell. Christ restored man, but only to a kind of conventual life, not to dominion. Such Scriptures as Isaiah 2:1-5 are referred to as the Kingdom Age by premillennialists, and thus made irrelevant to Christian action today, or spiritualized into meaninglessness by the amillennialists.

Turning now to postmillennialism, we must say that very definitely, because it sees salvation as victory and health in time and eternity, it sees therefore a responsibility of the man of God for the whole of life. Postmillennialism holds that the prophecies of Isaiah and of all Scripture shall be fulfilled. Scripture is not divided, it is not made irrelevant to history. There shall be, as Genesis 3:15, Romans 16:20, and Revelation 12:9,11 declare, victory over Satan, and, as Genesis 13, Genesis 28:14, Romans 4:13 and the whole of Scripture proclaims, all the families of the earth shall be blest. People out of every tongue, tribe, and nation shall be converted, and the word of God shall prevail and rule in every part of the earth. There is therefore a necessity for action, and an assurance of victory.

The historic creeds of the church have been postmillennial in the main. For example, the Westminster Confession, ch. VIII, sect. 8, reads:

To all those whom Christ hath purchased redemption he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same: making intercession for them, and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by his Almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.

The Larger Catechism gives us a like emphasis:

Q. 54. How is Christ exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God?

A. Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that as God-man he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father, with all fulness of joy, glory and power over all things in heaven and earth; and doth gather and defend his Church, and subdue their enemies; furnisheth his ministers and people with gifts and graces, and maketh intercession for them.

Q. 191. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, (which is, *THY KINGDOM COME*) acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in; the Church furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances, purged

from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate: that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him for ever: and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.

The postmillennial view, while seeing rises and falls in history, sees it moving to the triumph of the people of Christ, the church triumphant from pole to pole, the government of the whole world by the law of God, and then, after a long and glorious reign of peace, the Second Coming and the end of the world. This view holds, *first* of all, very obviously to the unity of Scripture. All of Scripture teaches one way of salvation. All of Scripture has one mandate for man. All of Scripture teaches that man is under the one abiding law of God. We have one calling, one unchanging God, one unbroken word. *Second*, postmillennialism makes clear that Christians not only have a task of soul-saving, but also of school, home, church, business, state, vocation-saving, a calling to bring everything into captivity to Christ the King. *Third*, postmillennialism restores the law to its place as the way of sanctification and a plan for conquest. *Fourth*, postmillennialism takes seriously the lordship of Christ. He is not only Head of the Church, but the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This means that He is Ruler of all nations and Lord over all authorities in every area, and all things are to be put under Christ in time as well as eternity.

The impact of the church as it confronted Rome, as it confronted the barbarians, and, again, at the Reformation, was to conquer, to subdue kingdoms to the Christ of Scripture and to His infallible law-word. The Reformers were men of the world, Luther a professor first and last, Calvin a lawyer-theologian called in to reform Geneva by the city council. Reformation means to proclaim the saving power of Christ, and to apply the whole word of God to every area of life. Anything short of that is not the Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. VITALITY IN CHRISTIAN FAITH

A study of hospital patients in relationship to their life expectancy reportedly came to the conclusion that there was a strong correlation between life expectancy and future oriented thinking. A man whose mind looked ahead to activities a year hence was more likely to live than one whose thinking was only in terms of the daily hospital routine. Those without a future in mind had no future, as a rule.

This conclusion should not surprise us. Man, having been created in the image of God, is created with a mind which is not chained to the moment. Physically, man is bound to the hour; he cannot step backward in time to ages past, nor can he move into the future by a sudden leap, jumping over intervening years in a second. For the Almighty God, all history is present before Him. God is not bound by time, because He is the creator of time, as of all things. Before the foundation of the world, He ordained and decreed all things that come to pass, so that the beginning and the end of creation are always totally before Him. God is beyond history, but not a second nor a hair of all history is ever beyond Him or outside of His government and vision. He is the Lord, the Almighty.

Because man is created in the image of God, man has, intellectually, this same ability, on a creaturely level. He can see, as in a glass darkly, the beginning and the end, when his thinking and vision are governed by God and His word. Even without faith, man thinks and plans, studies history and himself, and is not chained to the moment. However, without faith in God, man loses the meaning of the moment as well as of the past meaning therein, he retreats from time and history into a convent-world, which, because it does not exist, means then a retreat into death. Ellenberger has written,

What we call the feeling of the “meaning of life” cannot be understood independently of the subjective feeling of experienced time. Distortions of the feeling of time necessarily result in distortions of the meaning of life. Normally, we look upon the future not only for itself but also for compensating and correcting the past and the present. We reckon on the future for paying our debts, achieving success, enjoying life, becoming good Christians. Wherever the future becomes empty, as with manics and certain psychopaths, life is a perpetual gamble and the advantage of the present minute is taken into consideration; wherever the future is inaccessible or blocked, as with the depressed, hope necessarily disappears and life loses all meaning.<sup>2</sup>

A future oriented faith thus means a perspective which plans to correct past errors in future action but also to rebuild in the future without those errors or sins. To the degree that future orientation is lacking in a society to that extent it is not only stagnant but also lacks the vitality to correct and to rebuild.

Minkowski, in discussing a case of schizophrenic depression, says of the patient:

There was no action or desire which, emanating from the present, reached out to the future, spanning the dull, similar days. As a result, each day kept an unusual independence, failing to be immersed in the perception of any life continuity;

each day began life anew, like a solitary island in a gray sea of passing time. What had been done, lived and spoken no longer played the same role as in our life because there seemed to be no wish to go further; every day was an exasperating monotony of the same words, the same complaints, until one felt that this being had lost all sense of necessary continuity. Such was the march of time for him.

However, our picture is still incomplete; an essential element is missing in it — the fact that *the future was blocked* by the certainty of a terrifying and destructive event. This certainty dominated the patient's entire outlook, and absolutely all of his energy was attached to this inevitable event.<sup>3</sup>

The same is true of non-schizoid people. In 1972, more than a few people reported to me their concern over friends and relations, who, lacking any faith, had read Gary Allen's *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* (1972) and had concluded that a dreaded seizure of all things by the semi-omnipotent mythical Insiders awaits the world; their reaction became at times suicidal; their ability to work and to function was impaired, and they lived a minimal life of fear and dread.

We must recognize that the premillennial hope is not on the same level. It has indeed its dreaded event, the great tribulation. Some hold that the church will be "raptured" before the tribulation, others during, and some, after. The "rapture" however, is a blessed event, a delivery into heaven. This hope, however, is personal, not social. The world as a whole is seen as on a futile course, so that there is no hope in any kind of social action, nor in Christian reconstruction. As a result there is a purely other-worldly orientation and a contempt for history and for time.

Amillennialism has no "rapture" and sees history deteriorating steadily to the end, and, as a result, it has, not surprisingly, created churches moving into decline and paralysis.

Thus, both amillennialism and premillennialism have the same social impact as schizophrenic depression: they produce a *blocked future*, a future which offers no hope with respect to history and time. But they do have a hope with respect to eternity. However, we have a right to ask of many of them how valid their hope is, since our Lord emphatically declares that the test of faith is a very practical one: do men bear good fruit here and now (Matt. 7:15-20)? "The peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11) is simply the results of God's chastening of His sons, to cleanse them of fruitlessness and to lead them into righteousness, and it means results here and now. "The night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). If Christians have a blocked future, then the world is in a fearful condition, because it is Christians who are the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13-15).

The impact of eschatology on man has been noted of late by various historians. Thus, Gary North has written:

The Puritans of the first generation were motivated with a postmillennial vision of earthly victory; they were to reform the world through preaching and godly reconstruction. By 1660, a radical pessimism had replaced the earlier eschatological optimism. The younger generation had not been converted in terms of the charismatic requirements of Christian experience. A hostile king was back on the throne in England. The Holy Commonwealth seemed to be collapsing. The inherited canons of medieval economics seemed inapplicable. No one knew how

to deal with economic crises, upward social mobility, and market laws like profit and loss. A kind of social antinomianism set in, as pastors preached general sermons against non-specific sins, but avoided offering concrete alternatives to the collapsing medieval framework.

Eschatological pessimism combined with social antinomianism to produce later Puritan pietism, marked most dramatically by the Mathers. Premillennial, emotional, and defeated in politics, Increase and Cotton Mather turned to the preaching of individual salvation and the creation of voluntary self-help societies. Franklin learned from Cotton Mather the importance of doing good; he did not grasp the theology that Cotton relied on in the doing of human good.<sup>4</sup>

A very central force which led to the stand by the colonies against the usurpations of power over them by the English Parliament was a renewed postmillennialism. Jonathan Edwards held that the latter-day glory is probably to begin in America. He wrote,

It is agreeable to God's manner, when he accomplishes any glorious work in the world, in order to introduce a new and more excellent state of his church, to begin where no foundation had been already laid, that the power of God might be the more conspicuous; that the work might appear to be entirely God's, and be more manifestly a creation out of nothing: agreeable to Hos. 1:10. "And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." When God is about to turn the earth into a paradise, he does not begin his work where there is some good growth already, but in the wilderness, where nothing grows and nothing is to be seen but dry sand and barren rocks; that the light may shine out of darkness, the world be replenished from emptiness, and the earth watered by springs from a drouthy desert: agreeable to many prophecies of scripture, as Isa. xxxii. 15. "Until the spirit be poured from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field." And chap. xli 18, 19. "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree: I will set in the desert, the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together." And chap. xliii. 20. "I will give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen." And many other parallel scriptures might be mentioned. Now as when God is about to do some great work for his church, his manner is to begin at the lower end; so, when he is about to renew the whole habitable earth, it is probable that he will begin in this utmost, meanest youngest and weakest part of it, where the church of God has been planted last of all; and so the first shall be last, and the last first; and that will be fulfilled in an eminent manner in Isa. xxiv. 19. "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous."<sup>5</sup>

Joseph Bellamy (1719-1790) saw a glorious future for the world, during which more will be saved "than ever before dwelt upon the face of the earth from the foundation of the world." In fact, he pointed out that, if the era of triumph lasted a literal thousand years, then, in view of population growth, "above seventeen thousand would be saved, to one lost."<sup>6</sup>

Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803) dedicated "A Treatise on the Millennium" "To the People Who Shall Live in the Days of the Millennium." Among other things, Hopkins said of that glorious era:

But when the millennium shall begin, the inhabitants which shall then be on the earth will be disposed to obey the divine command to subdue the earth, and multiply until they have filled it; and they will have skill, and be under all desirable advantages to do it, and the earth will be soon replenished with inhabitants, and be brought to a state of high cultivation and improvement in every part of it, and will bring forth abundantly for the full supply of all; and there will be many thousand times more people than ever existed before at once in the world. Then the following prophecy, which relates to that day, shall be fulfilled: "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I the Lord will hasten it in his time." (Isa. lx. 22.) And there is reason to think the earth will be then, in some degree enlarged in more ways than can now be mentioned or thought of. In many thousands, hundreds of thousands, yea, millions of instances, large tracts now covered with water, coves, and arms of the sea, may be drained, or the water shut out by banks and walls so that hundreds of millions of persons may live on those places and be sustained by the produce of them, which are now overflowed with water. Who can doubt of this, who recollects how many millions of people now inhabit Holland and the Low Countries, the greatest part of which was once covered with the sea, or thought not to be capable of improvement? Other instances might be mentioned.

Though there will be so many millions of millions of people on earth at the same time, this will not be the least inconvenience to any, but the contrary; for each one will be fully supplied with all he wants, and they will all be united in love, as brethren of one family, and will be mutual helps and blessings to each other. They will die, or, rather, fall asleep, and pass into the invisible world, and others will come on the stage in their room. But death then will not be attended with the same calamitous and terrible circumstances as it has been and is now, and will not be considered as an evil. It will not be brought on with long and painful sickness, or be accompanied with any great distress of body or mind. They will be in all respects ready for it, and welcome it with the greatest comfort and joy. Every one will die at the time and in the manner which will be best for him and all with whom he is connected; and death will not bring distress on surviving relatives and friends; and they will rather rejoice than mourn, while they have a lively sense of the wisdom and goodness of the will of God, and of the greater happiness of the invisible world to which their beloved friends are gone, and where they expect soon to arrive. So that, in that day, death will in a great measure lose his sting, and have the appearance of a friend, and be welcomed by all as such.<sup>7</sup>

According to Bushman, these and other men, with Bellamy as an outstanding leader, changed the character of their people and created the Yankee of the years after 1765.<sup>8</sup>

In earlier eras, men who felt called of God sought refuge from the world in a convent. Later on, under the influence of pietism, the church itself became a convent in the world, a refuge from problems and from the currents of social movements and forces. In the modern era, secular man has sought for the convent experience in various forms of escapism, retreats, mental health asylums, retirement, and many other avenues of surrender.

Postmillennial thinking was very important in the formation and development of the United States between 1765 and 1860. It is impossible to understand the development of the United States apart from this eschatology.

A secular scholar, George Shepperson, in discussing pagan and Christian forms of millenarianism, commented, of all these groups, and, in particular, of a movement in Nyasaland,

Like so many similar movements in other parts of the world, the expectations take a dramatic premillennial form; the saviour or delivering agency comes before and not — as in the case of postmillennialism — after the battle against the forces of evil. Premillennial always means a deep distrust of the orthodox forces of reform open to a society.<sup>9</sup>

This is a point of very great importance. Whether in its secular and political forms, wherein the millennium is to be brought in, not by reconstruction but by violent revolution, or in its religious forms, wherein a supernatural act brings forth the millennium, millenarian groups are hostile to reform and reconstruction. In recent church history, this has been conspicuously the case. Premillennial churches, with rare exceptions, have been unwilling to fight against the inroads of modernism into their denominations; too often, they have preferred to sit back and view this as a sign of “the end times” and as proof that the rapture is near. In my own experience within a major American church, I saw premillennialists deliberately, and by avowed statement to me, come late to key meetings where their vote could have led to the recapture of a synod, because they refused to be involved in trying to “reform” the church; it was to them “unspiritual” activity, and they felt assured that apostasy was ordained of God as a prelude to the “rapture.”

In the colonial era, men like the Rev. Thomas Clap (1703-1767) took little interest in theological development and advance, and contented themselves, as against Joseph Bellamy, to stamp out heresy.<sup>10</sup> The character of modern amillennialism is not unlike that of Clap and his Old Lights: it is indifferent to the world at large, content to hold the line, to repeat the old theological formulations instead of developing them in terms of the problems of the day, and more interested in stamping out heresy than in advancing the faith. The various Reformed and orthodox Presbyterian churches are excellent examples of this, with minor exceptions here and there.

Not surprisingly, the New Lights, led by Bellamy, soon became a commanding force in Connecticut. Bushman wrote, in 1763 William Johnson marveled that the New Lights who in his memory “were a small party, merely a religious one, had acquired such an influence as to be nearly the ruling part of the government owing to their superior attention to civil affairs and close union among themselves in politics.”<sup>11</sup>

A far greater influence and power awaits us today.

### 3. AREAS OF RECONSTRUCTION

Pietistic, amillennial and premillennial efforts lead invariably to a retreat from the world into a convent-type church which is made into a place of refuge from the world rather than a place of preparation for battle. Such churches emphasize songs of escapism, hymns that celebrate Christ as one who supposedly rescues them from the world and the problems of the world, they stress life on a “higher plane,” i.e., one of removal from the world’s battles.

Secular millenarianism has its place of refuge also, the state. All man’s problems are to find solution, not in work towards reconstruction, but in a revolutionary state whose fiat will affect the required changes. The revolution functions as the secular substitute for the rapture: the revolution will transport the true believers from the old and fallen world to the new world of the glorious revolution.

For the orthodox Christian, these alternatives are unbiblical and immoral. He has been regenerated by God through Christ to re-assume the task abandoned by Adam, namely, to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth under God and His law-word. It is important to cite a few of the necessary areas of action, but not in any order of priority.

*First of all*, we must begin with ourselves and our families. The family must be strengthened in its religious and economic life, and in its responsibilities towards every member. Children have a duty to support and care for their parents, and to maintain a strong religious and economic tie with them.<sup>12</sup>

*Second*, the church, before it is an institution and a legal corporation, is the family of God. This means the necessity of caring for one another. The diaconate, and the office of widows, needs to be revived in order to minister to the needs of Christ’s people, materially and spiritually. There is not a congregation without elderly members who need someone to do their shopping, clean their home, look after various duties, and much more. It is phariseeism to send money abroad to care for the needy, an impersonal act, and to neglect the personal and responsible act at home. To help someone close by means a continual involvement, back-aches and heart-aches, but this is what any work involves. The church should minister to the spiritual and material hunger and thirst of its members.

*Third*, Christian schools, colleges, institutes, and training centers are an urgent necessity. For a church or the parents, to have no regard for the fact that their children are receiving a godless education is a mark of apostasy.

*Fourth*, Christian political action is necessary, towards making the state again a Christian state, and its actions conform with the law of God.

*Fifth*, Christian professional organizations are urgently needed. Christian doctors, lawyers, and others must create their own professional agencies to further, not a pietistic, but a theologically sound view of their professions. This will also mean Christian hospitals, rest homes, old folks’ homes for those without families, and much, much more.

It means, *sixth*, studying every kind of calling from the perspective of Biblical faith and law. What constitutes a Christian farmer? How are salesmen, shopkeepers, men involved in real estate, manufacturing, or anything else, important for godly reconstruction?

It means, *seventh*, that the sciences are to be seen, as everything else, as an area of calling in which knowledge and dominion under God must be furthered.

Much more can be said. Suffice it to say that basic to all these activities, health, education, welfare, politics, economics, the family, the church, our vocations, and so on, is the necessity to *tithe*, so that the work of reconstruction may be expedited. The tithe is to the Lord, not to the church as such, and can go to whatever agency is working to further the Lord's dominion and to bring every area of thought and life into captivity to Jesus Christ.

Finally, another area *must* be mentioned: prayer. The first petition of the Lord's Prayer asks, "*Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven.*" This must be our prayer and also our calling.

#### 4. ESCHATOLOGY AND WORK

In 18th century colonial America, George Whitefield, while in New Jersey, dined with a number of American clergymen. We are told that:

After dinner, in the course of an easy and pleasant conversation, Mr. Whitefield adverted to the difficulties attending the gospel ministry arising from the small success with which their labours were crowned. He greatly lamented that all their zeal-activity and fervour availed but little; said that he was weary with the burdens and fatigues of the day; declared his great consolation was that in a short time his work would be done, when he should depart and be with Christ; that the prospect of a speedy deliverance had supported his spirits, or that he should before now have sunk under his labour. He then appealed to the ministers around him, if it were not their great comfort that they should soon go to rest. They generally assented, excepting Mr. Tennent (The Rev. William Tennent, Jr.), who sat next to Mr. Whitefield in silence; and by his countenance discovered but little pleasure in the conversation. On which Mr. Whitefield, turning to him and tapping him on the knee, said, "Well! brother Tennent, you are the oldest man amongst us, do you not rejoice to think that your time is so near at hand, when you will be called home and freed from all the difficulties attending this chequered scene?" Mr. T. bluntly answered, "I have no wish about it." Mr. W. pressed him again; and Mr. T. again answered, "*No, sir, it is no pleasure to me at all, and if you knew your duty it would be none to you, I have nothing to do with death: my business is to live as long as I can — and to serve my Lord and Master as faithfully as I can, Until He shall think proper to call me home.*" Mr. W. still urged for an explicit answer to his question, in case the time of death were left to his own choice. Mr. Tennent replied, "I have no choice about it; I am God's servant, and have engaged to do his business as long as he pleases to continue me therein. But no, brother, let me ask you a question. What do you think I would say if I was to send my man Tom into the field to plough, and if at noon I should go to the field and find him lounging under a tree, and complaining, 'Master, the sun is very hot, and the ploughing hard and difficult; I am tired and weary of the work you have appointed me, and am overdone with the heat and burden of the day; do, master, let me return home and be discharged from this hard service.' *What would I say? Why, that he was an idle, lazy fellow; that it was his business to do the work that I have appointed him, until I, the proper judge, should think fit to call him home.* Or suppose you had hired a man to serve you faithfully for a given time in a particular service, and he should, without any reason on your part, and before he had performed half his service, become weary of it, and upon every occasion be expressing a wish to be discharged or placed in other circumstances. *Would you not call him a wicked and slothful servant, and unworthy of the privileges of your employ?*" The mild, pleasant, and Christian-like manner in which this reproof was administered, rather increased the social harmony and edifying conversation of the company, who became satisfied that it was very possible to err, even in desiring with undue earnestness to "depart and be with Christ," which in itself is "far better," than to remain in this imperfect estate; and that it is the

duty of the Christian in this respect to say, “All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.”<sup>13</sup>

This was the Biblical and Puritan temper. Murray has shown the importance of this temper to the Puritan achievement, adding,

The opportunity of honouring Christ by fulfilling our present duties is a priceless privilege and those who thus serve him will not be found waiting at his Coming. ‘Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.’<sup>14</sup>

This belief that God has an important work for man to do, and that man must do it, was coupled with a belief that, what God has done for us, He can do for others. The present belief is increasingly a humanistic faith in the power of a scientific elite who alone can save man, if men will recognize their lack of expertise and submit to the experts. Certain races and classes are held to need this government if they are to advance. The Christian view is opposed to this, and it was manifested in the *form of agreement* of the Baptist missionaries, Puritan in temper and faith, who met at Serampore early in their missionary advance into India and declared,

He who raised the Scottish and brutalised Britons to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, can raise these slaves of superstition, purify their hearts by faith, and make them worshippers of the one God in spirit and in truth. The promises are fully sufficient to remove our doubts, and make us anticipate that not very distant period when He will famish all the gods of India, and cause these very idolators to cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, and renounce for ever the work of their own hands.<sup>15</sup>

Such missionaries clearly believed that by God’s grace they were superior, and it was their desire to give that same superiority of grace to all men. As their homeland, once given to savagery, had been transformed by God’s grace, so every people, tribe, and tongue could and would be transformed, because God has so declared it in His word.

A. A. Hodge of Princeton, who in his early years served as a missionary in India, saw the missionary effort hamstrung by premillennialism and wrote:

Millenarian missionaries have a style of their own. Their theory affects their word in the way of making them seek exclusively, or chiefly, to conversion of individual souls. The true and efficient missionary method is, to aim directly, indeed, at soul winning, but at the same time to plant Christian institutions in heathen lands, which will, in time, develop according to the genius of the nationalities. English missionaries can never hope to convert the world directly by units.<sup>16</sup>

Under the influence of the new premillennialism, “the Church was regarded as an institution without a future.”<sup>17</sup> *Not work but waiting* was the new emphasis, waiting for the rapture, for premillennialists, and waiting grimly for the tribulation and end, for amillennialists.

Two other factors reinforced the retreat occasioned by false eschatology. *First*, pietism saw life in essentially emotional and personal terms, and as a preparation for heaven. Work was seen as a

chore, an aspect of the curse, not a way of dominion, and the goal of man was seen as an eternal vacation with the Lord. Pietism produced a shallow life, intellectually and vocationally. The test of faith was made an emotional experience, and, not surprisingly, women began to predominate in both Catholic and Protestant circles: religion became a woman's affair, and the men in it were full of pietism and low on manhood. Pietism exalted the nothing people, pious poops who reduced the faith to pious gush and, for almost two centuries, have bedeviled the godly clergy with their sinful, sanctimonious ways. The nothing people avoid open acts of sin, not because they love and fear God but because they are timid souls who love and fear people and dare not offend them. In their hands, virtue ceased to be associated with dominion and strength and came to be associated with weakness and fear.

*Second*, the doctrine of evolution strengthened the humanism of false eschatologies and pietism. Man could now make himself by controlling his own evolution. A new philosophy of work resulted, work as a means of evolving a new man, a new society, and a new world. For Scripture, work was God's ordained means of dominion in Eden. After the Fall, a curse was laid on man's work insofar as he is fallen; to the degree that redeemed man is sanctified, to that degree his work again results in godly dominion.

The 20th century has seen the failure of humanistic man to usher in a new paradise by means of his work, and the result is a flight from work and a lust for retirement, for vacations, and for escape from the world of work. Humanism thus has a false philosophy of work and rest. Its claims ape those of God, to renew man and the world; it is a desperate evil, though fair of face, because its hope is, that out of evil good may come. It believes that sinful man can change himself and the world and vindicate his revolution against God.

A central fallacy of premillennial and amillennial views is the common assumption that the Fall somehow frustrated God's original purpose as set forth in Eden. But God is never frustrated, nor can He be. To believe this is to be a humanist, and humanism, wherever it is, must be strangled, because it assumes that man's way can prevail over God's Way.

God's purpose was not frustrated by the Fall but was manifested therein. All things are aspects of God's predestination and purpose, and nothing can be understood in terms of itself or the moment, but only in terms of God. The salvation of man is not the ultimate purpose of God, although a part of His declared purpose, but the manifestation of His glory and purpose in and through man.

The Fall thus advanced God's purpose. Weeds (Gen. 3:18) frustrate man, but they replenish the earth and prevent man from destroying it. The empires of old, the communists of today, the ungodly men of science, and others, all believe that they frustrate God and mock Him, but their every effort only advances God's purpose and His glory. Their wealth and achievements will be garnered by His Kingdom. In Isaiah 60:3, 5, 11 and Isaiah 66:12, as well as elsewhere, we are assured of this. Of God's Kingdom, we are told that "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it" (Rev. 21:24). Communism is an evil; we must oppose and wage war against its presence in our midst. Humanism is an evil: we must do battle against it on all fronts. We must remember, however, that their coming and their going will only further God's purpose and enrich God's Kingdom, because *nothing happens that will not further God's Kingdom and the glory ultimately of His people in Him and to His purpose.*

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58).

The world’s doctrine of rest is a flight from work. Vacationing means a restless quest for entertainment and preoccupation to avoid the claims of work. Work gives no dominion in escape from the fact of frustration and castration. Man without dominion is a eunuch, and humanistic man, lacking true dominion, runs from work into a frenetic sexuality, trying to prove a false potency, because he knows in his heart he is an impotent man insofar as true dominion is concerned.

For the man of God, rest is a privilege as is work. He *rests* because he has the assurance that the infallible and omnipotent God has assured him of victory, and that his labor is never in vain in the Lord. The man of God rests in the pride and joy of dominion, in delight in the God who makes *all* things work together for good to them that love Him, to them who are the called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28).

Retirement is a modern principle, the secular counterpart of the idea of a rapture. It is a surrender of manhood and of life. As long as a man is able, he *needs* to work, and he *needs* to rest. The rapture and retirement are falsely premised and mean a surrender; they treat a retreat from dominion as a privilege rather than a tragedy of grief. Postmillennialism gives us a theology of work and rest, and an eschatology of victory.

## 5. ECONOMICS AND ESCHATOLOGY

Very early in his student days, this writer, with missionary zeal began giving books to various persons if they promised to read them. This practice became a considerable one in later years, when funds allowed more generosity, and it has only been terminated of late. The books donated have covered a variety of subjects: religion and theology, philosophy, science, history, poetry, sociology, and much more. One variety of book has been very difficult to give away: economics.

The recipients of these books have been students, clergymen, housewives, professors, and men in various callings. Whatever their station or calling in life, a book on economics has been of little or no interest to them. This is not because books on economics are more difficult than others. Some of the writers I have suggested have been models of clarity and simplicity.

More than a few agencies have dedicated themselves to furthering economic knowledge. The Foundation for Economic Education has done outstanding work, and the Christian Freedom Foundation as well. In particular, the William Volker Fund for years subsidized the publication and distribution of notable works in economics. The work of these and other foundations, while highly competent, have not produced the results the same expenditures could have achieved, and have achieved, in other areas.

Why is there a disinterest in or a resistance to economics? And why has it for generation been called “the dismal science”? Why do men find the subject uninteresting when it is so important to their daily lives?

Schools require students to take a course in psychology, usually of more than dubious value, or geometry, which few people ever use. Many colleges require some laboratory work in the sciences, and students, most of whom will never become scientists, annually dissect thousands of hapless frogs and other animals as a part of their education. The curriculum is heavily cluttered with requirements which are useless to most people. *Every* person must reckon with economic facts, and yet as a general rule, schools do not require economics. The roots of this paradox lie deep in our culture, and in every culture.

The roots are in large measure Manichaeian and neoplatonic.<sup>18</sup> They feed on a distaste for the real world of material things and rest in a preference for a world of pure spirit. Since Hegel, the modern world has been deeply infected by such thinking, so that, no less than certain aspects of “medieval” culture, it is otherworldly. The difference now is that the other world is not a world of Platonic or Aristotelian universals but the world of man’s imagination and planning, without any pretext of a realm of universals.

This modern idealism does not like classical economics because it posits and requires a universe of laws; it insists on a reality other than man’s imagination. To cite an example: in the very beginning of the 1960’s, when this writer spoke of the coming disappearance of silver coins (a fact obvious to anyone mindful of classical economics), the usual response was a denial that the rising price of silver would lead to a disappearance of silver coins when their value in silver content equaled and then exceeded their face value. Later, when the clad coins of baser metals were issued in 1965, it was regularly insisted that Gresham’s Law would not operate.

When both things happened, i.e., the rising price of silver led to the abandonment of silver coinage, and the bad money (clad coins) drove out the silver coins, the set response was still a refusal to accept any economic law as operative. Instead, it was held, things happened the way they did *only* because too many people still believed in the old economics and therefore made it happen. *All* determination was seen as coming from the mind of man.

From a Biblical point of view, *all* determination comes rather from God, and His ordering of all things is the law structure of creation. The humanist insists that the ordering comes from the mind of man: As long as man still believes in the “myths” of the old economics, he will make them work. When men believe in the new economics, then the new economics will work.

This idealism, the belief that the mind and ideas of man are determinative of reality, is basic to the modern world view. Where this idealism prevails, a society will be essentially *political and sociological* in orientation rather than *theological and economic*. In a political society, man’s hope is tied to legislation and to acts of state. Success does not depend on obedience to God’s law in every realm, nor is man tied to the hard, material realities of economics such as supply and demand. Instead, man can legislate new realities by acts of state. Order is to be *created*, not *complied with*. If Gresham’s law is true, then order means compliance with that economic reality, not the creation of an idea of order by elite planners. If “Thou shalt not steal” and the Sabbath law are parts of an ultimate and inescapable order, we either comply with them or suffer certain disorders.

To say that order is to be created rather than complied with means that the mind of man must create it. If an ultimate order is already there, created by God, and man’s duty is compliance with it, i.e., obedience to God’s law, then man’s social goal is to seek harmony with that ultimate order. However, if all around us we have a “universe” of disorder into which the mind of man must bring order, then *conflict* is the appointed way. Conflict then is also twofold. *First*, there is conflict with the world of disorder around us. Instead of harmony with ultimate order, we are at war with ultimate disorder around us. *Second*, it means also conflict with men who may disagree with the humanistic state’s idea of order. Since order depends on the mind of man, recalcitrant men must either be converted to the true humanistic faith or else punished, placed in prison, or executed to eliminate the potentiality for disorder. Instead of harmony, conflict becomes the way to order, and the result is a conflict society.

Religiously, this humanistic emphasis on conflict means the exaltation of the powers of evil and of antichrist. Evil becomes determinative in a very powerful way, because determination and ultimacy have been transferred to the created world, to the world of men essentially, and the sovereignty and the predestinating power of God have been denied. In Scripture, the only valid definition of “antichrist” is anyone and everyone who denies that Christ has come in the flesh (I John 4:3), i.e., all who deny the reality of the incarnation. The Bible does *not* give us a one person of antichrist who shall rule the world: this is a myth, and it is a myth which exalts the powers of man as against God.

Similarly, in Scripture Satan is a *creature*, a fallen creature. Because he is a creature, Satan, like all creatures has a purely local appearance: he cannot be in more than one place at a time. He cannot thus be tempting me in California and another man in Vienna at one and the same time. His approach to any man is at best severely limited, however real. Too many men are ready to

blame the devil for their sins when, the truth is, they needed no help in committing them, only an excuse.

The devil, like man, is a creature. When man exalts the creature, he will exalt himself, his political fabrications, and also the devil. When Aristotelian thought was revived by Scholasticism, Christendom saw the rise of strong and humanistic political orders, and it also saw the marked rise at the same time in witches, occultism, and in Satanism. Satan became a great power simultaneously with the late “medieval” and Renaissance tyrants.

Similarly, the rise of the 20th century totalitarian state has also seen the simultaneous revival of magic, witchcraft, occultism, and Satanism.

The kingdom of Man is the Kingdom of the Creature, and it flourishes both in this world and in the after-life at one and the same time. Its pretensions are common to both and rise and fall together.

This means that the idealist must have a politically controlled reality, not a free market economy. The Bible says, concerning the creation of man, that he was created out of the dust of the earth (the dust having been previously made by God), and that man is tied to the dust and returns to it. To accept this fact about ourselves means that we accept also the fact that our economics, like all our lives, are tied to material realities, not as a penalty but as their normal and natural circumstances. Instead of rebelling against it, we recognize that life means precisely that for us, and life is good.

Economics thus is a barometer. Interest in it marks a sound eschatology, normally. Disinterest in it means an element of neoplatonist or Manichaeian thinking.

## 6. THE RAPTURE GENERATION

A bumper sticker of 1973 declared, “You’re in the Rapture Generation.” At the same time, one of the most popular books was titled, *Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth* (by Hal Lindsey and C. C. Carlson). Again, at the same time, a television program on a major network dealt with, “Satan’s Coming Dictator,” and a news network “feature story” dealt with the Jehovah’s Witnesses and was titled “Witnesses: ‘The End is Coming Soon.’” Its first sentence read, “American’s fastest-growing religious body seeks converts with a zeal fired by the conviction that the end of the world will come very soon, perhaps by 1975.”<sup>19</sup> People who expect the world to end very soon, and are planning on being raptured out of it, are not likely to be concerned about dominion over the earth, nor the application of God’s law to the whole of life. Moreover, if such people believe, as they do, that Satan rules the world, they will regard their responsibilities to the world as negligible, and the world as something to escape from.

They will, of course, be interested in “saving souls,” but the focus of their evangelism will not be Biblical. One evangelist, in a mailing of August, 1973, had, on the back of his enveloped, in large letters, these words: “It’s Fun Being Saved.” This man, who states that he has been contacted by one of the three leading television networks (from California) about the matter of a national T.V. show to be called, “The Bob Harrington Show,” states, “I have told them I am interested only if I can come as a preacher and talk to people about Jesus: I want a ‘Bob Harrington Holy Happy Hour.’” Harrington writes further,

Everywhere I go today, I say three things in this order:

1. First, “Jesus sent me to you.”
2. Second, “It’s Fun Being Saved.”
3. Third, “I’ll be back!”<sup>20</sup>

St. Paul, after the shattering experience of his conversion, did not eat or drink for three days (Acts 9:9); he knew what it meant to be a Christian, and it was not a “fun thing” with him but an experience which brought him persecution and trouble as well as the glory of God’s grace.

The kind of religion Billy Graham and Bob Harrington represent is readily approved of by corrupt politicians and venal communications media. It does not challenge their godless dreams of dominion, and it does sugar-coat their sins with the veneer of religious respectability, with a facade of pietism. Such men can have the ear of national leaders and preach in the White House and in Congress without affecting even to the extent of an iota the national march into degeneracy and apostasy.

It is easy to approve of something when it gives us credit for being good men and asks little or nothing of us. Our Lord said of the world, that its attitude towards Him was simply this: “We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). The world is happy with any man who diminishes or denies this kingship of Christ. The world wants to exercise its own dominion over the earth, not to recognize Christ’s dominion. St. Paul says, however, of Christ, that “he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (I Cor. 15:25).

For anyone to proclaim the absolute Kingship of Christ, and the necessary exercise of dominion by Christians in terms of God's law, is to declare war on the world and to incur wrath and hostility. It is impossible then to be a chaplain to the Establishment and to be sought by the godless communications media.

Can the enemy imagine a better ally than "the rapture generation?" Not only does the rapture generation deny the necessity of battle but it surrenders all its dominion to the enemy. If the world were indeed in the hands of the rapture generation, Satan would most certainly be alive and well on planet earth. But it is God who rules the world, not Satan, and it is His government which alone prevails.

The rapture generation has no interest in Christian reconstruction, only in being raptured out of the problems of history. The title of Hal Lindsey's book is revelatory of their attitude, *The Late Great Planet Earth*. When the world and history are already seen as dead, concern with it is essentially irrelevant. Lindsey has a word of caution, at the end of his book, on living with the possibility that the rapture may not be in our life-time, but the basic thrust of his book is that this is *the late* and departed world of man, the world of history. Essentially, he prepares his followers for the "countdown," the imminent rapture. He sees that "the most important prophetic sign of Jesus, Christ's soon coming is before us." It is therefore a "time of electrifying excitement."<sup>21</sup>

All those who have known Lindsey report his set approach to all prospective "converts." It is to inculcate fear and to preach the rapture. Suddenly, one of these days, he declares, I will disappear from before your eyes. My Bible will be here, but I will be gone in the rapture. Unless you believe, you will be left in a world without us.

An added picture is drawn: suddenly, on the freeways, there will be huge pile-ups of automobiles, as riderless cars smash into other vehicles because the rapture generation has disappeared.

Is this Biblical faith? Is it Christianity? Neither in their beliefs nor in their lives do great numbers of the rapture generation give evidence of regeneration. Rather, they stress escapism, and the overwhelming power of Satan. With some the result is a practical Satanism, because they more readily acknowledge the working government of Satan in the world than of God. They ascribe to Satan power over the weather, the determination of history, and the dominion over the earth which can only be ascribed to the triune God.

The rapture generation is not interested in God's law, in Christian reconstruction by means of it, the Kingship of Jesus Christ, nor in the essential doctrines of Scripture. All world history is seen by Lindsey as a "countdown" to the second coming *and* the rapture. "The big question is, will you be here during this seven-year count-down? Will you be here during the time of the Tribulation when the antichrist and the False Prophet are in charge for a time? Will you be here when the world is plagued by mankind's darkest days?"<sup>22</sup> The wife of a manufacturer, when I denied the validity of the rapture idea, exploded in some passion, declaring "Then what's the point of being a Christian if I have to suffer tribulation? What was the point of quitting smoking and dancing?" The Lord, she insisted, had no right to do that to her, and it therefore could not be true that He intended to put them through any tribulation, great or small. (Wealthy people are

preferred targets of much premillennial rapture generation activity. They are predisposed to buying escapism, and can better reward its sellers).

The rapture generation is the useless generation. Some years ago, a California school principal who had signed a contract in February for another school, was informed in early June of a series of problems and disasters confronting his present school district. He smiled happily and remarked, "It's not my problem. I'm not going to be here! I leave in three weeks."

The rapture generation has the same unconcern, only greatly enlarged, for present problems. Lindsey says very plainly, "We should be living like persons who don't expect to be around much longer."<sup>23</sup> This is a mandate for irresponsible living, for a neglect of social, political, educational, and other problems in favor of waiting for the rapture.

At one point, Lindsey admits a significant fact, namely, that between the time of the close of the New Testament canon and the mid-nineteenth century, "prophetic truth" as Lindsey defines it was little known.<sup>24</sup> Since then, and especially in this century, it has spread widely, extensively purveyed by the heretical notes of Scofield. In that same time, Christianity has declined as great numbers of people have joined the rapture generation and dedicated themselves to a studied irrelevance to God and to man. Their destiny is not the rapture but judgment, for our salvation is not in the rapture but in Jesus Christ.

## 7. PREDESTINATION AND THE LAW

It is time now to speak of the errors of much post-millennialism and its adherents and the reason for their decay. The heart of post-millennialism is the faith that Christ will through His people accomplish and put into force the glorious prophecies of Isaiah and all the Scriptures, that He shall overcome all His enemies through His covenant people, and that He shall exercise His power and Kingdom in all the world and over all men and nations, so that, whether in faith or in defeat, every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall confess God (Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:11).

God declares through Isaiah: “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (Isa. 45:23). St. Paul restates this as fulfilled in Christ’s coming and through His people (Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:11).

The first great petition of the Lord’s Prayer declares the centrality of this aspect of our faith. We are required, in true prayer to pray “after this manner” (Matt. 6:9), asking God, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). Prayers which are mindless of this petition miss the essence and heart of prayer as our Lord requires it.

*How* is Christ’s Kingdom to *come*? Scripture is again very definite and explicit. The glorious peace and prosperity of Christ’s reign will be brought about *only* as people obey the covenant law. In Lev. 26, Deut. 28, and all of Scripture this is plainly stated. There will be peace and prosperity in the land, the enemy will be destroyed, and men will be free of evils only “If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them” (Lev. 26:3). The obedience of faith to the law of God produces *irresistible blessings*: “And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God” (Deut. 28:2). On the other hand, disobedience leads to *irresistible curses*: “But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee, this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee” (Deut. 28:15).

According to these and other declarations of Scripture, the determination of all things within time is in terms of obedience and disobedience to God’s law. This is plainly spelled out for the various areas of life. *First*, national, rural, and urban prosperity and success are conditional upon obedience to God’s law. *Second*, human fertility is similarly an area where God’s curse and blessing are operative, and we are either cursed or blessed in the fruit of our bodies. *Third*, agricultural fertility and prosperity are also tied to the law. *Fourth*, the weather is likewise related to the law, so that God judges and blesses by means of the rain, hail, snow, dew, and sun. *Fifth*, our relationship to our enemies is again conditional upon obedience. *Sixth*, our personal lives and activities are blessed or cursed in terms of our obedience to God’s law.

The doctrine of predestination is *not* fatalism: it does not deny responsibility to man. Rather, it asserts the coincidence of God’s predestination and man’s responsible action, so that, while the primary causality is of God, the secondary causality is of man. The reality of secondary causes is not negated but is rather established by God’s primary causality. I am not less a man because I am a sinner, a mortal, and a child of my times; equally, I am not less a responsible man, and, in a

secondary sense, a man with a limited though free will (albeit a creaturely and derivative will), because God is the primary cause of all things and the only ultimate and absolute will.

God's determination of history is thus plainly described in His law. If we believe and obey, then we are blessed and we prosper in Him; if we deny Him and disobey His law, we are cursed and confounded.

We are not raptured into success in Greek fashion. The premillennial idea of the rapture denies God's law, and therefore it denies God, for His law is the major part of His enscriptured word, and we cannot call a lawless God the God of Scripture. The amillennials deny any victory in history and thus deny the very form and nature of God's predestination of history, so that their doctrine of predestination becomes a formal, hollow shell. Antinomian postmillennials deny the God-given way to God's Kingdom when they by-pass the law. In effect, they posit without reference to it, a rapture! How else is the world going to move from its present depravity into God's order? Are we going to float in on vague prayers and "higher-life" spirituality? The antinomian postmillennials have no answer.

The charge is often raised that the postmillennialism of colonial and 19th century Calvinism led to the Social Gospel of the 20th century. No one has documented this charge, which is obviously false. Hodges, Warfield, Machen, and others were not the source of the Social Gospel, and were hostile to it. The roots of that movement are in Arminianism, and, very directly, in that notable humanist-revivalist, C. G. Finney.

It must be added, however, that, as emphasis on God's law waned, because of the Arminianism of the day and the decline of the reformed theologians into a rationalistic rather than Biblical apologetics, the initiative in society fell into the hands of the advocates of the Social Gospel *by default*. They alone had an "answer" for social problems. Their answer, however, was and is humanistic politics. It is thus urgently necessary that Christians return to the law as the God-given means to realizing God's order. The declaration of Scripture is clear: "And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them" (Deut. 28:14). To deny God's law is to deny Him and His Kingdom, and to serve other gods and another faith. This we have been doing, and calling it "of the Lord"! Is it any wonder that we are under judgment? We need to pray with the psalmist, "The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: *Teach me thy statutes*" (Ps. 119:64).

God has a plan for the conquest of all things by His covenant people. That plan is His law. It leaves no area of life and activity untouched, and it predestines victory. To deny the law is to deny God and His plan for victory.

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<sup>1</sup> See R. J. Rushdoony: *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, Nutley, New Jersey, The Craig Press, 1973.

<sup>2</sup> Henri F. Ellenberger, "A Clinical Introduction to Psychiatric Phenomenology and Existential Analysis," in Rollo May, Ernest Angel, Henri F. Ellenberger, editors: *Existence, A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*, p. 106f. New York: Basic Books, 1959.

<sup>3</sup> Eugene Minkowski, "Findings in a Case of Schizophrenic Depression," in *Ibid.*, p. 132f.

<sup>4</sup> Gary North, "The Concept of Property in Puritan New England, 1630-1720," in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, vol. XXXV no. 1, Fall, 1972, p. 66f.

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Edwards, "The Latter-Day Glory is Probably to Begin in American," in Conrad Cherry, editor: *God's New Israel, Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*, p. 57f. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971; cited from *The Works of President Edwards*, IV, 128-133, 1830 ed.

<sup>6</sup> "The Millennium," in *The Works of Joseph Bellamy, I*, p. 456f. Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1853.

<sup>7</sup> *The Works of Samuel Hopkins*, vol. II, p. 288f. Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1854.

<sup>8</sup> Richard L. Bushman: *From Puritan to Yankee, Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, (1967) 1969.

<sup>9</sup> George Shepperson, "Nyasaland and the Millennium," in Sylvia L. Thrupp, editor: *Millennial Dreams in Action, Essays in Comparative Study*, p. 146. The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1962.

<sup>10</sup> Bushman, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

<sup>11</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>12</sup> For this, and more than can be summarized in this brief essay, see R. J. Rushdoony: *Institutes of Biblical Law*.

<sup>13</sup> Archibald Alexander: *The Log College*, p. 25f. London: Banner of Truth Trust, (1851) 1968. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>14</sup> Iain Murray: *The Puritan Hope*, p. 219. London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

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<sup>17</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>18</sup> See R. J. Rushdoony: *The Flight From Humanity*,\*\*\* this volume.

<sup>19</sup> Louis Cassals, “Witnesses:’The End is Coming Soon,’” in *The Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, Saturday, September 1, 1973, p. A-7.

<sup>20</sup> *Bob Harrington’s Heart Beat*, Sept., 1973, p. 2 New Orleans, LA.

<sup>21</sup> Hal Lindsey with C. C. Carlson: *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 57f. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137f.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.